

**CHELMSFORD COLLEGE  
QUALITY AND LEARNERS COMMITTEE  
22 February 2022 – 2.00 pm**

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**Minutes**

**PRESENT:** Sarah Noble (Chair)  
Presley Devenny (Student Governor) from 4.00 pm \*  
Nedas Laurinavicius  
Paddy Reilly  
Andy Sparks (Principal)  
Barbara Vohmann

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Penny Petch (Director of Teaching, Learning & Quality) \*  
Debbie Garroway (Vice Principal, Curriculum & Quality)  
Debs Hurst (Deputy Principal, Finance & Corporate Services)  
Alison Davies (Director of Curriculum, Moulsham Street)  
Marco Iciek (Director of Learner Development & Inclusion) \*  
Mark Emerson (Director of Information Services) \*  
Simon Drane (Director of Curriculum, Princes Road) \*  
Rob Millea FCA (Clerk to the Corporation)  
Joanne Harrington (Assistant Clerk)

*All attendees attended the Meeting in person except for those marked \* who accessed the Meeting through MS Teams.*

**735. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

Apologies for Absence were received from Amanda Montague, Christian Norman and Susan Hughes.

The Clerk advised that, for personal reasons, Susan Hughes has requested leave of absence as a governor until the end of this academic year. A resolution to approve leave of absence for Susan will be put to the Board at its Meeting on 25 March 2022.

Skye Kneisler-Butterfield (Co-opted member – Student) had been co-opted for the remainder of this academic year to this Committee, but she has now withdrawn for personal reasons.

### **736. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS AND CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

Barbara Vohmann declared her interest as a staff member at Anglia Ruskin University. She also informed the Committee that her employer has contacts with staff of Willmott Dixon.

The Clerk declared his interest as Company Secretary of Essex Shared Services Limited.

Andy Sparks declared his interest as a Director of Essex Shared Services Limited.

Debs Hurst informed the Committee that she continues in her role as a Member Representative on the Essex LGPS Advisory Board.

No other declarations made.

No **confidential** items were notified.

### **737. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Urgent Business.

### **738. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2021**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday 9 November 2021 were **APPROVED** and **SIGNED** by the Chair.

### **739. MATTERS ARISING**

The Clerk provided a summary of Action Points from the last Meeting and current status.

The Committee noted that the Board had approved the following items at its Meeting on 10 December 2021:

- Annual Safeguarding Report 2020-21
- College Self-Assessment Report 2020-21
- College Improvement Plan 2021-22
- Curriculum KPIs 2021-22
- Committee Terms of Reference (annual renewal)
- Appointment of Richard Davidson as designated governor for Careers

Regarding the development of Middle Managers, Debbie Garroway and Debs Hurst have put a programme together to support the way forward for these managers. This has begun and is going well, under Debbie's supervision of its delivery. Their current focus is on curriculum intent for

academic managers and managers are being asked to explain their intent to the CEG in March to ensure synergy with the College objectives.

A College certificate is to be issued on completion of the programme alongside celebrating success during PD week at the end of the summer term.

The Chair asked for an update on progress at the next Meeting of the Committee on 17 May 2022.

**ACTION: DG**

Simon Drane reported that the JTL partnership initiative is still being proceeded with them. Progress is looking very positive for the plumbing area. Financial implications are the next step with the hope of agreeing a position by Easter with JTL, together with validating JTL's market research to ensure viability.

The Chair asked about the Catering curriculum and its future. It was explained that it is necessary to look at this year's proposed Curriculum Plan to assess if it is fit for purpose. The point was made that this curriculum area is not offered by any other provider locally. It was agreed that this should be added as a risk on the Curriculum & Quality dartboard.

**ACTION:DG**

The Clerk reported that Mark Emerson had provided a fuller IT update following on from issues earlier this year to the Audit Committee on 23 November 2021 (see minute 693.3 of that Committee).

All other Matters Arising are dealt with elsewhere in this Meeting.

