

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE
1ST DECEMBER 2011**

Present: Mr H Guntrip (Chair)
Mr P Hannan
Ms T Bruton
Ms P Palmer-Abbit
MR D Arthur
Mr B Jefferies

In attendance:

Mr J Allen	-Clerk to the Governors
Ms L Brown	-Vice Principal
Mr M Lumsden Taylor	-Director of Finance

The meeting started at. 09.30

APOLOGIES, WELCOMES & DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

1. There were no apologies. The Clerk confirmed that the meeting was quorate. There were no declared interests against any of the agenda items. The two student governors were welcomed to their first meeting of the Committee. The Clerk informed the Committee that governor recruitment for the three vacancies is currently under way and new members will be added to the Committee to ensure there is a better balance between governors from within the College and external governors.

MINUTES

2. **RESOLVED -** that the minutes of the meeting of the Strategy & Performance Committee held 9th June 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

3. The Committee's terms of reference were received for information purposes (copy attached to the signed minutes).

MATTERS ARISING

4. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

5 The College report '*Quality Improvement Action Plan 2009/10*' was received (copy attached to the signed minutes). The QIAP focuses on operational areas for improvement as identified in the College's Self Assessment Report (SAR) 2009/10 and by external agencies such as Ofsted and feedback from Awarding Bodies. It was confirmed that any actions yet to be completed will be transferred into the new QIP that will fall-out from the College Self Assessment Report 2010/11 that will be an agenda item at the December Board meeting.

6. Progress updates were made available against each of the following areas for improvement:

- Ensure effective transition to Functional Skills to improve success rates to 58%
- Implementation of an effective Careers Strategy and plan improved collection and use of destinations data
- Further improvements in teaching and learning and e-learning
- Improvement in success rates
- Improvement in retention on long courses at 16-18 and 19+
- Improve the promotion of equality and diversity in lessons to further narrow the achievement gap
- Further incorporation of pre-school into capital, estates, curriculum and quality College agendas
- Improved engagement with schools

7. Against each area for improvement the Committee reviewed in detail the proposed actions to be taken, and the expected impact/outcomes arising from the actions, and by when.

8. The following points were noted:

- (i) Although Functional Skills achievement was 54% against the target of 58%, the area will still be assessed as 'Outstanding' because of the excellent student experience resulting from a fully embedded approach to Skills for Life.
- (ii) Financial modelling to support the development of a careers 'hub' is currently under way. With the strong focus from government on employability and job outcomes, and with the expectation that obtaining a job outcome could be factored into the formulae that determines a college's success rate, the Committee agreed with senior management that the 'Hub' needs to be operational within the current academic year. This is even more important with the demise of Connexions from March 2012. The Hub 'will' also be a key vehicle to invite employers into the college.
- (iii) Good progress has been made on teaching & learning and e-learning with Good and Outstanding observations at 86% against a target of 84%.
- (iv) The College has suffered an overall decline of 3% in success rates in 2010/11. It was confirmed that achievements are high for those students who stay on course. The main issue is around retention, especially 16-18 provision. Full data on retention is to be presented under a later agenda item. The Principal confirmed that a thorough review is currently underway on all aspects of the learners' journey and strategies are being put in place to address retention issues. A key theme at all recent staff presentations from the Principal has been on the need to seek improvement in retention and for all staff to be accountable. There is no single issue behind the decrease in retention, the issues are complex, from obtaining job outcomes, impact of the withdrawal of EMAs, to leaving at the end of the 1st year of a 2-year course because of the pressure of not completing assignments within the deadlines set. Robust strategies are being put into place to monitor and improve retention in year including attendance completion of assignments and withdrawals. The issue of retention is a key feature in all curriculum health-check reviews with targets being set and monitored at course/curriculum level.

9. It was **RESOLVED** to note the QIP Action Plan.

IQER ACTION PLAN

10. The IQER Action Plan was received (copy attached to the signed minutes).

11. Against each of the elements of good practice identified by the IQER process a commentary was provided on the actions being taken to ensure that the good practice continues. 'Green' assessments were recorded against each action point with the exception of 2 amber assessments – the development of strategy for scholarly activity and the need to expand the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) to fully meet the needs of students.

12. It was agreed that as all but 2 of the actions have been fully implemented, the Committee will receive an exceptional update on the development of a scholarly activity. The remaining action point around the LRC falls under the scope of the Estates Committee and the capital projects currently being considered.

