

The Henley College Board

**MINUTES of the Meeting of the Board
held on Wednesday 21 October 2020 at 16.30
via remote participation**

| BOARD: Trevor Watkins Rebecca Chandler-Wilde Satwant Deol Brian Fennelly Lizzie Firth Vince Maltese James Lingard Dr Tim Lincoln Chris Murray Justin Sutherland Andrew Unsworth Charles Wiggin Andrea Wood | Independent Member/Chair Independent Member Principal Independent Member Independent Member Independent Member Independent Member Independent Member Independent Member Parent governor Staff Governor Independent Member Independent Member | CLERK: Jacky Gearey SLT BY INVITATION: Eric Burrow Head of HR Eamonn Egan Interim Vice Principal Ashok Patel Director of Finance |
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| Agenda Item | Minutes | Action by |
| 1.1 | Opening of Meeting and Welcome The Chair opened the meeting at 16.30. The student governors did not attend. The Chair asked that all papers to be taken as read to ensure a timely meeting to allow for ample discussion on the Strategy Plan under item 1.12. The Clerk advised that Lizzie Watts will be arriving at 17.00 due to a work meeting. | |
| 1.2 | Apologies for Absence Apologies had been received from: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Alistair Wildman – work commitments 2. Robyn Vitty - ill 3. Abigail Kennedy - Student Governor 4. Roshelle Coopens Chavarri – Student Governor | |
| 1.3 | Declaration of Interests There were no declarations of interest. | |
| 1.4 | Minutes of Previous Meeting (i) Minutes of meeting of 28 June 2020 The Board approved the minutes of 28 June 2020 as an accurate record of the meeting to be signed by the Chair. Resolved that the Board agreed that the 28 June 2020 minutes were an accurate record of the meeting to be signed by the Chair. | |
| 1.5 | Matters Arising from the Minutes (unless covered by the agenda) Item 5.11 - Link governor role - as agreed at QS meeting 28 Sep 20 QS Chair and Vice Chair to undertake a review of the report form and report back for Nov QS meeting. Item 5.15(ii) – strategy plan- to be discussed under item 1.12. There were no other matters arising. | |
| 1.6 | Principal's Report The Chair said that a number of the items were covered in other parts of the agenda and asked for any comments. Covid is being managed and students kept safe and the report covers all other issues and some governors have been into college for a tour of the refurbished areas. One board member asked under Section 9 of the report about the concerns – regarding contacting FEC and Principal provided a response to this much of which covered the spending review and government policy decisions. | |

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| | <p>The report cites apprenticeship update with effect from next March - Principal advised about the Ofsted report which stopped the College from doing apprenticeships currently.</p> <p>The Principal presented her report for noting highlighting the following points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use and development of Microsoft Teams – working well 2. Student numbers are positive at 1730 ahead of the target of 1640 3. Student retention, pass rates and achievement for 2019-20 were all above the 2018-19 national averages 4. College finances have delivered a better than expected financial performance. The forecast outturn is an operating surplus (before pension adjustment) of £488K (budget - £128K) 5. Increased pressure on student services department due to increased student mental health issues already fully discussed at the last Quality & Standards committee meeting 28 September 20 6. Estates and health & safety team have delivered the summer refurbishment projects and complied with the safety requirements for Covid 7. FEC visit – positive feedback and confirmation that they will not be revisiting the college 8. Principal represented the sector on BAME – extracts from Commissioner's report and from CEO of Sixth Form Colleges Association for information <p>The Chair thanked the Principal for such a detailed report asked if there were any further questions. There were none.</p> <p>Resolved that the Principal's Report was received by the Board.</p> | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.7 | <p>Strategy The Principal presented an update on the KPIs.</p> <p>(i) Organisation KPIs</p> <p>All but one of the 2019/20 targets associated with student outcomes were met or exceeded. Key outcomes were:</p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 40%;">Student Retention</td> <td>91% (+2% on 2019/20 target)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Level 3 Year 1 to Year 2 Retention</td> <td>93% (+2% on 2018/19; +2% on 2019/20 target)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Student Pass Rate</td> <td>96% (+1% on 2018/19; equal to national average)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Level 3 Progress/Value-added</td> <td>ALPS Grade 4 (equal to 2019/20 target)</td> </tr> </table> <p>The positive outcomes for 2019/20 were the results of good teaching, learning and assessment, as acknowledged by Ofsted grading good in the October 2019 inspection. The indicator that remained below target was Student Attendance at 84%, 4% below the 2019/20 target, which was due to a decline in attendance at GCSE English and GCSE maths lessons by students who achieved Grade 4 or above in the November resit, and in tutorial lessons by Year 2 students following the January UCAS deadline. The work to be graded outstanding centres significantly around the improvements to make in the overall rate of attendance.