

Minutes

CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE

Date:	26 June 2023	Time:	4.00 PM
Chairperson:	Professor Gavin Brooks	Location:	UCN 284

Members	Name	Present	Role
	Prof Gavin Brooks (GB)	*	External Member & Chair
	Iain Wolloff (IW)	*	Principal & Chief Executive
	Sally Osmond (SO)	*	External Member
	Shelly Van Meter (SVM)	*	Staff Representative
	Sam Dibas (SD)	*	External Member (Teams)
Apologies:	Cathy Wright (CW)		Director of HR and Support Services
	Tim Major (TM)		External Member & Vice Chair
	Lauryn Bailey (LB)		Student Representative
In Attendance:	Dr Jo Houghton (JH)	*	Director of Business & Partnerships
	Lee Hunt (LH)	*	Vice Principal
	Rachel Southall	*	Executive Assistant and note taker
	Peter Lambert		
Quorum:	Three required		Meeting Quorate

AGENDA ITEMS

Item No.		Reports
1.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE No Apologies were received at the time of the meeting.</p> <p>RS checked RL inbox after the meeting. There were apologies from TM, LB, CW.</p> <p>GB thanked RS for taking the minutes today. GB confirmed the meeting is being recorded and once the minutes have been prepared and checked, the recording will be deleted.</p>	Verbal
2.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS No declarations of interest were made.</p>	Verbal
3.	<p>Minutes of the previous meeting</p> <p>3.1 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on the 17 April 2023 The Board unanimously approved the minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2023.</p> <p>3.2 To approve the confidential minutes of the meeting held on the 17 April 2023. The Board unanimously approved the minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2023.</p>	<p>Page 3</p> <p>Page 12</p>
4.	<p>Matters Arising from the minutes To consider matters arising from the minutes of 17th April 2023</p>	Page 17

	<p>GB noted the following actions from the action tracker:</p> <p>No. 26 Add skills responsibility to the C&Q TORs: GB confirmed the wording to be included: <i>To have oversight of the skills agenda for the College, including: to ensure that all curricula address and map onto the national, regional and local skills needs as well as the priorities identified in the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP); and to review and approve the Annual Accountability Statement.</i> The Board confirmed they were happy with the wording and therefore will be included. Action: IW will ask Marketing to upload the correct version to the College website.</p> <p>No.27 Amend the Complaints Policy to emphasise C&Q Committee oversight Needs reviewing. To do.</p> <p>No. 28 Send the minutes for GB for signature – GB has approved the minutes but not received them via electronic signature system. To do.</p> <p>No.29 Rephrase safeguarding (action3) to online safety – Done and closed.</p> <p>No.30 To Follow up with Peridot and Nurole about identifying new governors – in progress.</p> <p>GB asked if there was an update on recruiting a new Governance Professional? SO replied we have had one applicant but talking to another potential candidate. Hope to recruit in August.</p>	
5.	SAFEGUARDING *	
5.1	Safeguarding Position Statement <u>See confidential minutes</u>	
6.	QUALITY	
6.1	Inspection Report * <u>See confidential minutes</u>	
6.2	<p>Single Improvement Plan</p> <p>The Committee reviewed the progress in preparing and undertaking the actions outlined in the SIP. IW reported that although the Ofsted inspection report is yet to be finalised and published, the College has started the development of the Single Improvement Plan (SIP). The first draft identifies initial actions to be taken in response to the eight recommendations in the current version of the Ofsted report. If the College is in formal intervention, following the completion of the inspection process, then actions planned in response to the recommendations of the FE Commissioner team will also be added to the SIP. In addition, other actions planned by the College to enhance quality may also be added to the plan. The first draft of the SIP was provided to the FEC team on their recent visit, who commented that it was a useful initial plan of immediate actions and that it should continue to be developed with longer term actions. The FEC will provide further guidance and support with the development of the plan.</p> <p>Potential improvements: Good progress with immediate actions related to the current inspection recommendations</p>	Paper, Page 28

