Minutes of the Standards Committee held on Thursday 5th May 2022 at 5pm in Conference Room 2

Members Present: Wendy Brissett
Mollie-Amelia Hehir
Sukhninder Panesar (Vice Chair)
Neil Thomas
Andrew Woodford

In attendance: Georgina Barnard (Managing Director of Institute of Technology)
Gill Darwood (Director of Corporate Governance) (DCG)
Diana Martin (Vice Principal)
Dean Price (Standards & Performance Manager)

Committee administrative matters

1	**Confirmation of quorum**
1.1	The DCG confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

2	**Apologies for absence**
2.1	Apologies for absence were received from David Whatton. In the absence of D Whatton, S Panesar took the Chair.

3	**Declarations of interest**
3.1	There were no declarations of interest.

4	**Minutes of previous meeting**
4.1	The minutes of the meeting held on 8th February 2022 were confirmed as a true record for signature by the Vice Chair.

5	**Matters arising**
5.1	- Item 10.11 – "*to clarify which areas of provision might be lost as a result of withdrawing from partnership activity*" – Partnerships provision update – It was confirmed that no provision had been lost to learners which could not be covered by the College. No provision which was unique had been removed, only provision which was duplicated, was out of area or was of poor quality.
5.2	- Item 6.1 - English & mathematics update - "*An update would be provided on the results of mock examinations and further detail of the number of entries to June examinations would be provided at the next meeting*"
5.2.1	The VP provided an update on English and mathematics in response to this matter. She reminded members that the approach to English and mathematics had been revised to offer two routes depending on grade and initial assessment. This was as a result of the revised functional skills qualifications being considered inappropriate for the majority of learners. This was a sector wide issue, not just

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unique to the College. Mock examinations had taken place in January and then examination entries were done based on these results, with those achieving 3+ grade being entered for GCSE as well as those in their last year of College.

5.2.2   D Price advised that a quality audit had been undertaken before Christmas which had seen some very strong practice and learners were appreciative of the support provided.

5.2.3   In response to a question from A Woodford, in relation to attendance levels in lessons, it was felt that engagement would improve with the benefit of a return to face to face induction talks with both parents and students where the importance of engagement with these lessons could be highlighted.

6   **Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2022/23**
6.1   In the absence of D Whatton, this item was deferred to the next meeting.

7   **Committee Business Plan for 2022/23**
7.1   The DCG advised that the business plan for the Committee provided an indication of business and reports which would be submitted to the meetings of the committee scheduled for 2022/23. It was not a rigid document but was intended as a guide and would remain flexible to accommodate emerging priorities and unforeseen eventualities. The business plan also contained the proposed dates for committee meetings during 2022/23.

7.2   The CEP requested that the standing item on 'Office for Students' was renamed 'HE update' to encompass the wider nature of the item.

7.3   The DCG noted in view of item 8 that the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plan should be added to the plan for a twice yearly update.

7.4   **It was resolved** Subject to the agreed changes, to recommend the committee business plan for 2022/23 to Corporation for approval.

Strategic matters

8   **EDI Action Plan**
8.1   The CEP reminded members that the College had a heightened focus on its work around equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) this year. This began with the publication of the new EDI Commitment Statement at the start of the academic year and had been followed by sessions at staff conference, a number of key events and the appointment of some staff to lead on particular elements of this work through honorarium projects.

8.2   To help guide the work of these staff and others over the next 12 months and beyond, an EDI Action Plan had been developed that turned the commitment statement into clear actions being undertaken to drive forward this important work. The plan was provided for members' consideration and approval.

8.3 The CEP responded to questions from members and provided further clarification on points of detail. He advised that this would be a 12 month action plan running from January to December to align with the Operational Development Plan and that considerable progress had been made already on many of the actions. Future reports to the committee would be red/amber/green rated to show progress.

8.4 **It was resolved** To note the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion action plan.

9 **Update on T-level Delivery**
9.1 The VP provided a presentation on T Level delivery, the key points were noted as:

9.2
- In September 2020, the College had introduced the first wave of T Levels in Digital Production, Design and Development, Education and Childcare, and Design, Surveying and Planning.
- Industry placements were planned to take place in year 2 and all wave 1 learners had met this target.
- In September 2021 the College had introduced further T Levels in Health, Healthcare Science, Science and Digital Support with currently 110 learners enrolled.
- Further T Levels in September 2022 would be introduced in Management and Administration, Design and Development for Engineering and Manufacturing.
- Applications for 2022 were currently at 207 and continuing to rise, which meant that all T Levels would have viable numbers.
- Total investment to date included Specialist Equipment Allocations of £499k and capital investment grants of £2.4m.
- Progression from the first cohort of learners showed 40% progressing to HE, 40% into employment with their placement provider and 20% into apprenticeships or other employment opportunities.

