

Minutes of the Standards Committee held on Wednesday 8th February 2023 at 5pm in Conference Room 2, Broadway

Members Present: Julius Adams
Paul Hartridge
Mollie-Amelia Hehir
Paul Noon
Sukhninder Panesar (Chair)
Neil Thomas (Chief Executive and Principal) (CEP)
David Whatton (Vice Chair)

In attendance: Georgina Barnard (Managing Director of Institute of Technology)
Rachel Corns (Assistant Principal)
Gill Darwood (Director of Corporate Governance) (DCG)
Lynn Glazzard (Assistant Principal)
Samantha Jocelyn-Sears (Assistant Principal)
Diana Martin (Vice Principal) (VP)
Dean Price (Standards & Performance Manager)
Kathryn Jones (Director of HR)

Committee administrative matters

1 Confirmation of quorum

1.1 The Director of Corporate Governance confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

2 Apologies for absence and welcome to new members

2.1 Apologies for absence were received from Claire Millard, Assistant Principal.

2.2 The Chair welcomed Professor Paul Noon and Samantha Jocelyn-Sears to their first meeting of the committee and those present introduced themselves.

3 Declarations of interest

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4 Approve minutes of previous meeting held 16/11/22

4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2022 were confirmed as a true record for signature by the Chair.

5 Matters arising

5.1 All matters arising from the previous meeting had been actioned.

Standards and Performance Matters

6 Operational Development Plan 2023

6.1 The CEP reminded members that the College produced an annual College Operational Development Plan (CODP) for each 12 month period. This plan took on board key actions from the Strategic Plan that related to the year as well as areas identified through the Annual Strategic Impact Assessment (ASIA)

or other regional and national priorities. This was then supported by Quality Improvement Plans in every curriculum area and professional services team, delivered through the performance management system and monitored through the annual cycle of performance data. The Standards Committee reviewed the plan at each meeting, historically looking by exception at any actions which were at risk of not being met.

- 6.2 Whilst this approach remained broadly unchanged, the decision had been taken to focus the CODP for 2023 on the absolute priority actions which the senior team and Corporation should be closely monitoring. It made the assumption that all other actions were being picked up through department QIPs. There were twelve priority action areas identified and the details of the milestones for each of those actions were included in the draft CODP.
- 6.3 The senior team would be restructuring the agenda of its weekly meetings to focus on one or two of these priorities each week. This would ensure they were being closely monitored and supported through to achievement.
- 6.4 For Standards Committee the recommendation was that reports were no longer presented on a 'by exception' basis. By focussing on just twelve priority actions there would be the opportunity to review all twelve at each meeting, whilst still allowing a deep dive into specific actions as required. It was anticipated that this would provide more rigour to the close monitoring of these priority actions.
- 6.5 The twelve priority actions were considered by members and the CEP and VP answered their questions on points of detail.
- 6.6 D Whatton noted that it would be helpful to have an indication of milestones and an [explanation of any acronyms used in the report](#).
- 6.7 P Noon noted that some targets were more measurable than others, and the CEP explained that there were a series of [key performance indicators which sat behind each priority which could also be shared](#).
- 6.8 **It was resolved** to recommend the CODP and approach to performance monitoring to the Corporation for approval.

7 **Accountability Framework**

- 7.1 The CEP advised that, as part of the reforms related to skills and accountability, there was now a new requirement for colleges to produce and publish an annual Accountability Statement as part of the overall accountability agreement between each college and the Department for Education (DfE).
- 7.2 Further guidance on the background to this reform and the expectations of the accountability agreement were provided within DfE guidance. The accountability agreement now had two parts. Part 1 replaced the existing annual grant funding agreement and came from DfE, detailing the terms and conditions associated with funding granted to the College. Part 2 was the new Accountability Statement, which was developed by colleges and should set out the priority objectives for the coming year and how these would meet both the

College's strategic plan and the priorities identified in the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP). The deadline for submission of this Accountability Statement to DfE was 31st May and it would require sign-off by the Corporation prior to submission.

- 7.3 In turn, the LSIP was also being developed currently. The local LSIP would relate to the West Midlands region and its development was being led by Coventry & Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce. Following a detailed set of consultation activities the LSIP was intended to detail the local skills needs of key sectors in the region over the coming years. Its production must be led by employer representative boards. Colleges would then be required to respond to these skills needs through delivery of required provision, some of which would be detailed in the College's Accountability Statement. The deadline for production of the LSIPs was also 31st May, although some indication of skill priorities was expected before this to help inform Accountability Statements.
- 7.4 A very early draft of the content of the College's Accountability Statement was considered. It was noted that much of the content could not be finalised until publication of the draft LSIP. The timeline for production was noted.
- 7.5 DfE would confirm the statement was accepted at some point over the summer and Colleges were expected to publish the document on their website for the start of the new academic year (and no later than 1st December).
- 7.6 Members considered the first draft of the Accountability Statement and suggested that it would be important to articulate actions in relation to development of staff, which could represent one further priority to be included in the document.
- 7.7 **It was resolved** to endorse the approach to production of the Accountability Statement.

