

Minutes

CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE

Date:	18 March 2024	Time:	4.00 PM
Chairperson:	Professor Gavin Brooks	Location:	UCN Room 284 & Teams

Members	Name	Present	Role
	Professor Gavin Brooks (GB)	*	External Member & Chair
	Iain Wolloff (IW)	*	Principal & Chief Executive
	Sally Osmond (SO)	*	External Member
	Shelly Van Meter (SVM)	*	Staff Member
	Chris Wilson (CW)	*	External Member
	Khushi Ashwin	*	Student Member (19+ & HE)
	Deborah Ferguson (DF)	*	External Member
	Tim Major (TM)	* Teams	External Member & Vice Chair
Apologies:	Cathy Wright (CW)		Vice Principal – Central Services (VPCS)
	Nathan Hall (NH)		Director of Estates & Facilities (DEF)
	Lesley Black (LB)		External Member
Absent:	Roshani Jha (RJ)		Student Member (16-19)
In Attendance:	Paula Powditch (PP)	*	Director of Finance (DF)
	Jo Houghton (JH)	*	Vice Principal – HE & Skills (VPHEs)
	Lee Hunt (LH)	*	Deputy Principal & Vice Principal – FE & Curriculum (VPFEC)
	Heather Large (GP)	*	Governance Professional
	Jatinder Matharu (JM)	*	Director of Safeguarding and Support (DSS)
	Martin McNeill (MM)	*	FEC External Governance Review Officer
Quorum:	3 required		Meeting Quorate

AGENDA ITEMS

Item No.		Reports
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies were received and accepted for Cathy Wright, Nathan Hall, and Lesley Black. It is to be noted that Roshani Jha was absent. The Chair advised all present that Andrea Wood had resigned as a Governor with immediate effect.	Verbal
2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS No declarations of interest were made.	Verbal
3.	MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING To approve the Minutes of the meeting held on the 20 November 2023. The Committee unanimously approved the Minutes of the 20 November 2023.	Paper - 3
4.	MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES There were no matters arising.	Paper – 9

5.	SAFEGUARDING	
5.1	<p data-bbox="338 248 616 275">SAFEGUARDING REPORT</p> <p data-bbox="338 280 1278 306">The DSS presented the College Safeguarding Report to the Committee which included:</p> <ul data-bbox="338 347 1299 1688" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="338 347 1299 539">• Confirmation that the current safeguarding structure is new as well as the reporting system called MyConcern which has significantly strengthened the reporting of safeguarding issues. The system tracking has enabled the College to ensure early identification of concerns are recorded, monitored, and ensure students are supported but there is more work to be done to better organise concerns and capture trends. <li data-bbox="338 544 1299 669">• No known ongoing concerns at the time, but fourteen are open to safeguarding and wellbeing service for ongoing monitoring, one student has been identified as vulnerable and requires early help support, one further student is a child in need and four other students are the subjects of child protection plans. <li data-bbox="338 674 1299 831">• The Safeguarding and Wellbeing team is working with students alongside professional external agencies where necessary. The College has 128 students with an EHCP of which three are recognised as vulnerable students, plus another eleven students who have SEND but no EHCP but may be more vulnerable due to their additional needs. <li data-bbox="338 835 1299 969">• The working relationships with external stakeholders (such as the Local Authority and West Berkshire Safeguarding Partnership) have been strengthened and an increase in the safeguarding visibility across the College as well as Student Hub has been well received. <li data-bbox="338 974 1299 1064">• A new behaviour system was put in place and is working well via the red and yellow card approach. There have been 96 student disciplinaries to date and there is still work to be completed on understanding extra familial harms across the College. <li data-bbox="338 1068 1299 1193">• Classroom poor behaviour incidents have declined but there have been increases in student relationship conflicts and ongoing allegations that have taken place off campus which are time consuming and take a lot of resource and intensive work to resolve. <li data-bbox="338 1198 1299 1323">• Student attendance remains a priority and a small number of students are bypassing the registration system when attending a lesson by signing in and then going to the bathroom to not return, only to be found hanging around the College site engaging in concerning behaviours. <li data-bbox="338 1328 1299 1417">• The student single sex meetings indicate that students feel safe whilst on campus. The introduction of the Safety Warden and the presence of CLT members within The Street significantly contributes to this feeling of safety. <li data-bbox="338 1422 1299 1579">• The integration of pastoral sessions into the personal development programme has enabled targeted regular safeguarding messages to engage students more proactively. The Committee was informed of an alleged historic sexual assault case (onsite) involving two former students. The court case concluded at the end of February and the alleged perpetrator was cleared of any allegations. <li data-bbox="338 1583 1299 1688">• The Committee was advised of a new case of alleged sexual assault (offsite) currently under investigation. Risk assessments are in place for both students to continue education whilst the police investigation is concluded. <p data-bbox="338 1727 1299 1919">Committee confirmed it found the case studies very informative and asked what more the College is doing to help support students with anxiety. DSS confirmed that the focus is on robust and rigorous record keeping, which will show what interventions are currently in place, the monitoring results, and recommendations of what more could be provided. Using the system to capture any risks is fundamental to positive safeguarding practice.</p> <p data-bbox="338 1951 1299 2007">The Committee asked if there were any trends in the attendance data. DSS explained there is not one particular pattern but many, and the approach of the College is to</p>	Paper - 10