</p> <p>Student Recruitment is very strong currently at 1730 against a target of 1640. The recruitment will drop to around 1700 on census date which is still well above last year.</p> <p>Board asked about the student attendance and whether this was an indication of underlying issues within the college. The VP acknowledged the 84% attendance rate which was the same for the previous year and said the aim to improve the overall attendance rate was addressed in the QIP. However, as an explanation the foundation courses in English and Maths and functional skills impacted the attendance rate as did the personal tutorials and to address this was a complex issue with many reasons why these students did not attend including anxiety, personal circumstances, dull subjects, not valuing the process and depression. VP assured the Board that most courses were meeting expectation and that attendance rates needed to be looked at in conjunction with retention rates.</p> <p>(ii) Financial update</p> | Student Retention | 91% (+2% on 2019/20 target) | Level 3 Year 1 to Year 2 Retention | 93% (+2% on 2018/19; +2% on 2019/20 target) | Student Pass Rate | 96% (+1% on 2018/19; equal to national average) | Level 3 Progress/Value-added | ALPS Grade 4 (equal to 2019/20 target) | |
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| | <p>The FD advised that the College of outturn results but said they were draft and subject to audit and showed a significant improvement from the original budget. This was mainly associated to the long period of lockdown and delays in moving with some IT/MIS projects. Given that the College was working offsite since late March and the significant impact of the virus issue, the overall financial outturn is positive. With a 450k surplus projected.</p> <p>There will be an impact for 20-21 as a result of the on-going Covid 19 issue and also delivering the delayed investments in MIS/IT which has bridged two years and although this will affect 2021-2022 the net outcome is positive.</p> <p>FEC is agreed that the college is solvent and that there is no requirement to come back.</p> <p>The College will remain in an "outstanding" financial health category for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>Board members confirmed the FEC comments but said that the FEC wanted to see the strategy paper and the estates strategy and asked if there was a possibility of a reduction of funding. FD said that this was unlikely. FD then explained that the estates strategy priority was to deliver the LEP project because of the associated funding and that this and the infrastructure will be delivered according to the curriculum funding.</p> <p>(iii) Staff satisfaction survey update</p> <p>The Head of HR advised the board that this survey focussed on staff's reaction to the lockdown and the planning of re-opening the College, rather than the broader processes of the two previous surveys. In the previous two surveys 21.19% and 27.67% of all responses were neutral, so the decision was also taken to only have four options and not to have a Neither Agree/Disagree option to ensure a definitive response. This has had a significant impact in that there is now a more definitive picture of individual's feelings. There is also a far more positive response from staff with Disagree/Strongly Disagree responses only accounting for 12.55% of all responses, down from 35.4% in the previous survey.</p> <p>There was an additional question concerning how technology had affected staff during lockdown Board asked about the percentage of participation 54%. Head of HR said that the survey was sent out late. Board asked why the same questions were not asked as there is no comparison to last year's survey and there needs to be challenge against the percentage replies. The Head of HR said that this would be addressed going forward.</p> <p>Resolved that the Strategy update covering the Organisation KPIs, finances and the staff satisfaction survey was received by the Board</p> | |
| 1.8 | Student Governors' Report – not presented | |
| 1.9 | <p>Safeguarding and Prevent</p> <p>The VP said that safeguarding for the academic year 2019-2020 has been particularly challenging due to the COVID19 pandemic, the cyber- attack and our young people being out of education for 6 months. Key issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remotely supporting our vulnerable students • Remotely working with the external bodies • Loss of data due to the cyber-attack • Continuous changes to the safeguarding regulations • Positive destinations of our safeguarded students <p>The additional hours of the Counsellor had been invaluable, and the department would struggle without this extra support. Currently these additional hours are only until half term. This subject was discussed in great detail at the QS meeting in September.</p> <p>Safeguarding governor asked about the additional resources which had been requested. Principal said that more support had been provided including counselling for 4 days and the provision of additional admin support which was being looked at.</p> | |