8 **Data dashboard review**

8.1 The CEP provided an overview of the Dudley Dashboard which had been updated with latest available data in a number of areas including enrolment, attendance and achievement for each key client group. Members agreed that it would be appropriate to further update both the dashboard and the ASIA on publication of the national performance rates which were due to be published in March 2023.

8.2 A number of annual updates had also been made including estates, people and financial data.

8.3 **It was resolved** to note the Dudley Dashboard update.

9 **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Annual Report and Action Plan**

9.1 K Jones presented the draft Annual EDI Report and action plan which provided the committee with an update on the key EDI developments in the previous academic year, together with EDI metrics and the action plan for 2022/23.

Members were asked to comment on the format of the report as this would be adopted going forward.

- 9.2 Key points to note in this report were:
- The College's gender pay gap had reduced by 3% to 11% which was 3.9% lower than the national average.
 - The College ethnicity pay gap was 2% with the median ethnicity pay gap showing a positive variance of 8.5%.
 - The College disability pay gap was 8%.
 - Mixed ethnicity students generally achieved lower than their peers.
 - The number of students living in a 'disadvantaged postcode area' continued to increase.
- 9.3 K Jones noted that this report would incorporate the annual HR report going forward. Consideration was also being given to incorporating a dedicated EDI section into the operational development plan and next Strategic Plan.
- 9.4 K Jones advised that the College was working with other colleges within Colleges West Midlands (CWM) on five workstreams, including one on apprenticeships which Dudley was leading on.
- 9.5 She reported that 25 new EDI student ambassadors had been appointed and the candidates had shown a high level of commitment to the subject.
- 9.6 She further noted that the expanded pay gap report went beyond the legal requirements which only required the College to report on gender, and as such there were no national benchmarks for ethnicity pay gap and disability pay gap.
- 9.7 Student outcomes were covered within the annual strategic impact assessment (ASIA) within individual areas. It had been noted that mixed ethnicity students generally achieved at a lower rate across all CWM colleges. Training for staff to undertake targeted intervention with those students would be rolled out across all CWM colleges.
- 9.8 In response to a question from the Chair, K Jones advised that staff EDI champions had not yet been appointed although an EDI lead had been appointed in September. The intention was also to appoint a lead on EDI from the team of outstanding practitioners.
- 9.9 An update was provided on EDI training which had been undertaken by staff, including a number attending inclusive leadership training and a whole College focus at the last staff College Conference. K Jones advised that training resources were being further investigated including training for PMR managers on unconscious bias. P Hartridge suggested that face to face sessions were more effective than online training for staff, and that the recent College Conference had been particularly well received. The CEP advised that further CPD days may be introduced to cover some of this training.
- 9.10 The final report would be published on the website and there would be a standing item on the committee's agenda to review progress against the action

plan. P Noon suggested it would be helpful to have some infographics in the final published report to aid reading and highlight some of the positive statistics.

9.1.1 **It was resolved** to note the EDI Annual Report and Action Plan.

10 **Risk register monitoring**

10.1 The CEP presented the report which provided committee members with an update on risks relating to curriculum and standards.

10.2 The gross risk score for two risks had been updated:

- The risk relating to the impact of changes in government policy and other priorities may limit the College's strategic plans. The gross risk score had been increased from 8 to 12, reflecting the long-term uncertainty caused by the ONS reclassification of FE colleges to the public sector. The net risk score had also increased from 6 to 9.
- The risk relating to the College's response to a safeguarding matter had reduced from a gross risk score of 12 to 9. This reflected the ongoing training, support and impact of actions that the College continually made in relation to safeguarding students. The net risk score of 3 remained unchanged.

10.3 There were three actions that were subject to delay:

- In relation to the risk on the quality of apprenticeship provision, new job descriptions had not yet been issued to assessors.
- In relation to the quality of student experience, a mock inspection with another college had not yet been undertaken, however preparations for an Ofsted visit were well underway.
- In relation to the delivery of the work experience strategy, the realignment of work placements and apprenticeships to enable cross selling to employers, was currently under review with a proposal being considered by SLG.

