



## Northern College

### CURRICULUM, QUALITY AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum, Quality and Student Experience Committee held on **12 June 2023**.

**Present:** Colin Forrest (Chair), Tim Thornton, Emma Beal (Principal) and Bob Craig.

**In attendance:** The Director of Curriculum and Quality (Lee Kirton), the Assistant Principal – Student Experience (Diane Lawson) and the Clerk to the Governors (Sarah Johnson).

**Apologies:** Sue Horner and Maria Bowie.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Q23/34 Each governor present declared any potential interests/conflicts of loyalty related to items to be considered at the meeting. With respect to his roles as Deputy Vice Chancellor at the University of Huddersfield and HE advisory member of the West Yorkshire Employment and Skills Committee 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 AND MATTERS ARISING

Q23/35 The minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

Q23/36 The committee reviewed the actions tracker, noting that all were complete with the exception of the inclusion of data regarding staff and governors in the equality, diversity and inclusion reports (Min Q22/54) which would be actioned for the 2022/23 annual report.

### ENVIRONMENT/SECTOR UPDATE

Q23/ 37 To ensure that the committee was able to take the implications of developments in the sector and operating context into account when reviewing performance and considering strategy it considered an update on developments since the last meeting which could have an impact on quality, curriculum and student experience, including:

- the planned review of the impact of community learning by West Yorkshire Combined Mayoral Authority (MCA), noting that it was anticipated that South Yorkshire MCA would also undertake a similar approach and agreeing that this presented an interesting opportunity for the College;
- the planned joint review by West and South Yorkshire MCAs on the impact of residential adult education, agreeing that it was frustrating that the College had

still not received a scope for this work which was due to conclude by the end of July 2023;

- the impact review work being undertaken in the West Midlands relating to residential provision, noting that the College had suggested that this work be aligned with that being undertaken by West and South Yorkshire but this had not been taken forward by the MCAs;
- the College's involvement in a South Yorkshire colleges proposal for the Learning and Skills Improvement Fund, noting that the College was also seeking to be involved in West Yorkshire;
- feedback from the committee chair's participation in the Association of Colleges (AoC) chairs network, noting the assurance provided regarding the work of this committee.

**Resolved: i That the update be noted and factored into the work of the committee.**

### PERFORMANCE REPORT (Document 3i)

Q23/38 The committee considered a range of performance data which enabled them to review the performance of the College in relation to curriculum, quality and student experience, and to use that evaluation to inform risk appraisal, governance oversight and strategic thinking.

Q23/39 The committee noted the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection and:

- agreed the report was a fair reflection of the College;
- welcomed the overall effectiveness judgement of Good;
- welcomed the reasonable skills judgement, agreeing it was a sound reflection of the College's position;
- noted that the outcome aligned with the College's 2021/22 self-assessment, and did not identify any areas for development not already recognised;
- agreed that the areas for improvement relating to evaluating the progression of community learning students and implementing the new arrangements for recording IAG were critical, and noted that the College was continuing to progress developments in these areas;
- acknowledged that due to the small size of the College areas for improvement could feel disproportionate where they only applied to a very small number of students;
- agreed that the committee had already been scrutinising and challenging management on the areas for improvement raised - including progression, destinations and IAG, and would continue to do so;
- explored how the work on measuring impact could align with that being undertaken by the MCAs;
- explored how the report aligned with the early perspectives of the new Director of Curriculum and Quality;
- thanked staff and governors for their work in achieving the outcome.

Q23/40 The committee considered the College's **KPI dashboard to 12 May 2023**, particularly noting that:

- student recruitment remained the key challenge;
- a small improvement had been achieved in conversion rates;

- attendance was lower than target, but noted that this was a timing issue, and it was expected to reach target by year end;
- destinations and student satisfaction remained high;
- retention rates were very slightly down, and analysis had shown that this was as a result of complex circumstances for individual students;
- class size remained below target and this would be a key challenge to address in curriculum planning for 2023/24;
- staff absence and turnover were both higher than the previous report, which was causing a challenge in the curriculum area, the committee was assured however that the College was successfully appointing to vacancies with high quality staff, and sickness absence was due to individual specific circumstances rather than a generalised absence issue;
- agreed that there were no significant concerns in relation to quality.

Q23/41 The committee considered **student recruitment data to May 2023** from a curriculum, quality and student experience perspective, the committee explored:

- the introduction of new provision and the recruitment of effective delivery staff;
- the delivery of community learning in community venues;
- the balance of community learning and adult education budget (AEB) provision;
- the College's education offer and growth areas.