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| 1.10 | <p>Resolved that the Safeguarding, Prevent and PDBW Report was received by the Board</p> <p>FEC Update</p> <p>The Chair confirmed that the initial feedback from the recent FEC virtual inspection on the 1 October 2020 was that the FEC has endorsed the college's approach. This would be subject to review by the FEC Commissioner and the final report would be circulated to governors when received. This means there will be no further recommendations for improvement or further diagnostic visits and is the best possible outcome.</p> <p>The FEC have some advisory messages to help the college develop further and these will be reviewed on receipt of the written report in due course. Principal re-iterated that the college wanted to stand alone.</p> <p>Resolved that the verbal FEC update was received by the Board</p> | |
| 1.11 | <p>Update on Covid</p> <p>The Head of HR advised the board that there have been numerous versions of government guidance and the report presented details how the College has responded to such guidance in planning for the new academic year, and the work which has been undertaken to allow students back into College to follow a full timetable.</p> <p>This update builds on the paper submitted to the Quality & Standards Committee to provide information on how the College is currently operating a full-time table and adapting to new circumstances as they happen.</p> <p>The Head of HR provided the following updates:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. number of infections which was now 2 – one staff and one student. 2. there had now been 130 Covid related issues. 3. unions were asking about ventilation and the provision of masks for those over 60 in the college - Health & safety manager and Head of HR will be looking at this over the half term to ensure ventilation and temperature regulation. <p>Board asked:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. whether the risk assessment was robust enough to react quickly enough – VP said that part of the work the curriculum planning team has been doing was to address remote learning. 2. if there was sufficient back up for students if IT went down - VP advised that the use of Teams meant that this is run by Microsoft security. Board still was not reassured referring to the comments raised in the Principal's report regarding aspiring to be a paperless college especially in admissions and student data. VP said that decisions have not been made about the admission process as this is dependent on the health crisis going forward. 3. was there any risk of any students being disadvantaged by lack of equipment or internet access - VP said that there was a risk of this, and the numbers affected were very low, but the students were known, and the college would provide them with resources to address this. <p>Resolved that: the Updated Report on Covid was received by the Board</p> | |
| 1.12 | <p>Away Day - Strategy Plan</p> <p>Principal said the college was in the last year of the strategic plan 2017 – 21 and then went through her presentation covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aim, Deficit, Culture and challenges including heavily unionised, lack of future proofing - Organisation change and challenges - abandoned estates strategy, staff made redundant - Financial information – operating position improved, now investing in estates - Student performance – retention, pass rate and achievement at national average levels - Student destinations – to degree level apprenticeships, universities achieving 2:1 in the main or higher - Digital, press and promotion - Student numbers – high - Refurbishment of premises – aligning and zoning the areas | |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Student and staff safety – additional cleaning and security provision especially during the pandemic - Next steps – improve business and leaning systems and reports - Constant messaging, moving from a good to a great college - Aims from the previous strategy session in December were re-iterated <p>The Principal then asked for questions_</p> <p>Board commented that values and mission statements pertinent to the college applied to all colleges and wanted to know to clarify exactly what the college was offering to make the college successful. Principal said that this was for the board to consider.