

**Minutes of the Quality and Curriculum Committee**

**held on 25 May 2022 at 17.30 on Microsoft Teams**

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| **Present:** | | Dr Ann Lees (Chair)  Ian Looker  Lee Probert (Chief Executive and Principal)  Mark Rushworth  John Robinson  Beth McHugh-Hicks  Laura Mason | |
| **In Attendance:** | | Carolyn Barker – Director of Governance  Victoria Howarth – Director of Quality of Education  Ingrid Kellock – Interim Director of Student Experience  Danny Brett - Deputy Chief Executive and Principal (Curriculum and Quality)  Martin Halliday – Director of Young People’s Learning (16-19 Lead)  Gemma Thomas – Learning Support Manager  Meg Mitchell (HE student representative)  Georgia Linsey-Bessent (FE student representative) | |
| **Item 1** | **Apologies for Absence / Declarations of Interest** | | **Action** |
|  | Apologies received from Meltem Celik. It was noted that Cathy Waters has taken a break in service for six months. The Committee wished her well and look forward to welcoming her back.  There were no declarations of interest.  The Chair welcomed two student representatives attending to observe with the aim of expressing an interest in becoming a governor. The Chair was happy to invite comments from the students. | |  |
| **Item 2** | **Minutes and Matters Arising** | |  |
| 2.1 | **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**  The Committee reviewed the minutes of the meeting of 23 February 2022.  ***The Committee resolved to approve the minutes of the previous meeting.*** | |  |
| 2.2 | **Actions Summary**  All due actions were complete or are included as an agenda item at this meeting.  ***The Committee resolved to note the update on the Actions Summary.*** | |  |
| 2.3 | **Any Other Matters**  None to report. | |  |
| **Item 3** | **Strategic Plan Implementation & Risks** | |  |
| 3.1  3.2 | The reports were received. It was reported by the Deputy Chief Executive and Principal (Curriculum & Quality) that the risk remains static regarding the implementation plans and is reflective of the current situation. An update was provided on recent bids for funding. A bid previously submitted to provide capital and programme funding from the Strategic Development Fund to support changes in teaching and training facilities and provision was unsuccessful at the time though there was nothing inherently wrong with the bid. A further bid to the Strategic Development Fund has been submitted with the aim of receiving circa £130k in capital/revenue funding to support the building of green skills capacity at the College. The outcome of the bid will be shared with governors.  A further bid for funding of Skills Bootcamps has been successful to provide flexible courses of up to maximum 16 weeks, giving students the opportunity to build up sector-specific skills and fast-track to an interview with a local employer. The bid was submitted in conjunction with the LEP focused on the green skills agenda.  The Chair congratulated the leadership team regarding the work on the current activities linked to the government agenda. The Chair invited comments on the report.  A governor asked about the College’s plans to build on the “Good for Me, Good for FE” campaign particularly around encouraging volunteering in the community. The Committee was informed that there is a range of student facing initiatives progressing in the College and in the wider community, however the College would be eager to get involved with other initiatives to gain collective value. The Director of Student Experience advised that work was planned to log volunteering hours and plans are underway to roll out a staff and student facing campaign in reference to the College’s chosen charities.    The Chair asked about the review of the careers model and requested that the outcome of the review and discussion on careers provision should be part of the agenda for the next meeting. In the meantime, the Director of Student Experience, advised that a verbal update would be given at item 4 on the agenda.  A governor commented that there is clearly a lot of good work happening across the College that supports the strategic plan implementation but advised that it is difficult to judge whether the Committee should be pleased with the progress or not. The governor noted that the Committee had discussed targets/performance measures previously and asked at what point the framework would be ready. The Committee was advised that the KPI framework would be ready to share with governors at the beginning of the next academic year. The Chair agreed and commented that the Committee could well improve its effectiveness if there were more defined measures to check progress against the many good actions that are clearly in progress.  The Deputy Chief Executive and Principal (Curriculum & Quality) advised the Committee that the risk monitoring document had been streamlined and will continue to be refreshed during the year. | | DB  IK  VH |
| **Item 4** | **Student Engagement, Support and Success** | |  |
| 4.1  4.2  4.3  4.4  4.5  4.6  4.7 | **Quality Report**  The report was received. The Director of Quality of Education outlined the key points covered within the Quality Report and provided some verbal updates on quality actions since the submission of the report.  