**740. PRESENTATIONS FROM CAMs IN INTERVENTION AREAS**

The Committee **RECEIVED** a Powerpoint Presentation from five Curriculum Area Managers in the designated 2021-22 Intervention Areas:

**Engineering & Electrical**

Presented by Mark Johnson:

*Engineering*

- 22 action points of which 6 were AMBER and the rest all GREEN.
- Good progress to date with retention and projected achievement (above National Rate) – this is the primary focus
- Attendance at English/Maths and PDP very good – around 90%

- All staff have achieved their 5 KE
- Assignment work being marked on time and feedback to students is good

The Principal asked how attendance for English & Maths had been improved. Mark said that staff had personally directed students into the lessons.

The Chair asked how have staff improved their TaLoS so quickly so far this year. Mark said it was a combination of higher morale and better management of staff. There was now a very good atmosphere in the department. This was confirmed by Nedas from his observation.

### *Electrical*

Presented by Simon Drane

- Some staffing issues recently with recruitment which has impacted delivery and practical assessments (which have been delayed)
- Interim manager has made positive impact
- Strategic review of recruitment
- Some agency support has been needed and are now in place
- 15 actions of which 9 are AMBER and 2 are RED
- Retention good and projected achievement is above NR in each Course – attendance in mid 80s except level 3 evening which is 69%

The Principal asked how the College can be confident that evening classes are producing dividends given that these students (who are at Princes Road) are working full-time and that produces its own challenges for them.

It was noted by the Chair that progress is very positive, and that retention has held up well. Simon endorsed this and said that he is confident students can catch up on practical workshops. He remained concerned about attendance and level 2 retention.

### **16-18 Apprenticeships**

Presented by Sally Gatrell

- Achievement projected to be around 85%
- Academic staff meet weekly
- 16 actions of which 6 are AMBER and the rest are GREEN
- Skills gaps being addressed overall and for specific individuals
- Workplace visits being carried out to support development of KSB (Knowledge Skills and Behaviours)

- Meetings with carpentry employers to ensure they know what is required for students they have
- Recruiting difficult in carpentry

The Principal referred to the issues in carpentry and asked how the backlog is being addressed. Sally said that employers are clear what is required of them in terms of breadth of tuition and experience – affected last year by COVID and on-line learning.

She also said staff shortages has been a significant issue with one member covering two positions – steps are in place to recruit. In addition, learners are very immature and have minimal initial skills.

## **Creative Design & Media**

Presented by Jordan Barzoukas

- 14 Actions – all GREEN
- Retention has improved
- Explained reasons for withdrawals – health issues, going into employment, exclusions
- Confident of good outcomes this year and that the intervention plan will succeed

The Chair asked if there are skills gaps shown by new students? Jordan said that this is true and is being addressed in the Intervention Plan and seems to be working.

Jordan assured the Principal that art and media is proceeding satisfactorily with retention over 85%. In response to Paddy Reilly, he indicated that there are about 300 students in this area.

## **English & Maths (Functional Skills)**

Presented by Lisa Houghton

- Driven by FS poor results last year
- 57 Actions, of which 18 are GREEN, 31 AMBER and the balance of 4 are RED, with 4 not due/started
- Areas of concern are highlighted and still of concern, mainly caused by low attendance at exams
- Staffing issues still a challenge but being met
- Need to review FS exam processes

The Chair enquired as to the reasons for the poor results before Christmas – Lisa said that COVID and lack of discipline of students contributed but she was confident that targets will be met.

The Principal observed that the levels of new students is not great. Lisa agreed and still thinks that the results will be hit compared with the past due to COVID and other related reasons, like returning to campus learning. There are still some campus weaknesses in certain areas,

The Chair enquired if there was feedback on English and Maths teaching from Learner Voice meetings? Debbie Garroway responded by saying there are now a lot more focus groups to get students input on the educational challenges for them. The input from them is being acted on.

Paddy Reilly asked how many students are needing to get to level 4? Lisa responded it is a large number – over 1000 in both subjects. Students come with poor previous achievement in school therefore there is a lot of ground which needs to be made up. Lisa said the challenges were similar in both subjects.

## **Business & Leisure**

The VPC&Q advised that, from January 2022, Business and Leisure has become an intervention area from 4 January 2022 as all KPIs in that area are giving cause for concern.