	<p>Issues of concern: The development of a broader, longer-term plan is needed over the next few months.</p> <p>IW confirmed the SIP is ongoing and will require further work once we have received FEC information and the final report from Ofsted.</p> <p>Action: Revised version will be available for the Update to the Board Meeting in October.</p>	
<p>6.3</p>	<p>Quality Improvement Plan</p> <p>The Committee received an overview on progress with actions in the College QIP. Including potential improvements. LH gave an update on matters to bring to member's attention.</p> <p>Potential improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas moving through the BRAG ratings. • Foundation Learning establishment proposal which is currently under review by SLT as there is a financial implication to the cash flow. • Re modelling of the delivery for English and mathematics currently with SLT for final approval. • Developments in enrichment activity in study programmes – moving forward. • Work related activity and experience strategy implementation. <p>Issues of concern:</p> <p>Foundation Learning Support Staffing Maths and English engagement</p> <p>LH went into more detail about the Foundation Learning establishment proposal. Business case went to SLT around contracts and salaries which is still under review. LH proposes a fixed establishment proposal with a more robust panel process to check we can meet the need of students. It will mean a reduction in student numbers from 67 to 54. We are proposing a work force of 70 staff in Foundation Learning on a permanent contract; they are known to us, reliable, committed to the College, so we start the new academic year with no vacancies. This is the main piece of work being done on this QIP action. IW confirmed the struggle is a budget one. Will be working through revenue issues in the next few days.</p> <p>SO asked what is the strategy if we were to take on 80 students? LH replied it is in the plan. Part of the new staffing of 70 will include 5 trainee staff. Once they are fully trained, we can bring in additional learners who are on the waiting list. The current model is we take on the students and then find the staff which is problematic.</p> <p>LH highlighted a huge piece of work around Maths and English engagement is ongoing post Inspection. The challenge we face is that we have a workforce not understanding the position. In collaboration with colleagues an effective redesign of curriculum delivery has been mapped out going forward. IW is meeting with M&E staff this week to explain this, and the following week LH is talking with Career Academy team. IW reiterated we have a more robust plan moving</p>	<p>Page 41</p>

	<p>forward how to deal with it. GB suggests the approach with M&E also maps onto the area around Skills.</p>	
<p>6.4</p>	<p>Quality Data – in year</p> <p>LH asked the Committee to receive an update on students’ attendance and retention.</p> <p>LH highlighted potential improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance is in line with the last two years with some lower-level groups needing further support <p>Matters remaining unchanged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Football Academy is above 90% attendance. • Staffing levels within Technology have improved and attendance is improving. • FE overall Retention is on track for +90% <p>Issues of concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students’ non-attendance at Maths and English exams impact on the overall retention (students are not leaving the college but have multiple learning aims and if they do not attend their exams could be withdrawn). <p>GB commented that the success of our T Level courses would be a strong message in our communication plans.</p> <p>GB commented that although the growth in the Football Academy is a good thing, the FE commissioner would like to see more growth in other areas and football not to dominate our provision.</p>	<p>Page 60</p>
<p>6.5</p>	<p>UCN Termly Report</p> <p>To receive an update on the UCN provision</p> <p>Committee were informed of the increase in forecast student numbers due to the high number of Access and Sport L4 applications. Graphic design has proved popular and is expected to exceed forecast numbers and Engineering target student numbers for the next academic year are likely to be in excess of predicted numbers. Achievement is moderated as good or outstanding at all levels of Higher Education.</p> <p>Committee were advised of the low withdrawal numbers this is due to the small number of students on all courses (approx. 1 or 2) and with small cohort numbers it skews the figures to reflect that withdrawal is more significant than actual. However, the Access Nursing and Midwifery is of concern as they have had seven withdrawals. Attendance currently stands at 91.8%.</p> <p>Student/Learner voice has been positive and curriculum development approval has been granted to deliver HNC Community Coaching for England and HND Sport and Exercise Science which will serve as progression routes for Precision Football Academy students. Two L4 Robotic units are being developed for the new academic year. Skills Bootcamps in Life Sciences, Green Skills and Engineering have started and an expression of interest has been submitted for the Local Skills Improvement Funding to deliver an Introduction to Machine Learning and AI short course to start in October 2023 to meet one of the skills needs identified in the TVBL SIP for 2023-24.</p>	<p>Page 64</p>

