



**WOKING COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**  
**Minutes of a meeting of the Board of Trustees of Woking College held on**  
**Wednesday 2 July 2025 at 6pm in the Conference Room W09**

**Present:**

Gary Botha

Erica Ehoru

Charlotte Eker (via telephone until item 5)

Helen Flower

Brett Freeman Principal

Rosh Sellahewa Vice Chair (from 18.07)

Tim Stokes Chair of the Board

**In Attendance:**

Laura Cook Assistant Principal Curriculum & Quality

Helena Clarke Assistant Principal Support for Learning & Wellbeing

Sarah Churchill Clerk to the Board

	Agenda Description	Action	When
1.	<p><b>Apologies for Absence &amp; Declarations of Interest</b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate.</p> <p>Apologies had been received from Tracy Hampton, Anne Middleton and Nawal Razal-Malik, and Katherine Duleavy</p> <p>No Trustee or member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) declared any pecuniary or other direct or indirect personal interest in any item on the agenda.</p>		
2.	<p><b>Introduction to the Board Meeting</b></p> <p>The Chair explained that the final meeting of the year represented an opportunity to reflect and to thank BFR and all the staff at college for what has been a good year. The Board would receive the Principal's report, the annual Safeguarding Report 2024/25 and would have the opportunity to comment on the final draft of the College Strategy paper.</p>		
3.	<p><b>Minutes of the Previous Meeting</b></p> <p>The Board received the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th May 2025. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record and approved for signature by the Chair via the 'marked as signed' facility on GovernorHub.</p>		
4.	<p><b>Matters arising</b></p>		

	<p>It was noted that the Strategic Plan had been updated to include a maximum student cohort figure discussed at the last meeting.</p> <p>TST was confident with the process that had been gone through to develop the plan and noted it read well at a strategic level.</p> <p>There were no further comments on the draft strategy and it was adopted by the Board.</p> <p>BFR suggested that the Chair, Vice Chair and Principal had a meeting mid-September to confirm how report back to Trustees on progress on the plan. <b>This was agreed as an action.</b></p> <p>Questions arising:</p> <p><i>When and how will the Strategic Plan be made public?</i></p> <p>The plan needs to be refined, and it will be published on the website in the Autumn Term. It was agreed that a glossy brochure or launch was not necessary.</p>	BFR/ TSO/ RSE	30.09.25
	<b>Principal's Report</b>		
5.	<p>The Principal presented his very comprehensive report which is held on Governor Hub for review.</p> <p>The key statistic for Trustees to note was retention at 96.6%. This was a tremendous figure which was in part due to pastoral care at the College.</p> <p>RSE arrived 18.07</p> <p>Questions arising were as follows:</p> <p><i>In light of this positive report, what will be the main focuses for next year?</i></p> <p>LCO responded that there will be three main areas of focus:</p> <p><b>Skills</b> – Ensuring Gatsby Benchmarks are met and that all students develop the skills they need to take their next steps into the future. This isn't just academic but will include things such as problem solving and emotionally literacy. The College believes students are developing these skills, but that staff need to be better at identifying and signposting to students how they are developing as an individual in all sorts of different ways.</p> <p><b>Excellence</b> – this year this scheme was expanded to have a fourth strand. From September there will be a fifth strand. It is for high achievers and those who want to learn more. The strands will be: Physical Life, STEM; Arts; Humanities and Social Science; and Apprenticeship. Each will have a different leader who will do group sessions on applications etc. The College is aware they are the only college with a Level 2 provision in Surrey, but they want to be comprehensive</p>		