	<p>investigate all cases of non-attendance to establish the reasons. Non-attendance is often the first indicator that there are issues.</p> <p>The Committee asked about the relatively high number of disciplinaries in the Care and Services curriculum area and VPFE explained this is an area that has grown over the last three years, including a number of students in need of extra support. Whilst the College is benefitting from better retention of students, challenges still remain in engaging external agencies to support some students.</p> <p>The Committee asked if behaviour concerns were linked to any particular student cohorts, and it was confirmed that students on lower level courses often needed the most support to establish positive learning behaviours. Vocational delivery is strong at the College but there are some students who are experiencing significant issues, and these are being supported by the range of College services.</p>	
5.2	<p>SAFEGUARDING GOVERNOR REPORT</p> <p>The Link Governor reported on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of safeguarding concerns are around student mental health and wellbeing, largely due to issues outside of College. The wellbeing co-ordinator supports these students in accessing professional mental health agencies for students experiencing suicidal thoughts, self-harm or just feeling unable to cope. • Students are well aware of the Safeguarding Team and are confident in approaching and reporting their concerns, the single sex meetings certainly help with this. • Amalgamation of the pastoral and personal development provision will support students in becoming more resilient and managing their mental health. There are no Prevent matters of concern and DSS and her team will be prioritising visits to the Sports Academies to ensure safeguarding behaviour is understood and enacted. • Staff compliance on safeguarding training runs at 94% but the College works hard to chase those individuals who have not completed it. 	Paper - 25
6.	QUALITY	
6.1	<p>COLLEGE IMPROVEMENT PLAN</p> <p>The Deputy Principal summarised the progress of actions in the College Improvement Plan (CIP), including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Development – RAG Rated Amber • Work Experience (WEX)/Work Related Activity (WRA) – RAG Rated Amber • English and Mathematics – RAG Rated Green • Foundation Learning – RAG Rated Green • Assessment – RAG Rated Green <p>The College has arranged for FE Associates to undertake a ‘mock’ inspection monitoring visit, adopting the methodology used by Ofsted.</p> <p>The Committee made comments on the CIP and asked:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the reasons for the positive movement in personal development in the last two to three weeks? The Deputy Principal explained that this is due to the development work undertaken by the new Programme Leader for PD, working with colleagues from the curriculum teams. • Work-Related Activity – The Committee asked how WRA leads into work experience. The Deputy Principal explained that some students, often those on lower level courses, need a period of preparation in order to be ready for work experience. For young people it is a condition of funding that they undertake either WEX or WRA, as appropriate to their learning. 	Paper - 27

