

Item: 3  
Attachment:

## MINUTES OF LEARNER COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2016

<b>Present:</b>	Bailey Casson Peter Clark Richie Dunk Letitia Ingham Greg O'Shea John Rees Roy Everett	Student Governor External Governor - Chair External Governor Student Governor (minutes 44 to 89) Staff Governor Chief Executive/Principal Co-opted Non-Governor
<b>In Attendance:</b>	David Clapham Rachael Hennigan Karen Robson  Lesley Venables	Assistant Head of HE (minutes 44 to 73) Vice-Principal (Learning & Achievement) Head of HE & Professional Studies (minutes 44 to 73) Clerk to the Corporation

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

44 Apologies for absence were received from Diane Cothey (Co-opted Non-Governor).

### DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

45 There were no declarations of interest.

### MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

46 **Resolved -** That, subject to the re-wording of minute 43, the minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### MATTERS ARISING

47 The Committee noted that all matters arising had either been completed or were featured on the agenda.

48 Under minutes 26 and 29 the Vice-Principal reported that management had analysed the actions in the Quality Improvement Plan for 2015/2016 and that, where appropriate, areas for improvement would be re-classified as longer-term goals to provide continuity between academic years.

49 Termly Performance Reviews (now re-named as QIP Update meetings) would be made more quantitative for English and Maths to provide evidence of the impact of new moderation processes in improving assessment quality (minute 30).

50 It had been decided that any resourcing implications that could impact on learners highlighted in business support SARs would be reported to the Learner Committee for discussion (minute 32). Further work would take place to integrate functional and curriculum areas within the SAR/QIP process.

51 The most significant way to bring about improvement in 2016/2017 was to ensure that the actions identified in the QIP were advanced and completed. Where business support units had an influence on the delivery of curriculum area QIPs, they would be involved in the respective SAR.

52 Reasons for non-attendance were detailed as part of the report from student focus group meetings. It was felt that the College's Student Voice strategy should be more rigorous in terms of when the information was captured and presented, with more targeted interventions.

53 The Committee noted that there was now a holistic approach to the SAR/QIP process, which was being instilled in all staff.

## **OVERALL COLLEGE PERFORMANCE REPORT**

54 The Vice-Principal (Learning & Achievement) presented for information a report on performance against key curriculum indicators to date for 2016/2017.

### **Attendance**

55 The College's overall attendance level for 2016/2017 was 1.97% points below the identified target of 90%, which was mainly due to the high number of 16-18 year olds studying GCSE English and Maths. However, attendance for curriculum areas had improved compared to 2015/2016, with the exception of HE programmes and apprenticeships. It was recognised that a large amount of effort had been expended on raising levels of attendance, which was proving to be effective.

56 Attendance on GCSE and Functional Skills programmes had improved by 11.97% points. A full review of attendance reporting was underway to ensure that all information was captured properly.

57 The report included information on performance by age and qualification level. The Committee noted the significant increase in the quality of reporting and that actions for improvement had been identified, progress against which would be monitored at future meetings.

### **Retention**

58 Governors were reminded that the College target for retention was 93% for 16-18s and 95% for 19+ learners. Performance levels for the 16-18 cohort were 5.6% points above the target and 3.5% points above for 19+ learners.

59 The key areas for concern were 19+ Two Year Construction & Technology courses (where withdrawals had taken place in 2015/2016), Diploma, Certificate Levels, Increased Employer Delivery programmes and Basic English and Maths qualifications.

60 Performance on apprenticeship programmes had improved within each age group and was on track to meet the target for timely retention.

### **Progress**

61 Although the majority of learners were working at their target grade, at the first checkpoint in 2016/2017 a total of 27.2% of learners were achieving below their target grades or were considered to be at risk of failing their course. Robust monitoring was in place at individual learner level and all managers had been tasked with providing details of relevant intervention measures by 9<sup>th</sup> December. Meetings would be taking place to improve the levels of value added in a range of subjects.

