



Northern College

THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on **22 February 2021**.

- Present:** Prof Mike Bramhall (Chair), Colin Forrest, Prof Tim Thornton and Yultan Mellor (Principal).
- In attendance:** The Assistant Principal – Curriculum, Quality, Business Development (Emma Beal), the Assistant Principal – Student Experience (Diane Lawson) and the Clerk to the Governors (Sarah Johnson).
- Apologies:** Sarah Tyler.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Q21/1 Each governor present declared any potential interests/conflicts of loyalty related to items to be considered at the meeting. With respect to his role as Deputy Vice Chancellor at the University of Huddersfield Prof Tim Thornton declared a potential conflict of loyalty in items relating to the College's higher education provision. It was agreed that no decisions to be taken at the meeting would be affected and it was not considered necessary for the member to withdraw.

MINUTES

- Q21/2 The minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2020 were approved as an accurate record (a copy is filed in the minute book).

MATTERS ARISING

- Q21/3 None.

SECTOR REPORT (Document 2i)

- Q21/4 The committee received an update on sector developments and changes in the external environment that could have an impact on quality, curriculum and student experience, including:
- the response to COVID-19;
 - the DFE review;
 - ESFA assurance audit;
 - Devolution of the adult education budget;
 - South Yorkshire colleges;
 - local MPs;
 - Barnsley Council;
 - Skills for Jobs – FE white paper;
 - Barnsley gift card.
- Q21/5 The committee particularly:

- noted that whilst there was a great deal of challenge in the report there were also areas for optimism and opportunity;
- explored the potential impact of FEC intervention on the College's ability to capitalise on opportunities;
- considered the opportunities and threats inherent in the FE white paper;
- explored the College's readiness for reopening the campus, particularly in relation to COVID testing and curriculum delivery, and were assured that the College was well prepared.

Resolved: i That the report be noted.

PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD 2020/21 (Document 3i)

- Q21/6 The committee considered the performance dashboard for 2020/21 to 31 December 2020 particularly noting that:
- the College remained significantly behind target in relation to short course students due to the pandemic as previously discussed;
 - strong retention and achievement was predicted at this stage for students who were on course, and though results were likely to be below previous years they remained above sector benchmarks;
 - attendance remained relatively strong;
 - a number of positive moderation visits had been undertaken in the last period;
 - placement hours for teaching students were behind schedule and would be picked up in 2021/22.

- Q21/7 The committee noted the performance reported and agreed that the data presented was as anticipated. The committee particularly considered:
- the digital challenges faced by students, noting that digital confidence in students was a factor;
 - attendance data and the extensive communication and support for students offered by the College, noting that this worked extremely well where the College had engaged with students face to face prior to the latest lockdown.

Resolved: i That the report be noted.

PERFORMANCE REPORT (Document 3ii)

- Q21/8 The committee considered the performance report which provided an update in relation to:
- quality performance indicators;
 - COVID-19 response.
- Q21/9 The committee particularly explored:
- the work being undertaken in relation to the College's curriculum intent and the development of an implementation plan and KPIs;
 - the revised approach to HE provision which offered best quality and growth potential;
 - developmental observations, on-line learning walks and teaching quality, noting that whilst there was work to do in relation to paperwork and planning documentation the quality of the provision being delivered was good;
 - the review and refreshing of the College's additional learning support offer and admissions process, seeking and receiving assurance that feedback regarding the admissions process was collected and evaluated.

Resolved: i That the report be noted.

OFSTED REPORT (Document 3iii)

Q21/10 The committee considered the report arising from the interim visit by Ofsted on 3 and 4 December 2020, noting that:

- it had been a very positive experience which had galvanised staff and enabled the College to reflect on the extensive and effective work it had undertaken in response to COVID-19;
- the report was strong, and though the specific rise in mental health concerns and safeguarding required work, this was a sector wide rather than Northern College specific issue, and any areas for development had been appropriately included in the College's quality improvement plan.

Resolved: i That the report be noted.

QIP PROGRESS UPDATE (Document 3iv)

Q21/11 The committee considered a progress report against the College quality improvement plan, noting that there were no significant issues in relation to progress, but there was much work to be undertaken. The committee particularly explored:

- developments related to progression and employability and whether this work could be moved forward more quickly, noting that appointments to key posts in the management team had been key to moving this forward and these staff were now in place and the pace of progress would now increase;
- the significance of being able to demonstrate both data and case studies in relation to capturing the College's contribution to progression and impact;
- the evidence of strong digital improvements in relation to staff skills and confidence and systems developments.

Q21/12 The committee noted that the FEC had challenged the College not grading its self-assessment report and considered whether this should be revisited. It was noted that:

- the adult and community learning sector had moved away from grading;
- the report had a clear narrative which demonstrated a grade position of good;
- the College felt that grading was an old fashioned approach and was undertaking more forensic and focussed work, but was very happy to grade in future if that was felt to be appropriate.

Resolved: i That the College consider grading future self-assessment reports.

EDI REPORT Document 3v)

Q21/13 The committee considered a report which outlined how the College would ensure compliance with equality and diversity requirements, evaluate performance and identify areas for improvement.

Q21/14 The committee particularly explored:

- EDI objectives;
- gaps in achievement rates for those with protected characteristics;
- the partnership working and contribution to inclusion in the locality delivered by the College.

Resolved: i That the report be noted and further planned reports welcomed.

CURRICULUM PLANNING

Q21/15 The committee considered a verbal update regarding curriculum planning for 2020/21 term 3 and 2021/22, particularly noting that:

- there were significant unknowns in relation to 2021/22 that made planning particularly challenging;
- planning requirements for Sheffield City Region and West Yorkshire were evolving;
- the skills plan for West Yorkshire would be impacted by the election of a new mayor but was very much aligned to the College's offer and expertise and it would be critical for the future of the College to successfully engage with the combined authority and other West Yorkshire providers.

Resolved: i That the report be noted.

RISKS OVERSEEN BY THE COMMITTEE (Document 4ii)

- Q21/16 The committee considered the risk register, noting that whilst none of the currently active risks were specifically allocated to the committee for oversight a number of them had implications in relation to curriculum, quality and student experience. It was noted that:
- the register would be updated in response to the outcome of the FEC visit;
 - the key risks had formed the basis for the discussions during the meeting.

Resolved: i That the risk register be noted.

POLICIES (Document 5i)

- Q21/17 The committee considered and approved as a working draft the following policies:
- safeguarding children and young people.

Resolved: i That the safeguarding children and young people policy be approved as a working draft and recommended to the Board of Governors for approval.

GOVERNANCE

- Q21/18 The committee noted the resignation from the committee of the Catharyn Lawrence and welcomed the inclusion of additional members for the committee in the upcoming recruitment plan.

Resolved: i That the report be noted.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

- Q21/19 The next meeting of the Curriculum, Quality and Student Experience Committee will take place on **17 June 2021 – 1.30pm**.