Q23/42 The committee considered a report on **student attendance and progress to May 2023** for long course students.

Q23/43 The committee considered a report on **student voice**, particularly:

- the work of the student council;
- student engagement with operational committees, challenging management to ensure that a student representative for health and safety is successfully appointed in 2023/24;
- the challenges with engaging the student governor in 2022/23;
- noting the decline in students indicating they would return to study at the College since the last report, and suggesting that management consider adding a further question to enable analysis to understand if this is an issue;
- student feedback, noting that satisfaction remained high, and seeking and receiving assurance that a course booking issue which had been due to a technical issue on the website had been resolved.

Q23/44 The committee considered a report which set out **complaints and compliments** received and handled since the last meeting, noting that all complaints had been addressed appropriately, and no significant issues or themes had been identified.

Q23/45 The committee considered the **student destinations and progression update report**, and:

- welcomed and considered the increasingly detailed analysis;
- explored future planned developments in the collection process and the further analysis of the data required;
- considered collection rates, welcomed the 94% rate of students progressing to a positive destination, considered any differences in outcome for students with a range of characteristics;

- agreed that the outcomes reported were pleasing and encouraged management to continue with the further developments planned to ensure that the College had strong data in this important area.

Q23/46 It was noted that some data had been lost from the report due to a formatting issue and it was agreed that the report would be updated and circulated to the committee.

Q23/47 The committee considered a new report which presented data and analysis regarding the College's **additional learning support offer**, along with a range of planned actions. The committee:

- welcomed the new report which provided information regarding an important element of the College's offer;
- encouraged further development of the report to include measurable indicators of performance;
- explored how the offer supported individualised learning.

Q23/48 The committee agreed that the data presented demonstrated good progress, with several areas for further development identified and appropriate actions agreed.

**Resolved: i That management consider adding a further question to the College feedback survey to understand the recent drop in students indicating that they would return to College for further study.**

**ii That performance in relation to curriculum, quality and student experience remained good, and key areas of challenge were identified and appropriate actions were in place to address them.**

### QUALITY REPORT (Document 3ii)

Q23/49 To enable the committee to oversee the effective implementation of agreed quality improvement actions and identify any risk areas it reviewed progress against the College's quality improvement plan. The committee:

- noted that the QIP was a 'live' document, with new improvement areas added as appropriate, alongside the tracking of progress against actions;
- noted that the rag rating for some areas had changed since the last meeting;
- noted that the plan had been updated to reflect the recent Ofsted report;
- particularly considered the actions rag rated amber.

Q23/50 The committee agreed that progress was sufficient, plans to address the areas rated amber were appropriate, and actions had been suitably updated in light of the recent Ofsted report.

**Resolved: i That progress against the quality improvement plan was sufficient and the actions planned were appropriate.**

### HE REPORT (Document 3iii)

Q23/51 The committee considered an update report which provided them with data and analysis to enable them to review the performance of the College's higher education provision. The committee:

- Considered data relating to application, conversion and recruitment, retention and achievement, destinations and equality and diversity;
- Considered potential growth opportunities, areas for improvement and key areas for development.

Q23/52 It was noted that there was an error in the recruitment and retention data with the part-time PGCE/Cert Ed year two expected to achieve a 100% pass rate, not 86% as reported.

Q23/53 The committee welcomed the report and the progress reported, but agreed that further work was still required to separately identify HE performance across a range of areas in College-wide reports, for example student voice.

- Resolved:**
- i That management seek to appropriately reflect HE performance in a range of College-wide reports.**
  - ii That performance in relation to HE was generally satisfactory, with areas of challenge including student recruitment and growth identified and plans in place to achieve progress.**

### CURRICULUM STRATEGY AND PLANNING 2023/24

Q23/54 The committee received a verbal update regarding curriculum planning for 2023/24, noting:

- the planned changes to the College's community learning offer:
  - reducing the number of very short interventions, whilst remaining flexible and compact;
  - the move to a more place based approach;
  - the development of more off-site delivery, with an end goal of progression to on-site residential provision;
  - the development of project style learning, for example horticulture with well-being;
- the planned changes to the College's adult education budget offer:
  - more employer provision where changes to funding rules now offered exciting opportunities;
  - growing the free courses for jobs offer;
  - the intention not to take forward the potential on-line offer previously scoped due to capacity.