Alison Davies commented:

- Variety of reasons leading to intervention being imposed
- Inconsistent and declining performance indicators
- Complaints from staff, students and parents
- Low morale and poor team culture
- Intervention Plan now in progress
- Details of KPIs provided to the Committee
- Attendance is poor – below 80%
- Progress against TAG not too bad (70%)
- Retention and predicted Achievement is OK

Alison expressed confidence that the plan should turn around the weaknesses. In response to the Principal, she said that management in the department are being supported by experienced managers elsewhere in the College.

The Chair sought to know the reasons for the problems which had arisen. Alison said it was a combination of culture in the department, timetabling, lack of consistency in teaching and managing the students and some

poorer behaviours by students (pushing boundaries, immaturity) post COVID.

The Chair was concerned that the decline has occurred quite quickly. Alison said it had not surfaced as learning was on-line during lockdowns resulting in less interaction between groups of students and groups of staff and that the leadership & management was not as positive as it should have been.

The **Intervention Plans** in place for each of the areas covers:

- Improving attendance and student engagement/behaviours
- Improve accountability and staff performance
- Develop culture of whole College accountability
- Ensure vocational teams fully engaged with FS delivery
- The need for highly effective planning
- Additional support for students to build confidence for examinations and assessments
- Ensure plans in place for unexpected changes in delivery methods due to COVID19

The Committee **RECEIVED** the Reports and **THANKED** the CAMs for their presentations and answering Committee questions.

## **741. TEACHING LEARNING & ASSESSMENT**

Penny Petch (Director of Teaching, Learning & Quality) **PRESENTED** a Report on observation of TLA so far during 2021-22 and a table of continuing actions proposed for the remainder of the current year.

Penny also provided verbal updates on T Levels and on Teaching & Learning generally.

The key points of the **TLA Observation Report** were:

- 95 observations so far this year, slightly lower than 2018-19 (last comparable year (118))
- 72% of teachers meet all 5KE (target for the year 85%), a better level of progress to date compared to 2018-19. These figures do not include ten teachers, who are mentors (9) and one who is undergoing teacher training
- Changes to the observation policy in December 2021
- Addition of the holistic profile to the progress review system
- Four curriculum areas have met EOY targets already
- Three curriculum areas below College average of 72% (Health, Care and Access, Sport and Public Services and Construction)

- Key developments in the year explained – new observation policy, PDDs, Advanced Practitioner and mentor support and the introduction of the How2 platform

The **Key Issues noted this year** were itemised in the Report and included the following:

- Return to pre-pandemic teaching style
- KE1 is lowest in terms of achievement (planning and sequencing of curriculum)
- Placing planning on the online College scheme of work system
- Rigorous monitoring by the VPC&Q
- Support from APs and mentors to continue as well as continuing non-directed support – Pedagogy Pulse, Teaching and Learning Strategy of the month and Pedagogy Partners

### Governor Questions

The Principal commented that three areas are below target on the TaLos system and whether the holistic grades are looking better. Penny said that she doesn't know yet and will be reviewed next week during PRBs.

### **ACTION:PP**

In response to Barbara Vohmann, Penny said students had missed learning and not being in school had given rise to them struggling. Their basic skills need to be addressed and the learning overall paced carefully and sequentially. This message needs to be spread through curriculum areas and to that end, best practice is being shared.

The Chair asked if staff are changing Schemes of Work to respond the challenges that exist for students to meet their needs and whether it is being better evidenced. Penny confirmed this is the case and that the College is aware of OFSTED interest in this area to demonstrate teaching Intent.

The Chair asked about evidence of impact of CPD on the teaching of individual teachers. Penny said this is very hard to measure – records are kept of attendance and CPD is monitored, based on teachers' needs for their curriculum area and their own practice – teachers record their experience and feedback on the content/delivery.

### **T Level Update**

Training was given last week to all staff from ETF during PDDs – future training from ETF is expected to come over the next few months.



## **742. ATTENDANCE, RETENTION AND PREDICTIVE OUTCOMES 2021/22**

The VPC&Q presented a **Report** on achievement, retention, progress and attendance so far during 2021-22, which includes predictive outcomes.