62 Governors asked about the methodology used to assess target grades for individuals and were informed that the College used 'ALPs', which was based on added value. An aspirational target was also set for each learner, which was one grade above the basic target. However, many further education courses did not fit easily with the ALPs measure of performance and the College was working to disaggregate the data to identify patterns and areas of concern. The outcome of this analysis would be reported to the next Committee meeting.

### **Destinations**

63 Information obtained from learners who had completed their courses in 2015/2016 indicated that 63.33% of 16-18s and 28.27% of 19+ students had progressed to further or higher education courses. A total of 26.67% of 16-18 year olds had found an apprenticeship and 62.86% of 19+ learners had moved into employment or self-employment.

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT 2015/2016 AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2016/2017**

64 The Vice-Principal presented the draft SAR for 2015/2016 and QIP for 2016/2017. These had been moderated against Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework and had undergone a detailed and rigorous validation process involving both internal and external members.

65 It was proposed that the College graded itself overall as a '2' or 'good' and it was noted that there had been considerable discussion on the assessment of outcomes for learners. Several areas for improvement had been identified, including raising levels of attendance, achievement on a small number of courses, increasing the number of high grades attained on English & Maths Study Programmes, a greater proportion of learners undertaking work experience, addressing under-performance and achieving positive value added. Each curriculum area was clear as to what was required and the actions to bring this about were well-understood and supported by staff.

66 The QIP had been structured to enable progress against each milestone during the year to be measured and for strategies to be changed in-year if they proved ineffective. The process for both the SAR and QIP was reflective of the focus on performance throughout all reporting structures within the College.

67 **Resolved -** That the Board **be RECOMMENDED** to approve the Self-Assessment Report for 2015/2016 and the Quality Improvement Plan for 2016/2017.

## QUALITY ASSESSMENT PROCESS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION COURSES

68 The Assistant Head of HE outlined the forthcoming changes to the quality assessment processes required by the Higher Education Funding Council and the Quality Assurance Agency.

69 The revised process would include a desk-based Annual Provider Review, a quinquennial review on-site visit and an assessment of the College's provision against the Teaching Excellence Framework. Additionally, the Board was now required to sign a statement confirming that it had received information throughout the academic year on the performance of HE programmes. Due to the deadline for the submission of the proforma being set as 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016 and, following, robust scrutiny of HE as part of the Self-Assessment Review process, it had been agreed that the Chair of the Corporation should sign the statement on this occasion. However, in future, the Learner Committee would be asked to recommend approval of the statement to the Board that such assurances had been received throughout the year.

70 The Committee's terms of reference had been reviewed and it was suggested that a statement relating to the receipt of regular reports on higher education should be added. Governors would also receive the minutes of each Academic Board meeting.

71 As part of the second year of the Teaching Excellence Framework the College would be rated for its teaching quality (through the national student survey), the learning environment and on outcomes for learners (ie destinations). An external assessment of these 3 elements would be undertaken shortly and the results would be published by June 2017.

72 The Committee asked whether it would be appropriate to have governor involvement at an additional Academic Board meeting to evaluate the submission, test the integrity of the judgements and to identify any further evidence. The Assistant Head of HE reported that the funding implications were only minor as, currently, the College would not be operating an Access agreement until 2018, after which time the TEF would be in place.

73 Governors questioned the relatively low levels of performance against key aspects of HE provision (particularly organisation & management, learning resources, overall satisfaction and students' union) compared to the national averages. The Head of HE explained that each of these measures were contextualised by HEFCE for each provider, which meant that the College's performance could exceed these benchmarks. The Committee felt strongly that these levels of achievement needed to move towards the national average.

74 In response to questions, the Assistant Head of HE advised that it was not possible to project a grading for 2017/2018 as the respective criteria had not yet been published.

75 The Committee asked whether it would be possible to learn from the experience of other HE institutions, but were informed that, as the process was new, there would not be many organisations who had undergone the revised assurance regime.

76 **Resolved -** 1 That the HE assurance statement, as signed by the Chair of the Corporation, be ratified.

- 2 That the Board **be RECOMMENDED** to approve an amendment to the Committee's terms of reference relating to oversight of HE matters.

## HIGHER EDUCATION SELF-EVALUATION DOCUMENT

77 Governors received for information the Higher Education SED for 2015/2016. It was noted that this had been reviewed by the Self-Assessment Validation Panel, following which some amendments had been made to the content.