	<p>Committee were informed of areas that would benefit from further improvement are the effective promotion of UCN courses and recruitment of learners on programmes other than engineering and to ensure retention is higher on some programmes.</p>	
<p>6.6</p>	<p>Apprenticeship Termly Report To receive an update on apprenticeship provision</p> <p>The Committee were informed that recruitment is positive and targets likely to be achieved but numbers are forecast to be lower in 2023/24 but this is reflective of national trends. It was explained that the timing of end point assessments is the cause of a number of learners appearing out of funding, but end point assessments are booked. Student voice will be obtained in Term 3 and employer voice picked up by Ofsted with regard to the Skills Agenda and DoBP is being addressed by Heads of Department. The College will be trying to incorporate employer voice more fully.</p> <p>The Committee were advised that curriculum development now includes Machinist Apprenticeship Standards, BEMS Apprenticeship and Civil Engineering and Digital Marketing Apprenticeships all to start in the next academic year. Achievement is expected to be 16.5% above national average for Standards and 8.9% above national average for Frameworks. The areas of English and Maths for Apprentices does need improvement. Apprenticeship applications are up against forecast targets with the exception of Business, Accounting, Team Leader and Operations/Departmental Manager and this is being addressed by the Apprenticeship Team. Overall forecast achievement for apprenticeship frameworks has improved 9.4% from 2021-22 and there are no learners continuing on intermediate or Higher frameworks for 2022-23. Concern was expressed on apprentices leaving their job roles without notice which will affect retention in future years. An Apprenticeship Impact Coach has been appointed and has developed an action plan with curriculum area to improve tracking. The delivery model of functional skills English and Maths needs to be adapted to meet employer and learner needs. Attendance currently stands at 91%. Student voice revealed concerns raised by Technology learners around the organisation of their course which are being addressed. Apprentices raised concerns around their Development Coach and this is being worked on to improve the quality. Employer voice expressed concerns on the design of the curriculum across some areas and Heads of Departments and Programme Leaders are reviewing how their areas are meeting local skills needs and are working with employers to improve these areas.</p> <p>The Committee asked if the apprenticeship targets are achievable and were informed that the College is working hard on employer engagement and getting more from the budget. The College feels it will exceed the target and confident that the employers it has on board will make a significant impact on this. Marketing and recruitment are areas the College have worked on but only have one person bringing the business in.</p> <p>The Committee questioned if the competition of T Levels and HQT's often employers get confused and have to be providing similar but competing experiences. The College explained it is promoting these consistently, and guide the student in the whole route, and get employers on board but would like to get this developed onto a bigger scale but it is hugely time consuming. Job Fairs are</p>	<p>Page 69</p>

	<p>part and parcel of promoting this and the College agreed citing EXPO as being very successful for the College. Committee advised it would be good if the College could increase the funnel in term of resource and ensure that the employers they are talking to have not had conversations with other colleges so as to ensure there is no over lap. College explained their plans for growth in this area and the focus on quality and how they are looking for resource on this. Committee recommended a business plan and talking with all those on the ground who are delivering and share what everyone needs and what the plan is, having open discussions on what everyone is bidding for. The same should be applied for those on a functional level as well and this could be implemented in an Away Day and review the planning and implementation of each area both in academic and support so the service can be made so much stronger.</p>	
6.7	<p>Subcontracting Termly Report To receive an update on subcontracted provision</p> <p>As part of the College Strategic Plan for 2023-24 the decision has been made not to subcontract in 2023-24 but to use the save resource to increase internal delivery to generate a higher education. There is low recruitment of 16-18 year age group for the Adviza Prince’s Trust Programmes and WBTC are only meeting 50% of their contract value due to low recruitment of learners. The end of this academic year result should be strong and positive. The Committee sought for a better understanding of the reasons for not continuing and the College explained the bureaucracy around this and how it could be done internally.</p>	Page 73
7.	CURRICULUM	
7.1	<p>Curriculum Development & Planned Courses 23-24 To consider a report on current and planned developments in the curriculum offer.</p> <p>Committee were informed that areas being worked on for improvement include increasing student applications, low level digital skills development (Career Academy), growth in part time provision linked to the Skills and Levelling up agenda, AEB re-profiling which is also linked to the skills agenda and the postponement of the school links offer. T Level implementation will remain an area of focus and the development of the foundation learning course offer. The sport provision will continue to be expanded.</p> <p>The whole College curriculum will focus on the design and development of pathways that support learners onto their chosen career typically lasting around 3-7 years. The Adult Education Budget received an additional £120k for the next academic year and will mean a higher level delivery for 19 plus learners. WBC will now lead the West Berkshire Council contract for local leisure courses. On reviewing the school link programme it was identified that the current risk linked to safeguarding was too high so the programme has been postponed for 2023-24. The Committee were asked to note that part of the central government reforms links to the delivery of A levels alongside vocational qualifications and there are significant changes planned to this offer for 2024/23. The College curriculum portfolio is not impact, but other local schools may be and this will create opportunity for the college. The online A level offer is being developed and may enhance the opportunities available for the college. The College outlined the upskilling of students without Microsoft office skills and how it would be good to get a qualification in place for this. Carpentry and Automotive courses have increased in applications. Some of the sub-contracting savings will be used to implement courses. Future T Level subjects will afford greater depth and</p>	Page 76