The key points of the Report were

- The Report compares the above data against College targets, outturn for last year and most recent National Rates (2018-19)
- Detailed data tables were provided to the Committee for review – 16-18 students, 19+ students and by department
- Retention is 2pp down on last year for 19+ and 1pp down on last year for 16-18
- Outcomes for 16-18 learners are above the outturn last year and slightly below the College target, but above NR – nevertheless, there are concerns at entry level and level 2 with under 50% of learners in these groups making the progress expected of them
- Outcomes for 19+ learners are below last year's outturn and below the College target, but above NR
- Attendance continues to be a challenge for both groups of students (16-18 and 19+), especially at Levels Entry, 1 and 2 and are adversely affected by English and mathematics and tutorial lessons
- Learners receiving Higher Needs funding and Looked After Children and Care providers are making good progress

The data in the Report provided more detail to Members and covered data regarding learners' progress against their respective Target Achievable Grade, which is reviewed every six weeks. Currently, the progress varies considerably between curriculum departments and is lower than in previous years.

It is likely that the impact of lost learning is responsible and the ability of students to re-adjust just to face-to-face learning, as well as over inflation of GCSE grades in some cases, is resulting in some learners struggling to progress as expected.

In addition, there is the effect of several referred assignments and the failure of students in some cases to submit work to satisfy the higher grades.

The VPC&Q emphasized that the next few months is the key time to do the 'heavy lifting' to get students to achieve as best as they possibly can.

## Governor questions

Barbara Vohmann asked for further explanation of the reasons for why learners are not progressing as well as they might.

The Principal said that there are 280 learners at Entry level and progress is being dragged down at present by nearly half of the students doing FS. However, it is better than last year although it is 10pp below the 2018-19 National Rate.

Debbie Garroway said that there are additional workshops being offered to get students up to speed.

Further discussion around mental health was raised by Paddy Reilly as in university scenario where the return to campus has improved engagement quite quickly. Debbie outlined the reasons why many students are finding it a challenge at present (anxiety, nervousness, lack of maturity, no 'normal' teaching for two years, lack of resilience).

She confirmed that the College provides mental health support to the extent it is feasible to do so, given resource and budgetary constraints. Marco Iciek said the issues relate back to restricted development of students at school between ages 14 to 16. He also commented that external referrals for mental health issues are on an 18-month waiting time.

The Committee **NOTED** the Report.

### **743. ENGLISH & MATHEMATICS**

The Director of Curriculum, Moulsham Street (Alison Davies) **PRESENTED** a Report giving an overview of the current position and progress made against the formal intervention plan.

The intervention plan covers all aspects of Maths and English delivery – GCSE and Functional Skills. There are 57 actions, of which 4 are RED and 31 are AMBER.

The results of the November 2021 GCSE resits were poor, declining significantly from 2020 – the number of students taking resits in the past two years was comparable. The results are in line with the FE sector for Maths but lower in English (21% v 36%).

The FS results from exams undertaken in December were positive at Levels 1 and 2, but Entry Level was below expectations for English, but FS Entry Level for Maths were lower than expected.

The Committee was provided will full detail of the results for both FS and GCSE.

The key objectives of the **Intervention Plan** are as follows:

- Improve accountability and staff performance in FS Maths
- Develop whole College accountability for M&E
- Ensure vocational teams fully engaged and progress reviewed by all CAMs and Heads of Departments
- Highly effective planning
- Improve attendance and engagement in FS Maths
- Additional support for students to build confidence and provide examination preparation
- Students enrolled on right programme
- High standards of quality assurance
- COVID19 planning (if needed)

Alison confirmed that tutors are reporting that students have large basic skills gaps and are finding areas of their study programme challenging, especially at level 3.

The Committee were also informed of the staffing position.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the Report.

#### **744. STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

This item covered the following subjects and was presented by the Director of Learner Development and Inclusion:

- Student 'On Course' Survey (December 2021)
- Learner Voice Report
- Governor Champions Report
- Student Destinations 2020-21

##### **744.1 Student 'On Course' Survey**

The Committee **RECEIVED** a Report from the Director of Learner Inclusion & Development covering the Student 'On Course' Survey (December 2021).

The **Survey** took place during December and was live for two weeks. Overall, the survey produced a positive response of 90%, slightly higher than last year (87%) and the same as the rate in the October 2021 Induction Survey.