The focus of the quality report changes during the academic year. It was advised that student attendance is covered in a separate paper at item 5. The relatively high number of risk students on the report is mainly due to the inconsistent use of indicators on Promonitor and a review is being undertaken and will be reviewed periodically during the year. There is an action being taken forward to properly understand the reasoning of those students at risk with a follow-up on the 9 June 2022 planned to discuss those students at risk to the end of June. Other points outlined in more detail for governors included:   * Attendance registers had not been centrally updated from exams and as at today’s date there were 98 missing registers. Clearly this is not where it should be, though the situation changes daily as a result of staff updating the system. Processes have been refined and although further improvement is needed the work to date, and refinements are starting to make a difference. * Retention rates are recognised as a concern and risk for the College, as they are now below those of last year. Pass rates for some programmes have the potential to be lower than in previous years due to Covid impacting on exam performance. Discussions are planned for the next SLT meeting. Retention was discussed with Heads of Curriculum recently as there is a concern that we seem to lose more students in the first few weeks of their programmes and just before Christmas. * Achievement rate is potentially at-risk but work is ongoing with Heads of Curriculum to build a picture of outcomes this year including those programmes without exams. Several mechanisms are being introduced to ensure we refer students to other programmes where appropriate, and supportive and probing questions are being asked to gain assurance that, when the student leaves the College, we have done all we can to support.   The Chair asked about any feedback from students. Governors share the concerns of the teams about the level of retention, recognising it is a strange year because of the pandemic and other contributory factors. The Governor challenged whether there are mechanisms in place to capture this feedback from students. The Committee was advised that monitoring post six weeks and through withdrawals are checked by the Director of Quality with the majority having had to withdraw due to mental health reasons. There have been other students that have left over the last few months having secured places in the Forces. Very few have left for negative reasons or cite poor quality teaching and learning as a reason for leaving.  A student representative gave feedback on students that have left due to mental health reasons but plan to return to study. They queried how many students drop out and wait for the start of the next year to return. The Chair asked how many students it applied to and requested that this should be reviewed further. The Chief Executive and Principal advised that there are a few students who have restarted in the academic year.  The Director of Quality of Education advised the Committee that Higher Education programmes continue to be strong and reflected on the pleasure of being part of the graduation ceremony, the first time for two years. HE applications are up on the previous year, and there is a piece of work to do following the progression exercise to identify those students who have not yet decided on their options, to convert them to our HE offer. It was advised that an impact should be seen on HE applications in 2022-23 provision.  The Deputy Chief Executive and Principal (Curriculum & Quality) advised that the first draft of the HE strategy was received today and the mechanisms to maximise marketing initiatives are being considered. The strategy will be shared at a future meeting to take the Governors through it.  A brief update on Teaching, Learning and Assessment was provided outlining some key themes delivered and CPD sessions. A third set of learning visits had concluded and while there is still some work to do there was some good examples observed. Starts of lessons, retrieval practices and the use of music and composition at the start of lessons were positive. Thanks were given for the really good work that is already having some impact.  There were some technical issues in hearing one of the Governors asking questions and providing comments. The Governor added questions and comments into the chat function in Teams to contribute to discussions.  To understand the impact of the English and Maths expectations and requirements on important indicators such as 'at risk’, a Governor asked if a student who is doing poorly at English or Maths, which is an expectation of their qualification, but doing fine in the substantive subject is judged to be at risk. It was confirmed that if the subject(s) is an exit requirement (linked to a student’s qualification) then the student would be judged as ‘at risk’. The Governor also queried the cause of those ‘at risk’ and asked for a rough estimate of the current proportion of students at risk. The Committee was informed that the cause of being ‘at risk’ is poor performance and that accurate figures were not to hand. A ‘risk score’ is being developed, however, to apply to the 2022/23 cohort to flag early students who might be a concern (e.g. prior year attendance, previous withdrawal, enrolled on English & Maths, low qualification on entry score). The risk score is to be shared with the Committee.  **Student Experience and Student Voice**  The Interim Director of Student Experience shared presentation slides with the Committee to take them through the Student Voice Strategy. The strategy has been revised so that we can act more quickly on students’ feedback and experience. The strategy includes the timescale of activity, the frequency and measuring the impact. The strategy had been shared with the Strategic Leadership Team and feedback provided. The strategy will be shared with the governors after the meeting.  The main points from the strategy and the mechanisms to be used were outlined for governors, noting that students’ will be encouraged to suggest areas for improvement of college life.  The Committee was advised that discussions are in progress with York University student union with the aim of achieving a potential collaboration of HE/FE institutions to create opportunities for peer support, learning and to identify civic agendas. A Civic Vision and Strategy is to be developed to demonstrate a proactive approach to community involvement. Governor engagement is welcomed.  The Committee advised that they are happy to be guided by the Director of Student Experience regarding governor involvement and commented that it would be good for governors to engage with the focus groups to see the students in action. It was agreed that there would be involvement from governors in the best possible forum to hear the views of students. The matter is to be raised at the next Board meeting to promote the engagement next year and be guided by the Interim Director of Student Experience as to the best times for governors to learn from the work but not inhibit discussions.  **Safeguarding internal review**  A verbal update was received. A review of the College’s safeguarding provision resulted in reasonable assurance being recorded. The review considered the arrangements in place, how it is maintained and included consideration of policies, procedures, training and multi-agency working. Good practice was noted in the report in terms of the good links with external agencies in addition to the implementation of a digital recording system that is being rolled out to all College staff. In light of the changes in Keeping Children Safe in Education there are some other improvements such as peer on peer abuse that will be considered.  The actions and priorities for 2022/23 were shared. These include:   * A revised safeguarding policy with operational procedural advice for all staff. * Implementation of a digital platform (CPOMS) for all staff.   The Chair asked whether any comments were made on reporting to governors within the audit. The Committee was advised that there was specific reference given to bi-weekly reporting to the Strategic Leadership Team meetings that is subsequently shared at governor meetings in terms of referrals. A Governor asked where the College’s role starts and ends in the context of apprenticeships. The Committee was informed that apprentices are the College’s responsibility when they are on-site, and that the College checks the employer’s practices to make sure that they are up to date and members of staff are appropriately trained.  Since September there has been a focus on widening mental health and wellbeing provision and support with the recruitment of more MH first aiders to help those in crisis. The College has partnered with the ‘Wellbeing In Mind’ team funded by the Department for Education to enhance provision in schools and colleges. It allows us to look at creative and innovative ways to benefit our students and will be fully implemented in the Autumn term. The Committee was informed that there has been an increase in referrals related to exam anxiety, and we have supported students with this. Focused low-level support has been given to those students, and the College team focus particularly on those with suicidal thoughts where a significant increase in cases has been reported. An occupational therapist joins us shortly and work will continue with the school wellbeing service.  A student representative shared their feedback on using the College system and noted it was overall positive but suggested that more focused time to talk during tutorials would be beneficial as students are more likely to talk in that context. The Interim Director of Student Experience advised that tutorials will be a focus and that throughout the year there will be initiatives to promote positive mental health with the aim of articulating that it’s just as important as taking care of your physical health.  **Careers provision**  The Interim Director of Student Experience provided a verbal update and shared some key points on presentation slides. These were:   * Matrix Re-assessment * Quality in Careers Standard * Gatsby Benchmarks * Events * Staffing and Skills   In April this year the College maintained its Matrix standard. An audit was completed with some verbal feedback provided at the time including some positive comments around the current provision. The final report is due shortly and will be shared with the Committee.  A Governor asked whether the College has measured itself against the Gatsby benchmarks. It was advised that they have, and this was largely positive with a little more work to complete. The College is using the digital tool to measure our performance. A Governor asked how joined up is the College’s careers advice and links with other colleges and schools ie is it a consistent process coming through from school to college. The Committee was advised that this is to be given further consideration and a fuller piece of work will be conducted to ensure students are being given consistent messages as to their skills set.  A Governor suggested that they could support with this work and there are some areas of good work that can be shared with governors.  **Student support – internal review**  A verbal update was provided by the Director of Young People’s Learning (16-19 Lead). The new model has been rolled out and regular reviews have been completed during the year with a feeling that we are in a stronger position moving into the next academic year. A few points noted from the briefing included:   * Pastoral/tutorial framework – work in progress to ensure there are clear granular responsibilities included which will encompass attendance monitoring. * Changed approach to disciplinaries to align it with the College’s values with a solution focused approach on supporting students to attend. * Relaunching of communication routes with parents, providing regular updates with opportunities for parents to discuss at evening events. * Focused group with student involvement regarding UCAS to give clarity in terms of timelines and responsibilities. * Induction has been a little fragmented previously with a cohesive approach needed. There will now be a consistent approach across the 16-18 students with a one-day induction. This has been as a result of student feedback. * Another key initiative planned is the Safety Net in the first 6 weeks of a student’s programme, being a mechanism for those students at risk who may have chosen the wrong course and want to pursue another course. Training is taking place with staff on the process to support students. * Engaged with Spark in the centre of York to discuss various initiatives with the aim of having some Safety Net support (one day a week) where students may be struggling in their early weeks in the College environment. We also have the external provision called the Parish where we have now secured the White Rose Sports Facility at Bishopthorpe as a venue for those learners who need additional support. Arrangements for this are currently under discussion. * The tutorial scheme of work is to be aligned with both the Quality Calendar and Student Experience Calendar with checkpoints throughout the year. The three calendars aligning with each other should improve cohesion.   