

Minutes of the Learning & Quality Committee Meeting held at 4.30pm on 12 March 2025

Present: Huw Chapman, Tim Jackson (temporary chair), Mariia-Olena Hodell (student governor), Shirley Nellthorpe & Mike Stoneman

Apologies: Prue Amner, Liz Byrne & Lyndsey Mason (staff governor)

In attendance:

Chris Bilton	Director of Data Services (Mins 159 – 163)
Mickiela Blake	Director of People & Organisational Development
Tess Cole	VP Curriculum and Quality (Mins 159 – 164)
Matt Phelps	Deputy CEO and Deputy Principal
Emily Pountney	DP Curriculum and Quality
Paola Schweitzer	Director of Governance
Sarah Warren	VP Curriculum and Quality
Katy Quinn	Principal & CEO

Minutes

159 Attendance and Participation

Prue Amner, Liz Byrne & Lyndsey Mason (staff governor) sent their apologies. Tim chaired the meeting in Prue's absence.

160 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

161 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 03 December 2024 were **Agreed** as a correct record.

162 Matters Arising

Minute 152: Safeguarding & Prevent Annual Report: Mike would complete his safeguarding training as a matter of urgency. All other matters arising were **Noted**.

163 Learning & Quality Dashboard (paper 737/25/L&Q)

The dashboard set out the current best case position for education and training, apprenticeships and attendance data for 2024/25 as compared to previous years. The dashboard had been RAG rated following governor feedback. Key points were:

- Attendance and retention had improved year on year in most areas of provision but required further improvement.
- Matt said he was confident end of year achievement targets would be achieved
- Tutorial attendance had significantly improved year on year but further improvement was required.

- 16-19 applications were up c700 compared to the same point in 2024 (likely to convert to 425 additional enrolled students). Modelling was underway to plan for this growth.
- Apprenticeships had improved year on year but remained a risk.

There was a discussion about how the College was preparing for the potential large influx of students, particularly as there was unlikely to be any in year funding. Katy noted that whilst the College's financial position had stabilised, it didn't have sufficient cash reserves to manage significant growth of an additional 425 students and it was therefore possible student numbers might need to be capped. Further information would be brought to Corporation. Governors welcomed the improvement in quality at the College in recent years and did not wish to see a diminution of quality due to a substantial increase in learners. Matt commented that the College had significantly improved the quality of education across every provision type (albeit more slowly with Apprenticeships) over the last three years whilst merging two colleges and simultaneously delivering a high level of growth in student numbers which was acknowledged by governors. Governors discussed tutorials, noting that there had been significant improvements, but further work was required to deliver relevant content in an engaging way. In response to a question, Mariia-Olena Hodell (student governor) commented that some students viewed tutorials as unnecessary. Having reviewed the L&Q dashboard, including the risks and mitigating actions, governors **Noted** the progress being made and the areas for improvement.

Governors reviewed the FE Provider Dashboard, a DfE tool being piloted collating previously published data across a variety of measures in a single dashboard. It enabled performance benchmarking with other colleges and formed part of a college's annual strategic conversation with DfE. It was noted that several of the fields for COPC showed amber and red against other colleges, indicating performance in some areas lower than the average. Katy urged caution with some of the data and Matt noted that the measures were likely to evolve, particularly those drawing on other data sources such as HMRC, e.g. the Skills measure. Governors **Noted** the FE Provider Dashboard and the lower performance than the comparison average and noted that more would be reported in due course, given the intention of DfE in future years would be to use this tool to assist their measurement of college accountability.

Chris left the meeting

164 External Stakeholder Voice Update (paper 743/25/L&Q)

This report provided an update of progress against how the College was working to improve its skills contribution as graded by Ofsted from *Reasonable* to *Strong*. Ofsted found that the College carried out excellent work with stakeholders in many curriculum areas, but this was not consistent across all provision and that whilst curriculum changes were made following stakeholder feedback, this was not always communicated back to stakeholders. The first Community Dinner with stakeholders in November was a great success and work was underway to follow up stakeholder pledges. Ongoing work included training Assistant Principals (APs) to identify and work with stakeholders, revising the EAB model and working in non-curriculum areas. It was reported that there had been a visit to Weston College by the Principal, Deputy Principal and other managers to examine how that college were working with employers, especially with a focus on apprenticeship, and the points of learning from that visit would be used at COPC. Having reviewed the progress being made to ensure a *Strong* contribution to skills, Governors **Noted** the external stakeholder voice update,

and the efforts being made by the College in further networking, training and study of effective practice at other colleges to improve this further at COPC.