Marco Iciek reported that almost 1800 learners responded, as against 1400 learners who responded to the Induction Survey last October.

The questions put to students covered the following key areas:

- Welcoming and safe College
- Knowing how to operate in College due to restrictions
- Basic course information
- Safeguarding
- Expectations around attendance, behaviour and conduct
- Student support services (including mental health)

The only areas of low response were 'do you know how you are going to be assessed for your qualification' and 'do you know what your next step is after you complete this academic year' (13% said no in each case) and 'do you feel that you are progressing well' (12% said no).

All other questions engendered a response rate of 90% positive or more.

The Report explained the mechanisms to inform students about progression and that process is continuing with students. The response rate should therefore improve.

### Governor questions

The Committee was pleased with the revision of the LV process for the future. Marco said that the key issues raised will be reported to this Committee at each Meeting, along with planned actions.

#### **ACTION:MI**

It was agreed that one or two governors will attend the next LV Meeting scheduled for 25 March 2022, which will be just before the Board Meeting scheduled for that day.

#### **ACTION: MI/DG**

The satisfaction rates in Construction are lower than other areas and there is therefore a need to drill down to identify the reasons and see if they can be improved.

### **744.2 Learner Voice Report**

The Committee noted that a Learner Voice Meeting took place on 15 October 2021 and these Meetings will continue this year on a termly basis. These Meetings will be led by the PDP lead together with some other selected managers to make the Meetings more engaging for

students and to address the points made in the previous minutes of this Committee (**minute 727.2**).

The Committee were advised that the next LV Meetings are scheduled for 25 March 2022 (same as Board) and 27 May 2022.

In addition, Marco advised that the LV Meetings will be supplemented by a series of focus groups on a smaller scale in order that students can express their views and concerns more confidently. These groups will be run at **both campuses**, to recognise the differences in learners at the two sites, and in **subject specific areas**. Details of dates scheduled were provided to the Committee. They will cover maths/English, PDP, sexual harassment, mental health and the College anti-bullying policy.

Finally, there will be opportunities for learner representatives to attend directorate Meetings and to meet SMT members.

These initiatives will be reviewed and analysed and used to construct the overall Learner Voice methodology for 2022-23.

Paddy Reilly asked if students are rising to the LV challenge and Marco reported that they are attending and the maths & English focus group at Princes Road recently commented that use of agency staff means there is a lack of continuity of teaching.

### **744.3 Governor Champion Reports**

The Governor Champions programme has now begun, albeit in a very limited way due to illness and COVID restrictions.

Debbie Garroway is to provide a verbal Report notwithstanding the limited number of visits thus far. This will be coupled with a short Report from governors (coordinated by the Chair) who have participated in the process to be given at the next Meeting of the Committee together with responses from Directors on how the process is going from their perspective.

**ACTION: SN/DG**

### **744.4. STUDENT DESTINATIONS REPORT 2020-21**

The Director of Learner Development & Inclusion **PRESENTED** a detailed analysis of the above for the information of the Committee.

Contrary to last year, there has been a significant shift back to progression into employment rather than remaining in education. This situation reflects the experience in 2019-20 before the pandemic. Doubtless, this reflects the employment patterns with the position now being that there are more jobs available as the economy recovers.

The Report is prepared up to 4 February 2022 and 1782 learners have responded, about 89% of the contact list. Capture of this information continues throughout the year.

For comparison, the data shows 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 results.

As in the past few years, the number of learners progressing to apprenticeships with the College continues to be disappointing.

The Chair asked that, for the future, the detailed data in the Report be presented in a more visual, diagrammatic form with an indication of movement/change from the previous year rather than the detailed written commentary as is presently the case.

### **ACTION:MI**

The Principal made the point that the shift back to movement into employment for Levels 1 and 2 is a threat to the College as this means that progression to further education courses in the College will be reduced.

Nedas asked if the T Levels introduction will affect destinations, e.g., by leading to more students staying on in the College. It was noted that T Levels are 5 days study per week whereas current vocational courses are 3 ½ days per week so this restricts considerably students undertaking part time work.