78 The SED contained 3 year trend data against a number of criteria. The Committee was advised that retention and achievement (now 72%) had improved over the period of the SED. Although targets had been set for 2015/2016, this area needed further development in future. There had been some under-performance in relation to qualifications awarded by particular awarding bodies and this had been identified as an area for action in the Quality Improvement Plan for 2016/2017.

79 A number of courses had been deleted from the College's provision, especially where there had been low numbers or small class sizes and those that did not align to the curriculum plan.

80 The Committee was informed that 80% of learners from 2015/2016 had remained on programme. At the March meeting, this information would be reported in greater detail and presented by length of course, providing a more accurate picture of performance during the year.

81 Governors queried whether action was being taken to improve retention on the HND in Business from its current level of 25%. The Head of HE reported that, after considerable turnover in 2014/2015, new staff had been appointed and were starting to deliver effectively.

82 In response to questions, the Vice-Principal explained that the critical points for student retention were induction and in December/January (due to the increased workload). Course meetings were held with all groups to identify any potential difficulties.

83 The Committee noted that the QIP would focus on a number of key areas: attendance, achievement on a small number of courses, improving high grades on English & Maths Study Programmes, ensuring that more learners had access to work experience, reducing under-performance in a small volume of apprenticeship provision and improving positive value added. As discussed earlier in the meeting the College had been scored by learners at well below the national average for organisation/management and overall satisfaction (57% and 59% respectively). Additional data was currently being collected in order that these matters could be further investigated. A survey that mirrored the questions asked by the National Student Survey had already been carried out and staff had ensured that learners had understood the questions being asked.

84 Governors asked whether learner numbers had been adversely affected by the College's HE provision being located off-site during 2015/2016. The Assistant Head of HE reported that there had been some comments in the survey on this issue.

85 **Resolved -** That the Self-Evaluation Document be approved and submitted to HEFCE

**K Robson and D Clapham left the meeting at this point.**

## COMMITTEE SELF-EVALUATION

86 The Clerk presented a draft of the Committee's self-evaluation.

87 The Committee felt that in 2015/2016 it had focused on significant items such as English and Maths and learner success levels. Further development of its role in overseeing higher education provision was identified for 2016/2017, together with greater detail on the Learner Voice strategy and its outcomes. Thought would be given to raising levels of engagement between the Board as a whole and students.

88 The Clerk was asked to amend the self-evaluation proforma to reflect whether the Committee had met expectations in terms of the areas under review and what was being done to address any gaps.

89 A number of training needs were suggested including familiarisation with Moodle, Navigate, E-Tracking and Pro-Monitor, from the perspective of how these systems impacted on target-setting, performance and levels of teaching, learning and assessment.

### **Letitia Ingham left the meeting at this point.**

90 Governors commented on the benefits they had derived from the structure of the November development day and expressed a wish for this to continue.

91 The Committee graded its performance as a grade '2' or 'good'. The changes in membership had affected its effectiveness to some extent, but governors felt that they had fulfilled the terms of reference.

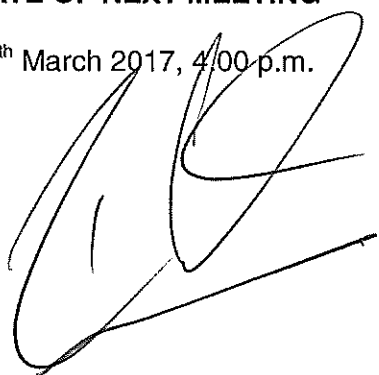
## ITEMS TO BE REPORTED TO THE BOARD

92 The Committee agreed a list of items that would be report to the Board on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2016:

- SAR and QIP were recommended for approval
- Changes to the quality assurance processes for the College's HE provision
- Approval of the Self-Evaluation Document for HE
- New monitoring system for key curriculum indicators was working successfully
- Committee's self-evaluation had resulted in a grade '2' or 'good'

## DATE OF NEXT MEETING

30<sup>th</sup> March 2017, 4/00 p.m.

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