

CURRICULUM, QUALITY & STUDENTS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES PART 1

Date: 14th March 2023

Venue: Board Room, Poplar

Time: 5:30pm

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| **Chair** | | Marilyn Hawkins |
| **Corporation Members** | | Labib Aminullah, Claire Baker, Paul Crossey (Co-opted), Gerry McDonald, Brijesh Patel, Rob Hull (Observer), |
| **Officers** | | Principal Redbridge & Epping: Narzny Khan  Principal Havering: Janet Smith  Interim Principal: Ian Fitzpatrick  Group Director of Apprenticeships and Business Development: Jamie Stevenson (item 7 only)  Dean and Group Director of Higher Education: Mark Smithers (item 6 only)  Head of Governance – Havering: Cathy Horne |
| **Apologies** | | Sue Williams QPM |
| **Director of Governance** | | Cathy Horne deputising for Elsa Wright |
| **Item No** | **Item of business** | |
| **PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS** | | |
|  | **Chair’s Welcome & Opening Remarks**  The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. | |
|  | **Apologies for Absence**  Sue Williams QPM had sent apologies for the meeting. | |
|  | **Declaration of Interests**  There were no declarations of interest | |
|  | **Minutes of the Meeting Held on 22nd November 2022**  The minutes were **agreed** as drafted. | |
|  | **Matters Arising and Action Points from the Meeting**  There were no matters arising from the minutes that were not covered by the agenda.  The Committee considered the draft Single Equality Scheme, including how it would be monitored and the purpose of the Scheme. Following discussion, SLT were asked to make some amendments.  **ACTIONS:**   * **SLT to explain the requirement for a SES and how it had been put together in the Executive Summary.** * **The document be amended to ensure consistency with either ‘Learners’ or ‘Students’.** * **Page 9, point 5 to be amended to make it clear that it is referring to the 16-19 cohort.** * **Reference to ‘micro-aggressions’ to be expanded.** * **More information on staff induction and disclosure of protected characteristics to be included.** | |
| **ITEMS FOR CHALLENGE, MONITORING & REVIEW (the items were taken in a different order to the agenda)** | | |
|  | **Termly HE Report**  The Dean and Group Director of Higher Education gave an update on the key university partners. The Open University provision was in the final stages of the teach out process with the last course assessment board due to take place in November 2023. London Metropolitan was also in the teach out phase and would be replaced by a similar foundation degree in Early Childhood Studies in from September 2023. Three new programmes, written by Bath Spa University, would be delivered at Hackney from September 2023. Members noted that legislation for the Lifelong Learning Loan was going through parliament and there was a potential growth opportunity with every adult being able to borrow up to £37,000 in their lifetime. There was currently national debate about the ability of T level students to progress to HE with some universities not considering T Level qualifications for entry to their undergraduate programmes. The need to focus on employability and value for money for potential students was discussed.  An application for a Teaching Excellence Award had been submitted with the result expected in July. The Committee was pleased to note that the Department for Education had granted permission for NCC to use the term ‘New City College University Centre’. Members noted that the HE marketplace was particularly crowded in London but that strong application numbers had been received for September with all courses viable.  The Chair thanked the Dean for his report. | |
|  | **Partnerships, Subcontracting and Employer Engagement Report**  The Group Director, Apprenticeships and Business Development, informed Members that 16-18 retention was outstanding at 100%. Learning walks and unannounced visits had taken place and some minor recommendations made but there were no concerns.  For AEB, retention was good at 94.8%. The in-year achievement rate was 56%, with the overall achievement rate expected to exceed 90%. Monitoring visits had taken place and support provided. All providers had responded to the NCC approach and there were no concerns.  Members discussed the OJ offer, particularly in regard to progression to employment and the relationship of the College with one religion. The CEO explained that the OJ offer had been part of the Hackney merger and had been discussed in detail. The offer was very carefully managed and Ofsted, despite spending a disproportionate amount of time with them during the inspection, were very happy with the offer. The teachers were appropriately trained and good distance had been travelled since they became part of NCC.  Good progress had been made with employer engagement with around 15-20 employer meetings taking place each week. The College had launched two new websites for commercial employers: NCC Trade Skills; and NCC for Business. There had been a lot of interest and the College was in a position to deliver support and training. The Chair requested the Group Director to invite Governors to employer events, such as business breakfasts, as they were keen to meet employers as part of their new Duty.  Regarding apprenticeships, 190 had enrolled against a target of 402. The biggest barrier was the quality and work readiness of potential apprentices. The Apprenticeship Achievement Rate had declined in the previous year and this was an area for priority monitoring. Currently 58% were making good progress. Finding work experience and industry placements, despite good relationships with over 1000 employers, continued to prove difficult, particularly in health and social care and in areas where employees were still working from home.  The Chair thanked the Group Director for his report.  **ACTIONS:**   * **Trend data for adults to be provided in future reports.** * **Trend data for apprenticeships to be provided in future reports.** * **The Group Director to invite Governors to employer events.** | |