Tess left the meeting

165 Impact of Staff Development (paper 738/25/L&Q)

The intent of staff development was reported as being to create an organisational culture rooted in the College's professional values enabling the College to attract, develop and retain great people as well as creating a highly skilled, engaged and motivated workforce. The report provided an overview of staff development and its impact. The four themes for 2023/24 were: Grow Your Own strategy, aligning Professional Development Days (PDD) with College wide themes, developing the College Management Team and launching Space to Innovate programme. These were reported as having had a positive impact and were being continued in 2024/25 with a different focus. In response to a question, Emily confirmed she was pleased with current approach as it was clear, cohesive and differentiated by campus. Mike welcomed the Grow Your Own initiative, noting the challenge in schools of retaining Teaching & Learning Assistants. Huw agreed, believing it would reduce staff turnover. Katy stated that the College was developing a benchmark for digital skills to provide a measure for upskilling. Emily would identify key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the impact of staff development and these would be reported annually to the Committee in the autumn term. Having assured themselves of the staff development priorities being undertaken and the contribution being made to improve the learning experience of students and apprentices, governors **Noted** the positive impact of staff development in 2023/24 and welcomed the re-focus of the continued plan for 2024/25.

166 Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EED&I) Targets Update (paper 739/25/L&Q)

Matt presented the report which he commented as showing that whilst the College had made some progress against its EED&I targets, progress was negatively impacted by focusing on too many objectives. The report therefore provided the rationale for a narrower, more staged approach to align with the Association of Colleges (AoC) Charter and the new Ofsted framework. Matt reported that this new approach would be brought to the Committee's next meeting, alongside KPIs and data. Huw welcomed matching targets to local demographics and suggested data was also matched to industry trends. In response to a question, Katy clarified that whilst Jo Shankland (VP Student Engagement) and Mickiela (Director People & Organisational Development) were the senior leads, EED&I data was owned by the Senior Management Team. Having assured themselves of the activity taking place, in particular ongoing and future actions, governors **Noted** the EED&I targets update and the plan for a narrower, more staged approach to align with the AoC Charter and the new Ofsted framework.

167 Quality of Education Update (paper 740/25/L&Q)

The extensive quality of education report provided an update on apprenticeships, external quality activities, learner surveys and feedback and teaching and learning. Matt reported that whilst the pace of apprenticeship improvement had quickened, it was still too slow in some areas and this presented a compliance risk. The target was to complete all outstanding progress reviews by the Easter break, in advance of a potential PFA audit. Governors asked how this would be achieved and Matt confirmed changes had been made to the method of review and additional resources had been allocated. Tracking of knowledge, skills and behaviours (KSBs) had improved but was still not sufficiently strong. There was a brief discussion around the potentially positive

impact of the recent relaxation in functional skills compliance requirements for 19+ apprentices. In response to a question, Sarah confirmed that elements of Century Tech (an AI teaching and learning package for maths and English) were embedded in the curriculum for certain groups of learners. As would be explored later at the meeting, student voice was strong and improving with one area requiring further work: knowledge of progress particularly amongst full time students. The College recently held its first Festival of Innovation with a range of CPD sessions delivered internally and by external guests. It was an engaging day and evidence of progress would be brought to the Committee in the autumn term. Finally with regards to the review of teaching and learning, Sarah reported that the quality of teaching at North Harbour was very good in many areas and she was confident that positive change was underway, not least because for the first time in three years, the team was only one member of staff away from being fully staffed. Having reviewed the quality of education update, governors **Noted** that (a) there were evident improvements to the learning experience of apprentices learners, though this was inconsistent and subject of further actions and (b) that the efforts to improve the learning experience for the far larger numbers of other learners (i.e. Education and Training provision) was something the Committee and the board could take assurance was working effectively.