9.3 Going forward, a Capacity Development Fund of £386k had been provided to support the further development of work placements with a target of 460 non-T level placements on specific programmes. This was a very challenging target and it was not yet clear if this would be subject to any clawback, although the amount was not considered to be material. It was noted that some areas were more challenging to arrange placements, such as the Creative Arts, where people tended to work on a freelance or short term contract basis for multiple employers.

9.4 In response to a question from S Panesar, the CEP noted that the development of T Levels did represent a capacity issue in delivery of some disciplines. Staff delivering on the current T Levels were very positive about the provision and the advantages they offered to their learners.

9.5 It was noted that with the wider national roll out there would be heightened promotion by the government towards 2023.

9.6   The CEP noted that work was ongoing through the AoC to challenge the government's proposals for discontinuing other level 3 qualifications and the potential impact on learners not suited to T Level or A Level programmes.

9.7   **It was resolved** To note the update in relation to T Levels.

Standards and Performance Matters for information

10   **Operational Development Plan monitoring**
10.1   The VP reminded members that the Operational Development Plan for 2022 had been agreed by Corporation and ensured that the priorities outlined in the Strategic Plan and as a result of the Annual Strategic Impact Assessment processes were implemented.

10.2   A number of actions were noted which were currently not showing as completed by their original due date. Details on these were provided by exception for members' information and assurance.

10.3   **It was resolved** To note the operational development plan monitoring report.

11   **Data dashboard review**
11.1   The CEP provided a live demonstration of the data dashboard which provided an in-year update in relation to enrolments and attendance by key client group:

- *Apprenticeships* –enrolment numbers were on a consistent level but not yet returned to pre-Covid levels due to the impact of a lower rollover level. Members noted that the financial plan going forward did not provide for a return to previous enrolment levels. Attendance was in line with previous years.
- *Full time learners* – Enrolments were slightly behind the same point last year but the gap had slightly narrowed. Attendance was in line with the previous year.
- *A level learners* – Enrolments were in line with the previous year. Attendance was high and also in line with last year.
- *Adults learners* – enrolments were significantly increased on last year in terms of numbers, but down against the income target due to the changed mix and balance of provision with a move to more unitised, short technical courses, reduction of JCP employability training as well as the cap on ESOL enrolments. The CEP noted that this would be brought back to Corporation for further consideration in relation to the implications for the future offer and resourcing. Attendance of learners was lower than previous years, due to the ongoing impact of Covid.
- *Higher Education* – as previously reported, enrolments were down on traditional HNC/HND programmes but were offset by apprenticeship enrolments and other HE provision funded through WMCA. This cohort had high attendance levels.
- *Subcontracting* – in line with the strategic aim to reduce sub-contracting and focus on areas of strategic alignment, enrolments were reduced.

11.2   **It was resolved** To note the dashboard update.

12   **Risk register monitoring**
12.1   The CEP presented the risk register monitoring report which provided committee
        members with an update on risks relating to curriculum and standards.

12.2   There were six risks that were relevant to this committee. One risk had a higher
        level of risk appetite but a low risk score, relating to changes in government policy
        and funding. The College continued to actively seek opportunities to generate
        further activity and funding where possible. Examples of such activity were on the
        Skills Accelerator project, a collaborative bid with Colleges West Midlands and the
        FE Capital Transformation Fund that had resulted in an award of £8.8m capital grant
        for the four projects bid for.

12.3   There were no changes to the net risk score for the six identified risks when
        compared to the report presented in February, other than the removal of the risk
        relating to Covid. There were three actions subject to some minor delay in respect
        of the implementation of mitigation measures.

12.4   **It was resolved** To note the risk management report.

13   **Teaching and learning report**
13.1   D Price presented the paper which provided a summary of the progress and
        development of teaching and learning across the current academic year. Key points
        from this paper were noted as:

        -    Following Covid, a great deal of work had been done to restore classroom
             teaching to the expected high levels.
        -    Majority of triangle and walkthrough observations had been completed.
        -    Still further work to be done on learners being able to clearly articulate key
             PIP themes (British Values and Prevent), quality and timely marked work and
             digital upskilling.
        -    Learner visits had been introduced to support Ofsted readiness.
        -    Learner visits included a pre-meeting with curriculum teams, lesson visits to
             talk to learners, feedback to curriculum (individually and collective) and a
             report.
        -    Additional Ofsted readiness activity included a presentation to all curriculum
             teams, external visits, CM CPD and curriculum triangles.
        -    College conference on 8th April had a single theme of Safeguarding and had
             received excellent staff feedback. The single theme approach would be
             continued for future conferences.