10.4 All other actions were on track or complete. The committee noted that the highest net risk score was 9 which indicated that existing mitigations were having a positive impact on reducing the level of risk to the College.

10.5 **It was resolved** To note the risk register monitoring report.

Teaching and Learning Matters

11 **Teaching and learning update**

11.1 D Price presented the report which provided a summary of the progress and development of teaching and learning across the current academic year. Key points from this paper were highlighted:

- The continued teaching and learning focus for this academic year were teaching triangles, learner visits and Ofsted readiness.
- All curriculum areas had been involved in learner visits; teaching triangles underway with all staff.

- Teaching and learning across the College remained consistently strong. Key areas for development had been identified and continued intervention in place.
- Learner comments from learner visits had been positive. Areas for development (Prevent and curriculum links) had been identified and intervention was underway.
- Work based observations were to focus more on the review process.
- Update provided on the four areas of intervention (exam attendance, Access, retention and timely completion of apprentices).
- A robust process for monitoring teaching and learning performance data continued.
- Student PIP survey results were highly positive with 97% of learners stating that they attended a weekly PIP lesson. Short snappy surveys in addition to longer annual surveys. This is seen on log in. Also held student focus groups on safety both in and outside of College.
- Work with other colleges inspected as outstanding under new framework.

11.2 D Price provided further clarification on points of detail raised by members, including how best practice was shared through teaching triangles, team meetings, learning fairs, Teachmeets and a shared resource area on Teams.

11.3 In response to a question from P Noon, D Price explained that the College's primary focus was on what was best for learners rather than meeting Ofsted criteria, whilst acknowledging that staff needed to have an awareness of the inspection framework and the language used by inspectors.

11.4 In response to a question from D Whatton, D Price explained that the challenge in sustaining Ofsted readiness was in ensuring that each new cohort of learners was prepared in terms of Ofsted language and felt confident to take part in any exchanges with inspectors. In terms of student engagement and gathering feedback from students, M Hehir felt that anonymous surveys were of value as students were likely to be more open in their views, whilst staff felt that student focus groups and learner voice were also valuable mechanisms to capture feedback.

11.5 **It was resolved** To note the teaching and learning update.

12 **Confidential - Compliments and complaints analysis**
This matter is the subject of a separate and confidential minute.

Safeguarding and Student Conduct Matters

13 **Confidential - Safeguarding and learner conduct report**
This matter is the subject of a separate and confidential minute.

Higher Education Matters

14 **Higher Education update**

14.1 G Barnard presented the paper which provided members of the committee with an update on matters relating to Higher Education. Key points were noted as:

- A review of HE roles and responsibilities would be carried out following recent staff changes.
- As a condition of registration with the Office for Students (OfS), providers would come into scope for mandatory involvement in the Teaching Excellence Framework when their HE FTE numbers exceed 500. The College assumed therefore that it would need to participate from next joining date; this was academic year 2026/27. Therefore, preparations were underway to align to the TEF standards.
- A new PowerBI report was being developed to more directly align the College's HE statistics with the metrics required by OfS, DfE and QAA. This would help to produce required documents more effectively.
- The College was up to date with all reporting requirements, with HESSES data being signed off and submitted on 3rd January 2023.
- The majority of HE-related policies and procedures had been updated and published online.
- An update on the HE section of the new College website was still ongoing to identify amendments required in line with Consumer Law and OfS registration.

14.2 P Noon noted that it might be helpful for the College's HE partners to support with TEF preparation. G Barnard advised that she was a member of a network of colleges who had also provided support in this area.

14.3 The Chair noted the importance of timely investment in staff to ensure that there was a good understanding of the metrics and data on programmes which would be required.

14.4 **It was resolved** To note the Higher Education update.

Policies for recommendation

15 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

15.1 The CEP noted that it was a requirement of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 that the College published a Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement. The statement had been reviewed and updated and was being presented to the committee for recommendation to Corporation. The statement had been reviewed by senior colleagues and changes were shown in an alternate colour in the document.

15.2 **It was resolved** To recommend the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement to the Corporation for approval.

16 Any Other Business

16.1 Members agreed that future meetings would commence at 4.30pm.

16.2 The Chair noted that this would be D Whatton's final standards committee meeting. On behalf of the committee he expressed his thanks to David for his commitment and support during his time as both a member and as former chair of the committee.

17 **Date of next meeting**

17.1 The next meeting was noted as 3rd May 2023 at 4.30pm.

The meeting closed at 18.22 hours.

Approved by committee members at the meeting held on 3rd May 2023.