	<p>which means celebrating success at all levels including celebrating high achievers.</p> <p><b>MIS</b> – A new system is being secured. It will have a yearlong implementation process and will involve training whole staff. This is exciting because it will have a huge positive impact on staff wellbeing as it will be easier to use and reduce workload. E.g. the exams team will no longer manually write on every single access arrangement as the new system will do this automatically. There will be a new head of MIS in place to manage this process.</p> <p><i>Who will be providing the MIS system?</i> The provider is UNITE and Cedar (currently use rems / with a portal, which they are not supporting well). It is the most widely used system for sixth form in the country, and it is well supported</p> <p><i>As part of the migration will historic data be moved across?</i> Yes, and this process will be carried out internally. This process has started to populate the spreadsheet. This is a huge undertaking but an essential first step. It is hoped a project planning meeting, between the new MIS manager and the provider, will take place soon to help manage this process between</p> <p><i>What are the consequences if we get this wrong?</i> The system won't work. However, nothing gets 'lost' as, during the transition period, the information will stay on the existing portal also. The initial stage is setting up a test environment and seeing what works and doesn't work. Systems will also be compared. At the end of the year, the proper migration will take place and then move to 'go live'.</p> <p>BFR add that there is always risk, but this was considered low risk due to long the long transition period. Other colleges have done this in 3 months. The hardest bit will be getting staff in the room to be trained at the same time.</p>		
	<b>TEACHING, LEARNING &amp; ASSESSMENT</b>		
6.	<p>The Board received and noted a report on Curriculum Intent and Curriculum Changes for 2025/26</p> <p>LCO Highlighted that the curriculum intent remains the same. The only changes were those imposed regarding Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs). It is only the qualifications in IT, Computing, Childcare, Engineering, Health and Social Care and Applied Science that are impacted (They are equivalent to one A level) The results of the Department for Education's Curriculum Review for diploma qualification were not yet known.</p> <p>The new AAQs allow for nested qualifications which means students can achieve a certificate if they don't go on to the next year.</p>		

	<p>In addition, two pathways would open for A level further maths, one for pure maths and one for mechanics, which may be more appropriate for those students who want to go into engineering</p> <p>Questions arising:</p> <p><i>Do these changes result in extra workload for teaching staff?</i></p> <p>It does result in additional work as all the courses need schemes of work and resources put together. Some are like courses already on offer so will require less effort. The biggest difference is the for engineering which now includes a practical project. This means one of the maths teachers has been coopted to deliver that part of the course as he has industry experience.</p>		
	<b>Finance &amp; Audit Committee</b>		
7.	<p>The minutes of the meeting had been uploaded to the folder prior to the meeting for Trustee's information. In addition, the Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee provided an oral summary of the key issues discussed by the Committee at its meeting on 18 June 2025 as follows:</p> <p>They were joined by the internal auditors who talked through a 3-year plan. There was a discussion about the sequence of the audit and that the contract would go for tender next year.</p> <p>The auditors offer training in cyber security. This is something the Finance and Audit Committee would consider and recommend to the Board if they felt it appropriate.</p> <p>Discussions on the Risk Register were deferred to the Autumn to allow the register to reflect the new strategy, but the broad areas were discussed and agreed as still relevant.</p> <p>There was a discussion about the possibility of using the charitable status of the College to apply for financial support from Trusts and Funds. <b>ACTION: TST will bring a proposal for this in the Autumn Term.</b></p> <p>The management accounts are predicting a surplus at the end of year which is positive. It represents £250k turnaround. This enabled the much-needed improvements to the outdoor social spaces to take place during the summer break.</p> <p>The Budget and forecast were discussed, noting the biggest sensitives were student numbers and staff pay. Student applications were very positive and higher than last year, but final numbers would only be known on enrolment. A small amount of additional funding was received, but this has been earmarked for repairs to the flat roof as these were essential and the CIF bid was not successful. This means that the bottom line has not changed.</p>	TST	03.10.25