</p> <p>Board further discussed what was the unique selling point of the college and whether it was maintenance verses progress with the Principal explaining the current rationale of wanting to be an outstanding college. Board asked what the test of choice would be and had the college surveyed students and parents. Principal said that surveys are carried out several times a year with the parents' survey shortly to be carried out in November. Developing this theme, the Board asked:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. if there was a tactical plan to support the strategic aims that college is trying to accomplish 2. what were the perceptions of the people in the town? 3. who is this directed at? 4. what was Henley college about and the student perception of that? 5. what was the leaders of the feeder and nearby schools' perception of the college? <p>The Principal advised that extensive market research had been done and presented at the previous away day last December and that she had been in contact with the schools in the area. The Board asked for this feedback. Principal said that this would be provided together with all the marketing and ancillary data.</p> <p>Chair summarized:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the Henley College brand? 2. What are the reasons for students not coming to Henley College? 3. Quality of student experience e.g. estates, IT, teaching input and curriculum offer 4. Organic growth or merger which can be built into away day. <p>The Chair said that the issue was the structure of the away day and inability to have face to face and asked for the board's suggestions on how the above could be undertaken. A Board member with extensive training experience suggested multiple days with a topic per session on different days or perhaps two on one day. No decision was made and would be discussed further using advice from a governor with extensive experience of online meetings.</p> <p>Resolved that the Away Day - Strategy Plan was received by the Board</p> | |
| 1.13 | <p>Notification and approval of:</p> <p>(i) Safeguarding Policy</p> <p>The Safeguarding Policy is fundamentally the same, however since the outbreak of Covid-19 in March. and an appendix has had to be added. The inclusion of Appendix 1 from page 16 onwards addresses the significant changes that have had to take place at the College in response to the outbreak following advice from the government and local agencies. This policy had been reviewed by the QS committee 28 September 2020 and the Safeguarding governor concurred.</p> <p>Resolved that the Safeguarding Policy was received and approved by the Board</p> | |
| 1.14 | <p>Board and committee membership</p> <p>At the Governance & Search meeting held 21 September 2020 the following was discussed and agreed.</p> <p>(i) Committee Membership – Chris Murray is to moves from Audit to Finance & Resources to ensure that there are two qualified accountants on the committee which the FEC recommended.</p> <p>(ii) Specialist Link Governor Role - Cyber Security - As the issue has now been resolved, IT including cyber security will be covered by internal audits and therefore discussed at Audit Committee with the inclusion on the risk register. Extensive research with other colleges has shown that this is not a</p> | |

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| | <p>link governor role as it is operational in nature, therefore there is no longer any requirement for this role.</p> <p>(iii) Co-opted Governors - are only brought onto committees for their specialist knowledge, they are not appointed to the Board. After due consideration of the skills sets required for each of the committees, the Clerk has been tasked to find someone with estates strategy expertise.</p> <p>Andrea Wood left meeting at 18.30</p> <p>Resolved that:</p> <p>(i) Board and Committee membership report was received by the Board</p> | |
| 1.15 | <p>Committee Reports/Minutes/Feedback:</p> <p>(i) GS minutes - 21 September 2020 – updated covered under item 1.14</p> <p>(ii) QS minutes – 28 September 2020 – the QS Chair said that there were no issues to highlight to the board as the had been referred to in the main part of the meeting.</p> <p>Resolved that the verbal Committee Reports/Minutes/Feedback were received by the Board</p> | |
| 1.16 | <p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Senior Post Holders Update</p> <p>Director of Finance - Chair advised the board that despite going through a recruitment agency and interviewing candidates, the successful applicant had at the last minute turned the offer down. It was decided that the college would go out to market later in the academic year for this post.</p> <p>Vice Principal – this position is to be reviewed later in the academic year, but the current incumbent had indicated a willingness to consider the role permanently.</p> <p>The meeting then transferred to the confidential item at 19.05</p> | |
| 1.17 | <p>Items to be taken forward to next Board meeting:</p> <p>1. Away Day – Strategic Plan</p> | |
| 1.18 | <p>Date and Time of Next Meetings:</p> <p>1) 7 December 2020 at 18.00</p> <p>2) 1 February 2021 at 18.00</p> <p>3) 24 March 2021 at 18.00</p> <p>4) 28 June 2021 at 18.00</p> | |
| | <p>Close of Meeting</p> <p>The meeting closed at 19.38</p> | |
| | <p>MINUTES of the meeting held on 21 October 2020 were agreed and accepted as a true and accurate record and signed by the Chair</p> <p>..... on</p> | |