The Committee thanked the Director of Young People’s Learning (16-19 Lead) for the comprehensive update and for additional information in relation to retention and attendance. The members were invited to comment.  No further comments were made.  **Apprenticeships Actions Update**  A report was circulated to the Committee prior to the meeting. The paper was noted as received. The Deputy Chief Executive and Principal provided an update to the report.  National rates for apprenticeships were updated earlier in the year with the College’s rating being at 4.7 percentage points above the national average. Currently the achievement rate for the College is at 73.1% against last year’s national average of 57.7%. This is 1.4pp down from March 2022, a decrease but still a far healthier position than at the same point last year. There is a large volume of End Point Assessments taking place nationally and regionally which has been difficult to manage, but we are currently managing these effectively.  The team is currently reviewing the structures in our apprenticeships to maintain current numbers and facilitate growth. Proposals and decisions are in progress to bolster the resources where necessary.  A Governor referred to the table in the report and asked whether the data is national achievement rates indicating that the College came in 4.7pp above those rates. It was advised that the College currently stands at 73.1% and with the expectation that the College rates will be above national rates. The Chair asked whether the team has any concerns in terms of infrastructure and the journey of those apprentices. It was advised that there were no specific concerns to raise.  The Committee advised that it was reassured by the amount of work being progressed in this area.  **High-Need Students – Update**  A verbal update was provided by the College’s Learning Support Manager with presentation slides shared at the meeting. The Chair advised that the Committee had received reports and statistics at previous meetings but felt that a more in-depth understanding of arrangements was required, and members therefore looked forward to the update.  Facts and figures were shared with the Committee including:   * Number of staff in the team (approximately 70) * Two key aims of the team – (1) enable students to access education as fully as possible (2) promote and develop independence * In-class support for High Needs Students * Support for low needs students * Specialist pastoral support * Exam support   The presentation slides are to be circulated to the Committee.  The Chair invited comments.  The Director of Quality of Education paid tribute to the team in terms of high needs support with many of the students on mainstream programmes achieving as well as or above their peers. The work being completed in mainstream is a tribute to the team in terms of the excellent support given to students.  A Governor asked how the office base on the first floor immediately above the welcome desk was used. The Committee was advised that this is the learning support area where the majority of pastoral work takes place, with an area outside of the office where students are supported/supervised over lunch time. Debriefing also takes place following work placements.  A Governor asked whether there is anything within the context of York and the surrounding area where the team may need to respond. It was advised that the team currently works with 4 regional areas and that while autism used to be the greatest area of need the emphasis now seems to be on more general mental health support. The Chair asked what the referral process entailed. It was advised that the local authority formally issues a notification to the college, and we respond to advise if we have the right support available for that particular student. There is a legal duty to provide everything that is agreed within the plan and that is why the consultation process is essential.  The Committee thanked the Learning Support Manager for all the work the team is doing and for her presentation this evening.  A student representative asked about the visibility and communication channels for student support. It was advised that where the need for support is identified either as a follow-on from school or from the student themselves, the team discusses the specific support that is needed to ensure it is relevant to them. The College provides information, advice and guidance through its website, welcome days and events, giving further opportunities for students to gain the support they need. It was also noted by a Staff Governor that during 1-2-1s Progress Coaches offer opportunities to support.  It was requested that after this agenda item the following attendees to be excused - Learning Support Manager, Interim Director of Student Experience and Director of Young People’s Learning (16-19 Lead). The attendees were excused. | | IK  DB  DB  IK  IK/CB  IK  CB |
| **Item 5** | **Student Attendance & Destinations** | |  |
| 5.1  5.2  5.3 | **Student Destinations**  The report was taken as read.  The Chair reminded members on the background to this paper, namely that it was a follow-up from the discussions regarding centre assessed grades. Information on the impact on student destinations was not available at the time and therefore a much broader report was requested.  The Deputy Chief Executive and Principal advised that the report is a standard one that would normally be asked for by external agencies.  A Governor advised that more detail within the report in the future might help further. The Governor stated that there was nothing in the report to inform the reader on what a positive or negative destination meant. It was advised that a positive destination would be a student progressing on to further education in their existing institution, for example, or in HE. Internal data has been used now to produce the report however a link to the official guidance can be shared with the Committee.  A Governor asked about the comment under the first table in the report, regarding the 2020-21 positive destination being stated as 93.83%, while the first bullet point below the second table seems to imply the overall positive destinations is 93.83%. This was queried, given that the numbers in the first table for 18-19 and 19-20 are substantially lower. It was advised that the comment under the first table was the College’s overall positive destination figure. The 18-19 and 19-20 figures were the overall positive destination figures for those years.  **Student Attendance**  The paper was noted as received.  The Chair asked that the Committee should keep attendance figures under review at every meeting. The Committee was advised that the purpose of the report is to show the comparison from November through to the Easter break and start of the exams. Clearly attendance is not where the team would want to see it, however there is a consistent drive to encourage attendance with several actions outlined in the paper that are expected to improve the position next year.  The Chair expressed the Committee’s appreciation of the work being undertaken.  **FE QIP Update**  The report was received and noted. The Committee was advised that there are plans to streamline the report for next year. Since the last report, milestones have been included and more focus on impact to assist governors in their monitoring of progress.  The Chair invited any comments.  The Chair challenged whether 90% is an appropriate target for completing PDRs bearing in mind it is such an important area for development of staff and outcomes for students. It was advised that given the College’s previous response rates, the expected completion rate is at 95%. The team acknowledge that work needs to continue to ensure that all staff have a positive PDR experience. Clarification was also sought on the expectations of staff regarding delivering enrichment activities. The Committee was advised that when staff begin to plan their courses, they map out enrichment activities as part of study programmes. | | DB  VH |
| **Item 6** | **Other Matters** | |  |
| 6.1  6.2 | **Committee Self-Assessment & Terms of Reference**  Changes to the Committee Terms of Reference and questions to self-evaluate performance were shared with the Committee prior to the meeting.  **Terms of Reference**  The Chair advised that members should consider the changes to the TOR to determine if those updates are reflective of the work that the Committee should be undertaking. Comments were invited from members.  A Governor questioned whether the last bullet point regarding meeting local skills needs should be included. The Chair recommended retaining the wording as it is reflective of the College’s new responsibilities outlined in the Skills for Job White Paper.  The Chair suggested including within 5.9 wording to reflect the discussions this evening in respect of student welfare. The Chief Executive and Principal advised that perhaps needs to state the student experience overall. It was also recommended that the number of Committee members noted within 2.1 should change to say “up to ten members”. This was agreed.  The Chair advised that the wording of the ToR will be reviewed outside of the meeting to reflect the points raised in discussion. The proposed changes are to be circulated to members in draft for any further amendments before finalising.  **Committee Self-Assessment**  The Chair invited members to share their views on the effectiveness of the Committee and advised that members were welcome to share views outside of the meeting with the Chair of the Board, if they felt more appropriate, regarding the chairing of meetings. A few points noted for consideration were:   * The importance, next year, of ensuring that we integrate the local skills needs channel and that it is through this Committee that this will be considered. * The Committee has a very broad remit and full agendas, so ensuring that the members have focus at meetings on the important aspects of quality and curriculum is key. The data within reports has been very well articulated but further focus is needed. * It would be useful to hear more student and employer views through the Committee. * The papers presented to the Committee have been timely and minuting has been good. * Two deep dives have been completed including high needs and apprenticeships which have been helpful. Time should be dedicated to similar deep dives at future meetings. * Chairing has been great including the development of agendas and work between meetings. * Presentations and papers need to be more concise.   The Chair supported the points noted and advised that the Committee needs the right degree of transparency around the data provided and concerns raised the Strategic Leadership Team. It was also noted that the Chair wishes to continue the work in progress to ensure that the information/reports continue to be relevant to governors and that agendas allow governors to focus on key topics at the appropriate meetings across the year.  The Chair thanked the members for all their views.  A Governor asked whether meetings would continue to take place virtually and if so, will there be any opportunities to visit College to improve engagement and involvement. It was advised governors will be invited to engage more in college activities during the next academic year. | | CB |
| **Item 7** | **SUMMARY MATTERS**  **Key Meeting Outcomes and/or Actions** | |  |
| 7.1 | **Matters for report to the Governing Body (if any**)   * High Needs presentation * Message to governors about opportunities for engagement with students | |  |
| 7.2 | **Matters for report to Audit Committee (if any)**  None to report. | |  |
| **Item 8** | **Summary Matters** | |  |
| 8.1 | **Any Other Business**  The Chair noted that this would be Professor John Robinson’s last Quality and Curriculum Committee meeting. Thanks were given to John for the value he has added and his contribution to the work of the Committee and the College. | |  |
| 8.2 | **Date of the Next Meeting –** TBC | |  |
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| **Signed** |  | |  |
| **Name:** | Dr Ann Lees | |  |
| **Date:** |  | |  |