|  | **Progress against Curriculum KPIs**  The Principal, Havering reminded Members that the majority of KPIs were related to student outcomes and would be reported on at the end of the year. In-year data for consideration by the Committee concerned retention, attendance rates and variance between campuses. The report also contained comments on the additional KPIs agreed for complaints and learner satisfaction.  Members noted that retention was good, although slightly below the College target for adult learners.  Attendance was rated red and was in-line with the previous year. It had been a key area for intervention but there was still work to do. There was too much variance between campuses with the overall attendance rate at 85%. The Committee were advised that there had been a significant rise in mental health cases which had impacted attendance.  There was a range of interventions available, in addition to rewarding good attendance. In response to a question, the Principal, Havering explained that each campus and matrix area received local week by week data which enabled issues and trends to be picked up quickly. Deputy Principals held fortnightly meetings with Senior Curriculum Managers, and Principals with Group Curriculum Directors. She confirmed that any concerning issues would be flagged to the Committee and that all issues were contained in the report. | |
|  | **Progress against QIP**  Members were reminded by the Principal, Havering that the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) detailed tangible targets and milestones for the key areas for improvement. The report showed progress against each one. There had been good progress in improving performance in the key curriculum areas identified in the SAR and in developing teaching and learning to improve outcomes.  Attendance, particularly in English and Maths, was rated Red and was identified as a cause for concern.  There were a range of actions in place but it was a persistent problem.  Overall attendance was 85%, with Maths and English attendance 79%. The difference between the best and worst performing campuses was 6pp, 3pp below target. In response to a question, Members were informed that there was a clear correlation between teacher absence and student absence.  Members noted that there were two amber areas – quality assurance systems; and narrowing the performance gap between campuses. Members noted that retention was good but there was still a difference between campuses. If HSF was not included the difference was 2.8%. Members noted that the figures from the Sixth Form were impacted by 2-year programmes, however trend data for sixth forms was very different with HSF performing well above national rate.  The absence of a permanent Group Director for Quality and Data had resulted in insufficient progress in developing risk-based interventions. Various actions were in place and having an impact.  The Chair asked for the RAG rating to be shown in colour in future reports to enable easier identification of areas for concern.  **ACTION: Reports to include coloured RAG ratings going forward.** | |
|  | **Learner Voice Update**  The Principal, Havering explained that two surveys had taken place in term one – Student Perception of College (SPOC) and LOOP. Referring to the SPOC survey, the Committee was informed that responses were positive, with 79% rating the College good or better. This was a slight decrease of 1% on the previous year but one issue, enrolment satisfaction, had declined by 8pp. SLT were aware of the reasons for this and had worked on solutions. The Committee noted that 96% of respondents had said they felt safe in college, which was significant.  The LOOP report correlated with the SPOC responses, with students identifying feeling safe, support, and teaching quality, as strengths of the college. Work experience was an area which students felt needed to be improved.  The Student Governor commented that, in his view, the results accurately reflected student views of the College. He added that students were encouraged to complete the survey and saw it as a valuable exercise. | |
|  | **Student Progress and Destinations Report**  The Principal, Havering presented an overview of student progress and destinations, commenting that the collection rate had improved. The data showed that, of those who had been contacted, 100% of 16–18-year-olds (up 2pp) and 90% of adults (up 11pp) had moved onto positive destinations, including higher education, employment or an apprenticeship.  Members were informed that progression to HE had declined to pre-pandemic levels and that students were considering alternative options.  At Havering Sixth Form applications to HE were normalising but the Principal, Havering, was concerned that there were low numbers progressing to high-tariff universities. Various actions were in place including specific programmes for Medics and Oxbridge applicants, as well as HE fairs and a significant amount of work with A level and BTEC level 3 students. It was thought that students were applying to the high-tariff universities but, against increased competition partly due to grade inflation, were not achieving the grades required. | |
| **CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS – SEE PART 2 MINUTES** | | |
| **12.** | **AOB**  There were no items of any other business. | |
| **13.** | **Date of Next Meeting**  27th June 2023 at 5.30 pm | |

*The meeting closed at 7.17 pm*