	diversity and will include catering and there will be a big piece of work on this along with an element of matched funding. Committee asked about the sector contribution of 42% and if this was an average and College explained it was distorted by a number of things so was difficult to confirm.	
7.2	<p>Student Applications</p> <p>To receive an update on Student Applications for 2023-24</p> <p>Committee noted the lower figure for part time applications and were advised this is due to the processing of applications for the ESOL courses. The candidates have to take an assessment prior to making their formal applications and there are 151 enquires due to be assessed in June, so it does mean the figures will be up on last year. Apprenticeship applications are up against forecast targets in most areas apart from Business and Accounting. A small increase was noted in the 16-19 applications. Committee were very pleased with the growth forecast and stretched targets and noted in some areas applications are almost double to 2020.</p>	Page 90
8.	SKILLS	
8.1	<p>Accountability Statement</p> <p>To consider recommending approval of the Accountability Statement to the Board</p> <p>From 28th June 2022 governing bodies within further education have a duty under the Skills and Post 16 Education Act 2022 to review provision in relation to local needs. The Local Skills Improvement Plans were introduced and the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce is the employer representative body summarising employer skills needs in the local area based on labour market information and feedback from local businesses. The Board will need to sign this off but Committee were informed the report provided will not officially be published until 23 June 2023 and final versions of the report must be agreed, signed and submitted to the Dfe by 31 July 2023.</p> <p>Committee noted the report highlighted the skills offer of the College and how it is contracted to deliver 3% of the Community Learning provision for West Berkshire Council. The College has retained the Matrix Standard for IAG in 2022 and Investors in People (Silver) in January 202 and has also worked with the Careers and Enterprise Company to audit the College career activities in line with the Gatsby benchmarking. The College has worked closely with Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce (TVCC) for many years and collaborates with TVCC to run a range of employer events. In addition, the College works with a range of employers who help to steer the curriculum to meet local skills needs and have helped design the curriculum offer, provide talks, placements and progression opportunities to students and support with funding opportunities. The college also collaborates with several stakeholders linked to the community needs. The national skills priorities are construction, manufacturing, digital and technology, health and social care, haulage and logistics, engineering, science and maths. There is also a need to offer more essential skills up to Level 2 in English and Maths and Level 1 Digital.</p> <p>Committee asked what are the changes following on from the last meeting and the College advised it outlined what was required within the local community and how the college was meeting those requirements. It outlines the funding that can be used in areas the college needs to strengthen and bring different areas in that are not being run at the moment. The thinking is that it may change from</p>	Page 92

	September because the chasing of funding and need will need to be balanced. The College only had one meeting before the Ofsted visit and will now be actively working on the expansion and work growth. Committee agreed report to be the final version and forward to the Corporation for approval and forwarding to the DfE.	
9.	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	
	There was none.	
Meeting Closed at 17.57 Hours Next Meeting Date: Monday 20th November at 4pm		

***Confidential minutes**

Signed:



Gavin Brooks (Nov 23, 2023, 3:51pm)

(Chair) Date:

23 Nov 2023



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