Q23/55 The committee agreed that the offer would present a powerful blend of local, regional and national delivery, with a carefully crafted strategic approach.

- Resolved: i That the committee support the direction of travel outlined for the curriculum for 2023/24.**

### MARKETING UPDATE (Document 4ii)

Q23/56 The committee considered a marketing update, including:

- positioning;
- advertising;
- website development;
- communications;

- events;
- next steps.

- Q23/57 The committee particularly explored:
- the approach to addressing no-shows, and the planned analysis;
  - the robustness of the application process, welcoming the resolution of a website glitch in the application system;
  - the impact of on-site events, seeking and receiving assurance that transport to the site was sufficient and effective.

**Resolved: i That the committee note and welcome the encouraging marketing activity.**

#### **RISK OVERSEEN BY THE COMMITTEE (Document 4iii)**

- Q23/58 The committee considered the risks allocated to it for oversight which could have an impact on curriculum, quality and student experience. The committee noted that:
- the recruitment of both students and staff had been considered during the meeting;
  - recent staff appointments had added to the breadth and depth of experience in teaching, creating greater flexibility;
  - the risk relating to Ofsted had been removed following the recent good inspection outcome;
  - risk 10 relating to recruiting students with integrity had been lowered in response to the inspection outcome.

- Q23/59 The committee agreed that the risks were suitably reflected in the register and the controls and mitigation were appropriate.

- Q23/60 The committee considered whether any new risks had been identified during the meeting and concluded that no new risks should be proposed for addition to the register.

**Resolved: i That the risk register appropriately reflected the key strategic risks related to curriculum, quality and student experience and the controls and mitigation were appropriate.**

#### **SAFEGUARDING AND PREVENT UPDATE (Document 5i)**

- Q23/61 The committee undertook its regular evaluation of Safeguarding and Prevent arrangements at the College, to support the process it:
- considered a report which provided an update regarding current arrangements, responsibilities and activity including referrals, due diligence, training, and key actions/next steps;
  - received an update from the lead governing for the area;
  - questioned the designated safeguarding lead.

- Q23/62 The committee particularly considered:
- the Ofsted judgement for the area which endorsed the committee's prior assessments;

- referrals, noting that there had been a significant increase since the last report, and that they had been reviewed as appropriate with the Lead Governor – Safeguarding and were appropriate and actioned effectively and in-line with legislation and guidance;
- explored the increase in referrals agreeing that this was a positive position and reflected a good referral process, understanding by staff and students and strong community partnerships;
- explored the Ofsted point raised regarding one student not knowing the risks in his home area of Scarborough, agreeing that whilst the College already supported students to reflect on their own home area this could be even further emphasised in future;
- agreed that the emphasis on Safeguarding and Prevent remained high, and there was no complacency;
- that there were some key developments planned which would be considered further at the next meeting.

**Resolved: i That the arrangements for Safeguarding and Prevent remained good.**

### **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION UPDATE (Document 5ii)**

- Q23/63 The committee undertook its regular evaluation of performance in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) at the College, to support the process it:
- considered a report which provided an update on key EDI actions and progress, including progress against equality objectives, key reporting and further action planned;
  - questioned the assistant principal with responsibility for the area;
  - noted that this was an interim progress update and detailed data would be included in the annual report;
  - welcomed the staff and student perspective.
- Q23/64 The committee particularly explored:
- relevant narrative in the Ofsted report;
  - work relating to the AoC mental health charter.

**Resolved: i That the progress in relation to EDI since the last meeting was satisfactory and appropriate areas for development were identified.**

**ii That the committee looked forward to considering the detailed EDI annual report for 2022/23 at its next meeting.**

### **POLICIES FOR APPROVAL (Document 5iii)**

- Q23/65 The committee considered and approved for recommendation to the Board a number of College policies.
- Q23/66 The committee noted that due to the nature of the content and the multiple audiences being addressed by some of the policies they weren't particularly student friendly. The committee sought and received assurance that the student handbook covered the areas in a more accessible manner.

**Resolved: i That the additional learning support, admissions, student disciplinary and residential admissions policies be recommended to the Board of Governors for approval.**

#### **DATES OF THE NEXT MEETINGS**

Q23/67	Monday	4	December	2023	1.30pm
	Monday	19	February	2024	1.30pm
	Monday	10	June	2024	1.30pm