	<p>It was reported that improved timetabling meant the planned for portacabins were not needed for the start of the Autumn term.</p> <p>BFR added that he had met with an architect to think about what the College might do regarding designing a new block. This is to create an 'oven ready' plan to ensure if the government releases funding the College can act on it immediately.</p> <p>The Committee discussed Catering and were assured the College were getting value for money from the current supplier. There will be a tender process in the Autumn, and the current supplier would be invited to take part.</p> <p>External audit was discussed and the committee sought assurance that the College were getting value for money.</p> <p>The new H&amp;S Annual Report was submitted and some recommendations for improvement were made.</p> <p>The Chair of the Committee advised the Board that the Committee had also considered the proposal to form a Remuneration Committee and recommend the TOR for approval.</p> <p>TST reported that the Academy Trust Handbook had just been updated to say that a Remuneration Committee was 'now a must' and that an Executive Pay Policy was necessary. Due to the very recent update to the AHT the TOR had only just been finalised and would be updated to Governor Hub for approval. The Committee needs at least 3 members and AHE has put her name forward. There were no other nominations.</p> <p>Questions arising</p> <p><i>Is there anything the college did to turnaround the financial situation as the original forecast was for a much worse year end?</i></p> <p>The College was prudent when setting the original budget and have made savings in year such as saving wages when staff leave. The Budget had also assumed that all teachers would be at the optimum of their pay scale, which, in reality, was not the situation with new staff joining at different scales. There was some additional in year growth funding.</p> <p>The Board <b>resolved</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. To receive the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 April and 18 June 2025;</b></li> <li><b>2. To approve the April 2025 Management Accounts</b></li> <li><b>3. To approve the Budget for 2025/26 and Two-Year Finance forecast</b></li> <li><b>4. To approval external audit plan and auditors' letter of engagement</b></li> <li><b>5. To postpone approval of Risk Register to the Autumn Term</b></li> <li><b>6. To appoint Tim Stokes, Rosh Sellaheewa and Anne Middleton to the Remuneration Committee</b></li> </ol>		
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	<b>7. To approve the Remuneration Committee Terms of Reference via Governor Hub</b>		
	<b>Safeguarding and Prevent</b>		
8.	<p><b>Annual Report on Safeguarding</b></p> <p>The Annual Report on Safeguarding from the Designated Safeguarding Lead was received. HCL highlighted the following from her written report.</p> <p>Safeguarding and Prevent Training will be delivered online by TES development going forward. Trustees will also be expected to undertake this Training. HCL will also do an update based on KSCIE 2025 for all staff and Trustees at the start of term.</p> <p>There has been a significant increase in high level mental health concerns. 20 of these were for suicide ideation with a number making an attempt on their life during their time in college.</p> <p>A rigorous risk assessment process is in place for students who had made a suicide attempt or if they have been sent to hospital with concerns. In this circumstance a risk assessment meeting with parents, and other relevant people will be triggered. This is very challenging, and the Safeguarding Lead must weigh up the suicide risk of a pupil being in college versus the educational risk of them not being in college.</p> <p>Trustees noted that those students returning to college has improved. HCL explained that mentoring has helped support students who, during enrolment, were identified as having poor attendance in the past due to mental health issues. In the early stages of their return, this could include meeting the student at reception, taking them to lessons and liaising with them regularly.</p> <p>Attention was drawn to Surrey County Council's MSHT Team as this is the first year the college has been able to access this support. The team includes trainee clinical psychologists who deliver CBT-based intervention to students for mild to moderate anxiety/phobias. Staff can refer them, or they can self-refer. HCL meets with them regularly to check that the right students are receiving support. They have also delivered a parent/carer workshop and a resilience workshop with high achievers and have delivered a session to the anxiety group.</p> <p>Suicide prevention training was delivered to staff on the last INSET. In addition a staff member has undertaken mental health training and will be delivering this learning across a wider group of people. The 3-year action plan will involve every member staff having training.</p> <p>Questions Arising:</p> <p><i>Behaviour is amazing and low levels of poor behaviour are recorded. How does this compare to other Colleges?</i></p>		