13.2   D Price provided further clarification on points of detail in response to questions
        from members. He confirmed that staff digital skills had developed as a result of
        remote delivery and these developments had informed the teaching and learning

strategy. W Brissett further noted that there would be a digital theme running through teaching triangles this year.

13.3   **It was resolved** To note the teaching and learning report.

14   **Compliments and complaints report**
14.1   D Price presented the report on the College's compliments and complaints from 27 January to 25 April 2022. A breakdown was provided to show the nature, outcome and action taken. Key points from this paper showed that 6 official complaints were recorded through the 'How Are We Performing' process. All these complaints had been from external customers.

14.2   Four compliments had also been received in the same period. They related to extra mathematics support, CAT customer service and Skills Shop support.

14.3   One suggestion had been received from a learner during this period and the points raised had been forwarded to the relevant Assistant Principal/Executive Director for consideration and had been acknowledged with the learner.

14.4   **It was resolved** To note the compliments, complaints and suggestions report.

15   **Safeguarding and learner conduct report**
15.1   The VP presented the safeguarding and learner conduct report which gave an overview of referrals to the safeguarding, conduct and counselling teams. It also covered safeguarding training for staff.

15.2   The recent College Conference had been fully dedicated to safeguarding training for staff. Several external speakers delivered sessions covering key safeguarding topics including:
-       Understanding Sexually Harmful Behaviours
-       Understanding Adolescent Neglect
-       Online Safety
-       Counter Terrorism

15.3   Safeguarding interventions were noted as:
-       26 Child Protection Plans
-       19 Child in Need
-       37 Early Help
-       8 Learners at risk of Child Criminal Exploitation
-       7 Learners at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation
-       12 reports on peer-on-peer abuse
-       45 Child in Care status

15.4   Conduct interventions were noted as:
-       70 suspensions
-       10 exclusions
-       1 appeal

15.5   The rise in the number of suspensions was felt to be as a result of learners returning to College following extensive periods out of College.

15.6   361 counselling interventions had taken place and the VP advised that these had now returned to face to face sessions. She further advised that 26 staff had undertaken mental health first aid training and a rota had been established of those staff who were available to provide support.

15.7   Members considered the number of counselling referrals by curriculum area and reflected on whether a lower number of referrals indicated a need to raise the profile of counselling in those areas, or if a high number of referrals flagged any particular issues related to a curriculum area. By identifying any trends it might be possible to look at putting additional support in place.

15.8   Members noted that it was pleasing to see the take up of the service in key client groups other than 16-18 full time learners.

15.9   **It was resolved** To note the safeguarding and student conduct report.

16   **Higher Education/Office for Students update**
16.1   G Barnard presented the paper which provided members of the committee with an update in relation to Higher Education matters and Office for Students requirements.

16.2   Key points were noted as:
- An insight into the Level 4 and 5 education reform policy.
- An update on Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) and the next routes to be rolled out over the coming years.
- An update on all reporting actions for OfS compliance was included, which confirmed that all actions had been completed to date.
- A reminder of the role of the QAA and update on forthcoming actions.
- An overview of current HE provision with a plan to build stronger partnerships with Higher Education Institutes (HEIs).
- Update on Aspire to HE programme.

16.3   It was noted that the report on progress against the access and participation plan was reported to both this committee and through the College's Annual Strategic Impact Assessment.

16.4   **It was resolved** To note the HE/Office for Students update.

Standards and Performance Matters for approval
17   **Assessment Malpractice and Maladministration Policy**
17.1   The CEP advised that the policy covered assessment malpractice and maladministration of all activities accredited by an awarding organisation. Tracked

changes showed the proposed changes which had been made to the document. Members were asked to approve the required changes to the policy in order to recommend to Corporation for approval.

17.2   **It was resolved** To recommend the Assessment Malpractice and Maladministration Policy to the Corporation for approval.

18   **Any Other Business**
18.1   There were no further matters of any other business.

19   **Date of next meeting**
19.1   As per the business plan, the proposed meeting dates for 2022/23 were noted as

-       5.00pm on 16th November 2022
-       5.00pm on 8th February 2023
-       5pm on 3rd May 2023

The meeting closed at 18.52.

Approved by the Standards Committee at the meeting held on 16th November 2022.