20. It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

LEARNER SUCCESS RATE DATA 2010/11

21. The College report '*Learner Success Data 2010/11*' was received (copy attached to the signed minutes). The report provided an analysis on 2010/11 retention, achievement & success rate data (negative variances to land-based specialist benchmark data is highlighted in bold)

Retention:

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Land-based 2009/10 benchmark	Variance between 2010/11 & benchmark
Long:					
All ages	84%	83%	82%	88%	-6%
16-18	88%	87%	81%	89%	-8%
19+	79%	78%	83%	86%	-3%
Short:					
All ages	97%	95%	98%	96%	+2%
16-18	100%	94%	97%	98%	-1%
19+	97%	95%	99%	94%	+5%

Achievement:

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Land-based 2009/10 benchmark	Variance between 2010/11 & benchmark
Long:					
All ages	97%	96%	93%	91%	+2%
16-18	98%	97%	96%	93%	+3%
19+	96%	95%	89%	88%	+1%
Short:					
All ages	100%	100%	95%	91%	+4%
16-18	100%	100%	100%	91%	+9%
19+	100%	100%	93%	91%	+2%

Success Rate (Retention x Achievement)

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Land-based 2009/10 benchmark	Variance between 2010/11 & benchmark

Long:					
All ages	82%	80%	77%	80%	-3%
16-18	85%	84%	78%	82%	-4%
19+	77%	75%	75%	76%	-1%
Short:					
All ages	97%	95%	93%	87%	+6%
16-18	100%	94%	97%	89%	+8%
19+	97%	95%	91%	86%	+5%

22. The issues around retention has already been reported to the Committee. As this Committee, on behalf of all governors, has a key monitoring role and has the responsibility to task senior management to seek curriculum and quality improvements, it was agreed that the Committee will receive a specific report on retention at the spring term meeting. The report to outline the various strategies being put in place to improve retention; the targets set, along with expected outcomes; with a progress update on performance to-date and forecast year-end out-turns. Any areas of concern to be highlighted in the report.

23. It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

LESSON OBSERVATION PROFILE 2010/11

23. The College report '*Lesson Observation Profile*' was received (copy attached to the signed minutes). The following points were noted from the report:

- (i) A target of 150 lesson observations was set for 2010-11. This year 179 observations took place, including 1:1 tutorials, group tutorials and supportive observations.
- (ii) As a minimum all staff are observed once within the academic year. Some staff are observed more than once as they teach within a number of areas e.g. schools and a curriculum area, or they have been observed within 1:1 or group tutorial.
- (iii) All staff receiving a grade 3 or 4 are re-observed and enter the Stepping Up process (described in 2.2). Where a member of staff receives one grade 4 they enter the capability procedure. Where a member of staff receives three grade 3 observations they also enter the capability procedure.
- (iv) The lesson observation profile reports the highest grade achieved during the year of every member of staff. The report for all grades is not reflective of the quality of the overall teaching as it includes more observation grades for those staff who are a grade 3 or 4 and being observed more frequently and is therefore not included in the report.
- (v) Those staff who have received a grade 3 or grade 4 have automatically entered 'Stepping Up' which is a supportive process facilitated by the Advanced Practitioners. During 2010-11 26 staff have been supported through the Stepping Up process. Ten staff have achieved a grade 2 or above as a result of support and exited the process. These were all long serving members of staff. Eight staff were supported, but have left the College during the year and 8 staff remain in Stepping Up.
- (vi) The table below shows a comparison of the grade profile against target for 2010-11 (data reports highest grade achieved (126 observations)):

Grade 1 target	Actual	Grade 2 target	Actual	Grade 3 target	Actual	Grade 4 target	Actual
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21%	23%	63%	63%	16%	13%	0%	1%
Total Grade 1 and 2 Observations		86% against the target of 84%					

24. The Vice Principal confirmed that assurances are being sought through external moderation and scrutiny that the grade profile being recorded is robust and accurate.

25. It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE REPORT 2011/12

26. The '*Student Attendance Report 2011/12*' was received (copy attached to the signed minutes) and the following data was reported to the Committee:

- (i) Overall FE attendance 2011/12 to-date is at 87.85%, an improvement of 0.95% compared against this stage last year
- (ii) Overall HE attendance 2011/12 to date is at 85.80%, an improvement of 5.60% compared against this stage last year
- (iii) The overall attendance target is 90%. Although this has not been achieved the setting of a challenging target has resulted in an overall increase in attendance.

27. It was agreed to further review and report back to the Committee on the attendance figure for FE equine which records a decrease 6.65% compared to this point last year.

28. It was **RESOLVED** to note the report.

COLLEGE SELF ASSESSMENT REPORT 2010/11

29. A progress update on the '*College SAR 2010/11*' was made available (copy attached to the signed minutes). It was confirmed that the final report is on schedule to be made available at the December Board meeting for approval (a headline summary will be provided in the Board papers with all governors receiving a copy of the full SAR on a CD data disk).

30. It was confirmed that the following grade profiles are being proposed for Board approval:

Overall effectiveness of provision	Outstanding
Capacity to improve	Outstanding
Outcomes for Learners	Outstanding
Quality of Provision	Outstanding
Leadership and Management Equality and Diversity Safeguarding	Outstanding
Subject Areas	Grade
Animal and Land Management	2
Equine	1
Countryside & Fisheries	2
Landscape, Horticulture and Design	2
Higher Education	2
Foundation Studies	1
Functional Skills and ALS	1
Work-based Learning	2

Schools	2
Cross College Grades	Grade
Estates, Facilities & Grounds (inc H&S)	2
Commercial & Financial Operations	2
Human resources	1
Central Operations	2
Student Support Services	1
Governance	1

31. The Committee challenged why 'Capacity to Improve' and 'Outcomes for Learners' were being assessed at 'Outstanding' against the backdrop of overall success rates declining by 3% in 2010/11 with a continuing three year year-on-year decline in success rates. The Committee sought assurances that the proposed self assessment grades are robust and would stand up to scrutiny from Ofsted.