	<p>There aren't national statistics for comparison, however HCL will ask other colleges numbers of suspension to see if they are similar. <b>Action: HCL to ask other Colleges for their suspension figures to report back to the Board in the Autumn Term.</b></p> <p>BFR explained that the College is appropriately intolerant of poor behaviour at the start and this means some people leave early on. Staff are also out and about building a respectful relationship with students from day one.</p> <p>The main behaviour concern is around online offence language alerts which are flagged by Smoothwall (the monitoring and filtering software). If the language is discriminatory, it results in a student suspension. The student re-integration meeting makes it clear that as adults in the workplace, they could be sacked and risk throwing away their life chances through this type of behaviour. Pupils are normally responsive to this discussion.</p> <p><i>What is the split between those who arrive with concerns and those for whom college picks up a concern?</i></p> <p>HCL didn't know the exact split but explained that better systems have been developed to identify concerns before pupils arrive. This information is logged by the admissions staff before they arrive. Those students will see key people as part of enrolment process. This year HCL felt that very few people were a surprise to the College.</p> <p>TST commented that everyone in the pastoral team did great work and thanked them for this.</p> <p><b>Prevent Strategy</b></p> <p>There were not many changes to the strategy. This year no students have been referred under the Prevent scheme, although they have in previous years. When involved, Prevent was brilliant. The focus is on emphasising that the student is not in trouble and that the intervention is to ensure you do get into a place of trouble.</p> <p><b>Student Code of Conduct</b> (College's Behaviour Principles written statement)</p> <p>There were no significant changes. The AI section was reviewed, and there was an update to strengthen the wording around bullying.</p> <p>Questions arising:</p> <p><i>The Code of Conduct is quite wordy, do students read it before signing?</i></p> <p>Tutors go through the Code of Conduct with pupils on the 'Welcome to Woking' Day. BFR also gives a shortened version in the first assembly or the year which is summarised as 'work hard, be kind, wear a lanyard'</p> <p>The Board <b>resolved to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Receive the Annual Report of Safeguarding</b></li> <li>• <b>Approve the Prevent Policy</b></li> </ul>	HCL	03.12.25
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Approve the Student Code of Conduct</b></li> </ul>		
	<b>Policy Approvals</b>		
9.	<b>Policy Review Schedule</b> On recommendation from the Finance Committee the Board <b>resolved to:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Approve the Health and Safety Policy &amp; Annual Report</b></li> <li>2. <b>Approve the First Aid at Work Policy</b></li> </ol>		
	<b>Governance</b>		
10.	<b>Annual Conversation</b> TST reflected that the Board had been refreshed and had recruited new members. BFR remarked best board the College has ever had.  A Succession Working Party will take place in September which will work well with a new parent cohort providing potential parent governors if recommended by the Succession Working Party.  The Link Trustee Scheme was also launched at the beginning of this academic year. This model was strong and included Trustees Day with a suggestion of one or two visits each year by Trustees to their 'adopted' areas. <b>Action: Next year, the Clerk will put together some light touch reminders to help promote engagement in the scheme for 2025/26.</b>  Nominations were also sought for someone to link with MIS Data and IT Digital Strategy, especially as the MIS system was a priority for next year. It was agreed that TST will create a post on GovernorHub to request nominations.  <b>Declaration</b> Trustees were reminded to completion the Trustee Declaration of Gifts & Hospitality for 2024/25 (via Governor Hub)  <b>Election</b> An election for the Chair & Vice Chair of the Board for 2025/26 was carried out.  The Board <b>resolved to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Seek an MIS and IT Digital Strategy Link Trustee</b></li> <li>• <b>Appoint Tim Stokes as Chair of the Board for 2025/26</b></li> <li>• <b>Appoint Rosh Sellaweha Vice Chair of the Board for 2025/26</b></li> </ul>	SCH	Ongoing
10.	<b>Any Other Business</b>  <b>Sustainability Plan</b> This is the first report, and this document is a summary of the progress made this year and highlights the priorities for next year. It is proactive. The positives are LED lights, solar panels and double/triple glazed windows. The negative is the poorly insulated, leaky flat roof. The new Estates Manager is focussed on sustainability and will push this forward.		



	<p>Questions Arising</p> <p><i>Do we get paid for the energy we put back into the grid?</i> No, and there is a lack of information on how much the solar panels are saving, but all the energy is used by the College. They are functioning and therefore they must be doing their job and saving some money.</p> <p><i>How old are the solar panels?</i> There are various ages of panels, some are 12 years old and others are more recent.</p> <p><b>Record of Thanks</b> TST thanked staff for all the work they had done and wished them a great summer. BFR also thanks Trustees for their contribution over the year.</p>		
11.	<p><b>Date &amp; Time of Next Meeting</b> It was agreed that Trustees would meet on Wednesday 10 September at 4.15pm for a Trustee Conference with Heads of Department followed by a Board meeting.</p>		