168 Quality Improvement Plan – Term 1 Update (paper 741/25/L&Q)

The quality improvement plan term 1 update reported that reasonable progress had been made in improving the key areas for development thereby ensuring all students and apprentices benefitted from a consistent and good learner experience. Areas going well included progress in retention and achievement rates, particularly in GCSE maths and apprenticeships and use of digital tools. Work in progress included apprentices (skills scans usage, progress reviews and OOFs) and HE (planning and development of agreed curriculum). Matt noted that the report presented a consistent story and triangulated with the Committee's other papers. There was a discussion about work experience, with Matt stating that the College had invested in the team and now all students had the opportunity to undertake work experience. Mariia-Olena (student governor) was asked about her work experience and commented that whilst she had undertaken work experience and found it useful, it was self-sourced. She had not heard much about the opportunities provided by the College. Katy clarified that the College was slowing down its approach to the growth of HE, given it had tried to do too much, too soon within the context of other improvements required across the College since merger. The HE curriculum development timeline had therefore been revisited to enable sufficient time for university approval and student recruitment. Governors **Noted** the steps and impact of actions taken during the first term of 2024/25 to improve students' and apprentices' learning experience, concluding that reasonable progress had been made.

169 Student Voice Update (paper 742/25/L&Q)

This report provided an update on student voice activities across the College including findings from the 2024/25 student experience survey, feedback from teaching, learning and assessment activities and details on student representation and student union functions. There were discussions about various elements of the report:

- Kirsty clarified that core questions would remain in 2025/26 student surveys enabling the comparison of data across years
- Shirley noted that only 85% of students reported feeling safe in College and asked if that was enough. Kirsty responded that students who reported feeling

unsafe were largely from the LGBTQ community and work had been carried out with these students to address their concerns.

- Enrichment activities included social activities, employability skills, board games etc and aimed to create a college community. Enrichment was being reframed to raise its profile.
- Katy advised that the College had just received Matrix accreditation for Careers & IAG. The report would be circulated to governors and considered at the Committee's autumn meeting.

In response to a question, Kirsty explained that the College's SU constitution was based on the existing model and templates and sought to provide clarity around its roles and responsibilities. Paola clarified that the SU was a distinct entity, and that the constitution required periodic review by Corporation. The SU worked alongside student voice. Governors **Noted** and welcomed the ongoing and new actions from the student voice activity and **Agreed** to recommend the SU constitution to Corporation for approval, given it was assured that although based on the existing model and templates, it provided improved clarity around the roles and responsibilities of the SU.

170 Student Wellbeing & Safeguarding Report (paper 744/25/L&Q)

The student wellbeing and safeguarding report provided an overview of safeguarding disclosures and referrals, updates on statutory safeguarding training, the Single Central Record (SCR) and safeguarding monitoring and recording systems. It also outlined areas requiring further action as well as trends and priorities for 2024/25. The number of referrals was high, reflecting the reality for a lot of students and the College responded with supportive interventions. Matt drew attention to the two additional posts being created to unlock Student Experience senior leadership capacity. Shirley supported the creation of these new roles, noting that from her monthly SCR meetings she could see senior staff were doing an outstanding job and that it was a huge workload. There was a brief discussion about security and Shirley confirmed that multiple door access, particularly at the Highbury Campus, meant this was a priority but was dependent on securing funding. Work was being done as and when possible. Tim asked what level of assurance governors could take from this report, to which Kirsty responded she believed that governors could take strong assurance, as evidenced by Ofsted. Having noted the ongoing and future actions outlined in the report, governors **Noted** the student wellbeing and safeguarding report and that they and the board could take a strong level of assurance on the management of student wellbeing and safeguarding at the College.

171 AOB

Huw relayed information from the recent AoC Curriculum & Quality network meeting which had explored the new Ofsted inspection framework and apprenticeships. Huw noted the speed with which the new Ofsted inspection framework was being introduced (four months) and the confusion concerning changes to shortened apprenticeships and the new foundation apprenticeships. Matt commented that he was engaging proactively on both agendas and would ensure the College was well prepared for the changes.

The meeting ended at 7pm