## **745. SUB-CONTRACTING ARRANGEMENTS 2021-22**

The Director of Information Services **PRESENTED** a Report updating the Committee on the College's sub-contracting delivery for the 2021-22 year.

As in recent years, the College continues its arrangements with Qube Learning to provide provision for the unemployed in conjunction with JobCentre Plus (contract value £200K) following **APPROVAL** by the Board in December 2021. This will start in April 2022.

There are no other sub-contracting arrangements for 2021-22.

Achievement by learners during 2020-21 (151) was virtually 100%.

The quality of provision is closely monitored through

- Regular operational meetings
- Visits to check existence of learners and their eligibility for funding
- Lesson observations

- Internal Audit review as required by the ESFA

As a result, the College has strong assurance that the work being carried out is of a high standard.

The Committee **RECEIVED** the Report

#### **746. MONITORING OF COLLEGE IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2021-22**

The CIP Monitoring Report for 2021/22, updated to December 2021, prepared by the VPC&Q, was **RECEIVED** by the Committee.

The Report itemised actions agreed, RAG rated, according to progress to date.

The Committee noted that, from January 2022, Business and Leisure has become an Intervention Area due to all KPIs in that area causing concern.

The other two RED issues relate to the development of a standardised approach to the curriculum for adult learners and ensuring all adult learners are provided with opportunities to participate in personal development.

#### Governor questions

The Principal noted that attendance has worsened slightly since the CIP update was done in December 2021. It is therefore now an AMBER issue.

The Committee were also provided with the final version of the **Curriculum Plan 2021-22**.

Concern has been expressed nationally and noted by the Committee that the offer of T Levels to all students is not really viable as they are not tailored to the needs and learning levels of all students. Indeed, some students will not be suitable candidates for T Level qualifications, as they are currently proposed. Consequently, Government is having a re-think on the continuation of BTEC qualifications.

#### **747. RISK REGISTER AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

The Deputy Principal, Finance and Corporate Services and the Director of Information Services **PRESENTED** the updated (to January 2022) **College Risk Register** in respect of curriculum related issues, which was **NOTED**.

Thirteen risks have been identified for all curriculum areas and the Report outlined these in detail for the Committee by area. The dartboard reflects a segment for each academic area, RAG rated.

There are no RED risks.

The emerging risks for this year are

- Mental health and wellbeing of students
- Awarding of QTAGs for GCSEs in 2020-21 is demonstrating some students with significant learning gaps
- Impact of COVID19 and consequential staff sickness, impacting on ability to cover classes (although absence rate is below target at present)

It was noted that Catering may need to be added to the risks given relatively small numbers (currently 54) as it may not be viable financially. There could be a recruitment issue to further explore here.

The changes from the last Report are

- Business & Leisure area into intervention
- T Levels moved to AMBER to reflect lack of success in securing capital to upgrade teaching spaces
- CAM & PAM vacancy in Electrical/Engineering now filled, so now AMBER from RED
- PAM in Construction has moved from RED to AMBER as position now filled

The Senior Leadership Team reviews the Register weekly. The current full detailed Risk Register is placed on the governors' portal.

The Director of Information Services presented a Report on progress against the agreed **Key Performance Indicators** relating to curriculum issues (achievement, retention, attendance), which were discussed. The following areas were highlighted:

- Students not making progress on or above their TAG
- Overall attendance (82% against target of 85%)
- Predicted performance at entry level and level 1, adult learning and high needs learners being slightly below target, but slightly above actual achievement last year
- Staff turnover (25%) above target but expected to fall back to target (18%) by the end of the year

However, all measures are either rated AMBER or GREEN, even though there are some issues as noted above.



The Chair asked if the KPIs could be mapped to the College Improvement Plan to make tracking of progress clearer.

**ACTION: ME/DG**

**748. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Given Susan Hughes' leave of absence, the Clerk advised that another governor should attend the next Meeting of the Safeguarding Committee scheduled for 11 May in her place. This was **AGREED**.

**ACTION: Clerk**

There were no other matters of Any Other Business.

**749. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 17 May 2022 at 2 pm.

There being no further business, the Meeting terminated at 5.00 pm.

Signed.....Date.....