32. In response the Vice Principal and Principal made the following points:

- (i) The same question was asked during the peer review of the College SAR and the robust defence put forward by the College was accepted by peer reviewers.
- (ii) Teaching & learning is outstanding with a high percentage of grade 1 and grade 2 lesson observations (86%);
- (iii) Student attendance is very high and improving;
- (iv) There is still a great uncertainty on the external landscape and the overall reliability of benchmark data;
- (v) The judgements being proposed are not solely driven by data analysis;
- (vi) Robust strategies are in place to seek improvement in retention; and
- (vii) The student experience is generally very positive confirmed through the Learner Voice;
- (viii) Positive progression to employment is a key factor in measuring success.

33. It was confirmed that if there is no improvement in retention for the current year, then this would have to be reflected in proposed grade profiles in the College SAR for 2011/12.

34. The Committee accepted the assurances that were given by senior management and **RESOLVED** to recommend that the Corporation at its meeting in December be asked to approve the proposed grade profile and College SAR 2010/11.

COMPLAINTS REPORT 2011/12

35. The '*Complaints Report 2010/11*' was received (copy attached to the signed minutes).

36. The Complaints Report includes all official complaints made through the Complaints Procedure between the months of September 2010 up to and including August 2011. The aim of the report is to present and analyse the data collected during this period, compare with previous years where possible, comment on any trends and to make recommendations for improvement.

37. The Complaints Policy and Procedure was reviewed and updated during December 2010. The improved formalisation of the procedure; logging of the individual complaints; involving the appropriate manager in the investigations and notifying the associated member of the Senior Management Team when complaints are received have led to an improved efficiency of the system, response time for

complainants and subsequent higher number of complaints being recorded during the 2010-11 period. The improved process will now generate monthly date for a more accurate year on year comparison.

38. Following review, the Committee welcomed the approach and focus of the report on the various stages of the learners' journey and it was **RESOLVED**:

- (i) To receive a progress report at the next meeting on the actions being taken against each of the listed recommendations;
- (ii) For the scope of future reports to include compliments; and
- (iii) To note the report.

MONITORING OF COLLEGE PERFORMANCE & ASSESSMENT OF RISK

39. The College report '*Monitoring of College Performance & Assessment of Risk*' was received (copy attached to the signed minutes). The Board has agreed a framework for the monitoring of College performance and assessment of risk. The S&P Committee is responsible for making assessments in the area of student experience, teaching & learning. Assessments are to be carried out at each meeting of the Committee through a standing agenda item '*Monitoring of College Performance & Assessment of Risk*' with an overall assessment for each of the two areas being made available to the Board.

40. Once the assessments have been agreed, the Committee, in conjunction with College management, will then agree on the overall assessment (Red for concern/risk, Amber for some concern/some risk/or Green for no risk/no concern) to be made for the area of student experience, teaching & learning.

41. All performance indicators identified for student experience, teaching & learning were assessed as green (no concern) with the following exceptions that were assessed at AMBER (SOME CONCERN/SOME RISK):

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| • Overall Retention | 91% in year which is in excess of the target of 85% but will be subject to on-going monitoring due to the decline in retention suffered last year. |
| • 16-18 Long Retention | 95% current retention against the target of 89% but amber for the same reasons above |
| • HE Headcount of | 621 headcount against the target 650 |
| • 19+ Apprenticeships | Recruitment is currently below target |
| • Attendance | 98.48% average attendance against the target of 90% |
| • Progression to HE target | 22% progression against the of 25% |

42. After taking into account the issues presented to the Committee on 16-18 retention, and although appropriate robust action is being taken to implement a range of strategies to seek improvement in retention, the view of the Committee was that this was still an area of risk that required robust monitoring by both the Committee and Board throughout 2011/12. It was therefore **RESOLVED** to inform the Board of the following overall assessment:

Student experience, teaching & learning	Some Risk/Some
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ANY OTHER BUSINESS

43. There was no other business

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

44. Thursday 1ST March 2012 @ 09.30

The meeting closed at 11.30

Signed: _____ Date: _____

CURRENT STRATEGY & PERFORMANCE SUMMARY ACTION LIST

MIN REF	DETAILS OF RESOLUTION/ACTION POINT	Who	When
12	To receive an exceptional update on the development of a scholarly activity (Outstanding action point from IQER)	VP	1/3/12
22	To receive a report on retention. The report to outline the various strategies being put in place to improve retention; the targets set, along with expected outcomes; with a progress update on performance to-date and forecast year-end out-turns. Any areas of concern to be highlighted in the report.	VP	1/3/12
27	To further review and report back to the Committee on the attendance figure for FE equine which records a decrease 6.65% compared to this point last year.	VP	1/3/12
38(i)	To receive a progress report at the next meeting on the actions being taken against each of the listed recommendations in the Complaints Report 2010/11	VP	1/3/12