- The Committee noted that they were very pleased with the work on English and Maths and asked what was going well. The Deputy Principal pointed to the positive impact of the work of the C&Q Committee and lessons learned, the morale of the team, and the positive feedback from students.
- The Committee asked for an update on the issues around staffing for Foundation Learners. The Deputy Principal explained that staffing levels for support staff are good, and College is now able to focus more on developing the teaching staff who are delivering the curriculum. One area for further development is the provision of specialist careers advice in foundation learning and the College is examining how best to provide this service.
- The Committee asked for the reasons for Assessment being RAG rated Green and were advised by the Deputy Principal this is down to the positive impact of the monitoring meetings and learning studies. Over the next two days there will also be results from the learning walks.
- The VPHEs informed the Committee that the work experience team has made good progress but find it hard to get some students ready for WEX. The College recognises what further development is needed and the intention is to have a different structure that does not take away the core delivery. The lagged £0.5m of 16-19 funding does put pressure on resources but the improved WEX/WRA structure be in place for next year when these funds are received.
- The Committee asked how the College was supporting WEX for SEND students. The Deputy Principal confirmed that this can be a challenge and have asked students and staff to feedback on what support they need for their placement in readiness for next year. The College confirmed that this is still a work in progress, but the team has come a long way, and there is a two year window to get these students to a placement. The Committee asked if students can be sent out as a group and the Deputy Principal confirmed they can, but it is dependent on the specific vocational course - construction is one such example.
- The Committee expressed its concerns with the RAG allocations, accepting the College is making progress but pointed out the fact there are concerns about assessment and attendance and questioned whether a Green rating is appropriate. The Deputy Principal agreed that, if areas have concerns, then Amber should be used.
- The Committee expressed that it would like to see more evidence for English and Maths that the College is on track and the progress and outcomes that are anticipated. The Deputy Principal confirmed a benchmarking table has been utilised and that, this data can be provided, if governors would find that helpful.
- The Committee asked for confirmation that the key measures for English and Maths were progress scores, the overall achievement rate (grades 1 to 9) and the achievement rate for grades 4 and above which was confirmed. The Committee suggested that data should be included for any student getting a grade 1 to 9 so that Governors can understand the scale of the challenge in this area. Governors need to see the scale of the risk and scale of the College work needed to address that risk. The Committee observed that Ofsted will be looking for achievable targets from the College which will need to be agreed as appropriate, the co-ordination of the targets and what the College is doing to achieve and measure how effective it has been.
- The Committee asked for clarification on which subjects have the worst attendance rates and was advised it is the motor vehicle courses and the College has put in additional support in order to address this issue.
- The Committee asked if there were any outcomes for the processes put in place to enhance the quality of learning, and how the College takes action if teaching is not reaching the required standard. It was explained that performance management process is operated by the VPCS, working with the

	<p>relevant manager. The Capability Policy recommends a triangulation approach which is in the process of being updated. Other initiatives for reporting on teaching are the learning walks and the study groups which provide good feedback on the skills of individual teachers.</p>	
6.2	<p>COLLEGE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLANS</p> <p>The Deputy Principal outlined to the Committee that the College has produced a Self-Assessment Report for Further Education and Apprenticeships along with a Self Evaluation Report for Higher Education provision from which Quality Improvement Plans are initiated and reported on half termly. The Committee was informed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English and Mathematics delivery continues to make progress. • Foundation Learning staffing has stabilised, and students are making progress. • Attendance for the Main Programme of Study is above the College 85% benchmark. • Personal and Pastoral Development delivery continues to be challenging. • WRA delivery continues to develop and is challenging. • Attendance at English and Mathematics remains an area of concern. <p>The Committee asked if there is anything it can do to help drive the areas of priority. Committee was informed by PCE that the SLT are clear on what is feasible and possible and does believe it has the staff capacity to achieve what it needs to do. In relation to attendance, it was observed that the College is in an expensive area to live in, and many students need to have a part time job to support their studies.</p>	Paper - 32
6.3	<p>COMPLAINTS REPORT</p> <p>Committee was informed that the eight areas of complaints will remain, there are no specific trends or patterns. No concerns were highlighted.</p>	Paper - 44
7.	CURRICULUM	
7.1	<p>CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENTS</p> <p>The Deputy Principal introduced the proposed curriculum developments to the Committee which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distance learning course offer reviewed in consideration of the local skills needs for 23-24 to include more focus on health and care skills. • New essential digital skills course commenced and being developed to expand to level 3 Access to HE to meet government's 'Care workforce pathway for adult social care' plan. • Adult Skills Fund (ASF) collaboration work commenced to support the 2024-25 implementation plan. • Sport HE provisions introduced and expanding to level 5 for 2024-25. • LSIF funded intro to Machine Learning and AI short course commenced and being expanded to L4/5 from September 2024-25. • Two Robotics modules identified for full cost delivery from September 2024. • Skills bootcamps continue to run successfully with life sciences and engineering running from January 2024. • Successful £133K bid received from the Office for Students to support the development of a L6 degree apprenticeships, specifically Chartered Manager, Manufacturing Engineering and Product Design and Development Engineer. • Development of HE learners support through funding streams and the implementation of a new software analysis package (Cognassist). • Funding received for the development of the L4 Building Energy Maintenance Systems Apprenticeship transferred to the development of the L3 Building Services Engineering Apprenticeship. • Introduction of two new T level routes. Catering and Hospitality (25-26) and Media, Broadcast and Production (24-25). £72K SEA Grant funding allocated for the latter T level. • Continued growth in Sport courses at Level 3. • Development of the Public Services offer for 25-26. • Introduction of Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQ). 	Paper - 46

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FE Curriculum Strategy design and development for 2024 to 2027 underway. • FE Curriculum continue to offer programmes in a variety of curriculum areas supporting the local, regional, and national skills agenda. • University of Reading contract for the Foundation Degree from September 2024 has not been received. • