

**THE NORTHERN COLLEGE**  
**THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY AND STUDENT EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE**

Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum, Quality and Student Experience Committee held on **30 November 2020**.

**Present:** Prof Mike Bramhall (Chair), Colin Forrest, Prof Tim Thornton (from Q20/60 onwards) and Yultan Mellor (Principal).

**In attendance:** The Assistant Principal – Curriculum, Quality, Business Development (Emma Beal) and the Clerk to the Governors (Sarah Johnson).

**Apologies:** Catharyn Lawrence and Sarah Tyler.

**Q20/55** **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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.

**Q20/56** **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2020 were approved as an accurate record (a copy is filed in the minute book).

**Q20/57** **MATTERS ARISING**

Q20/96 It was noted that the process for DBS checks for governors would be rolled out early in 2021.

**Q20/58** **SECTOR REPORT** (Document 2i)

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 corona virus pandemic;
- the DFE review;
- devolution;
- Miriam Caites visit to College;
- Ofsted;
- Regional networks.

**Q20/59** The committee particularly considered:

- the on-campus arrangements for students in relation to COVID safety;
- developments in relation to devolution, noting that the College anticipated receiving grant funding from both SCR and West Yorkshire for 2021/22 which would be based on the previous three years of funding, the College needed to develop a three-year delivery plan, there may also be opportunities to bid for additional funding including from the Manchester area which was being explored;
- details of the visit to College of Miriam Caites noting that she had been very impressed with the College's offer and agreed that it was important provision for her constituents;
- the framework for interim visits being undertaken by Ofsted and the current plan for Ofsted to resume full inspections from January 2021;
- emerging regional networks related to adult education and the College's key role in this as the biggest provider of adult education in Sheffield City region;
- the position with regards to the ESFA audit and potential clawback, noting that the audit remained on-going;
- the potential opportunities and risks related to the lifetime skills guarantee from April 2021, noting that the College awaited the list of qualifications;

- the timetable and potential implications of the FE white paper, including the expectation that there will be joint oversight of regional providers and the impetus for the strengthening of regional networks.

**Q20/60** The committee received a verbal update regarding the DfE review, noting that since the papers had been issued the College had received some further information regarding proposals to remove the 4.7 residential uplift, changes to eligibility for residential learning and changes to how support will be drawn down. It was noted that a full update would be provided at the Board meeting in December 2020.

**Resolved: i That the report be noted.**

**Q20/61** **PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD 2019/2020 OUTTURN** (Document 3i)

The committee considered the draft final outturn dashboard for 2019/20, noting that:

- business success indicators were all rated red as a result of the pandemic and its impact on the College's delivery of short courses;
- the report now presented the year end position as opposed to previous census date to enable readers to clearly see the impact of the pandemic on retention in some areas;
- finance indicators – support and community learning were rag rated green, all others were red, again as a result of the impact of the pandemic – the College would meet the ESFA 68% performance indicator and should therefore retain all adult skills funding;
- student success – all indicators were rag rated green, there had been some leavers from those level 2 courses which had started later in the year, but overall retention and achievement data was strong, some issues on some courses but this would be explored further in the self-assessment report for 2019/20;
- equality, diversity and inclusion – all indicators were rag rated green with the exception of male recruitment, this was being addressed in curriculum planning, it was reported that male participation was high in 2020/21 to date, partly due to low numbers of short course enrolments which were usually predominantly female, noted that the proportion of learners from SCR and West Yorkshire had reduced for 2019/20 and this was thought to be as a result of lower short course enrolments which tended to be more local but this would also be explored further;
- destinations data was an area of potential weakness for the College as this had not been progressed at the rate anticipated due to the pandemic.

**Q20/62** The committee:

- explored how the collection rate for destination data would be improved, noting that whilst the College's response rate was in line with the sector it could be significantly improved and this was important data in relation to policy making;
- explored male recruitment which had been below target for two years in a row, noting how the College was seeking to address this in relation to marketing and curriculum planning.

**Resolved: i That the report be noted.**

**Q20/63** **SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT 2019/20** (Document 3ii)

The committee considered the draft self-assessment report for 2019/20, noting that currently data was incorporated into the narrative but a full set of data tables could be provide if the committee felt it appropriate.

**Q20/64** The committee:

- agreed that in order to enable governors to fully interrogate and challenge the data and the assumptions drawn from it a full set of data tables should be appended to the report prior to its submission to the Board of Governors;
- explored the Prevent section noting that it currently appeared contradictory in relation to the strength of induction work and weaknesses in course planning, it was agreed that the narrative should be updated to better reflect the nuanced position;

- explored the presence/visibility of HE in the report and agreed that it should include HE in the context and reference the HE annual report in the scope;
- challenged the existence of equality and diversity policies as being a strength and agreed that the point should be re-worded to reflect the impact on the student experience;
- explored how weaknesses are stated, currently set out as actions/areas for improvement and agreed this should be clarified;
- explored the use of the term technical in the leadership and management weaknesses and agreed this should be re-worded to clarify that it did not relate to T-levels, but rather professional updating;
- agreed to add the College's reputation in the sector as a strength.

**Resolved: i That a full set of data tables be appended to the self-assessment report prior to its submission to the Board of Governors;**

**ii That with the inclusion of the updates outlined above the self-assessment report for 2019/20 be recommended to the Board of Governors for approval.**

**Q20/65 PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD – 2020/21 to 30 SEPTEMBER 2020 (Document 3i)**

The committee considered the performance dashboard for 2020/21 to 30 September 2020 particularly noting that:

- it was very early in the year to make any judgements regarding performance other than recruitment which was presented in detail elsewhere on the agenda;
- a key factor would be the ESFA approach to protection of funding as a result of COVID 19 for 2020/21, which was as yet unknown and would not be announced until Spring 2021.

**Q20/66** The committee noted the performance reported and agreed that the data presented was as anticipated.

**Resolved: i That the report be noted.**

**Q20/67 PERFORMANCE REPORT (Document 3iv)**

The committee considered a performance report which set out key activities and performance in relation to curriculum and student experience, noting that a significant amount of activity in relation to COVID 19 and firefighting had been required.

**Q20/** The committee:

- explored the test and trace activity, work undertaken with public health and very low levels of positive cases experienced by the College;
- explored whether there had been any increase in complaints arising from the current situation, noting that there had been a small amount of enquiries related to the refund of fees but this had not been a key issue for the College;
- welcomed the overall positive feedback of current students at the College in relation to their experience.

**Resolved: i That the report be noted.**

**Q20/69 CURRICULUM INTENT AND STAFFING RESTRUCTURE (Document 4i)**

The committee considered a report which set out:

- the work being undertaken to realign management responsibilities and enable a sharper focus on teaching, learning and assessment which was in the final stages of completion;
- an updated curriculum outline focussed on recovery for the remainder of the 2020/21 academic year.

**Q20/70** The committee:

- explored the position with regards to teaching staff coverage and recruitment plans;

- agreed that the early part of 2021 was likely to remain a challenging period for student recruitment due to COVID 19;
- supported the College's proposed plans for offering fast track opportunities for students starting in the Spring 2021, progression planning sessions, summer intensives and community bounce back and resilience support;
- explored the lessons learnt from the College's on-line delivery and how this could be incorporated into a blended approach and alternative assessments;
- welcomed the College's focus on the development of a digital learning strategy;
- explored whether it was possible to further position the College's curriculum offer in relation to retraining for people mid-career and agreed this could be more explicitly outlined;
- explored how the College could more clearly orientate itself to outcomes in employment.

**Resolved: i That the report be noted.**

**Q20/71 RISK LOG – RISKS OVERSEEN BY THE COMMITTEE (Document 4ii)**

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, including:

- the potential impact of the DfE review and devolution in relation to the College's curriculum offer (risks 2 and 3);
- the development of an ICT infrastructure which can support the College's curriculum and student experience ambitions (risk 5);
- the impact of COVID 19 on the College's ability to deliver its curriculum plan for 2020/21 and offer a safe and appropriate student experience (risk 6);
- workforce issues which may impact on the College's teaching and learning and student support capacity in the short term (risk 8).

**Q20/72** The committee:

- particularly explored the impact of COVID 19 on the student experience, noting that the College had worked hard to ensure that students felt secure but that inevitably the lower than usual numbers of students in the College would be likely to impact on the overall experience;
- agreed that the narrative around some of the risk required updating as things were moving on quickly.

**Q20/73** It was agreed that the risks were appropriate and the controls in place provided assurance. It was noted that a number of the key risks had been explored throughout the meeting.

**Resolved: i That the risk register be noted.**

**Q20/74 POLICIES (Document 5i)**

The committee considered and approved the following policies:

- admissions;
- additional learning support;
- compliments and complaints;
- student disciplinary;
- residential admissions
- safeguarding children and young people.

**Q20/75** The committee explored the policies in relation to the potential implications of the DfE review of residential funding and noted that they were based on continuation of the current approach but would be reviewed at the end of the academic year and updated if required.

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

**Q20/76**    **GOVERNANCE**

The committee noted the resignation from the committee of the independent member Chloe Rendall.

**Q20/77**    The committee reviewed the effectiveness of on-line meetings, concluding that the meetings worked well and were convenient for members and aided attendance, and agreed that this approach would be continued for the foreseeable future.

**Resolved:**    **i    That meetings of the committee continue to be held on-line for the foreseeable future.**

**Q20/78**    **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Curriculum, Quality and Student Experience Committee will take place on **22 February 2021 – 1.30pm.**

<b>Signed</b>	
<b>Position</b>	Chair of Quality Committee
<b>Date</b>	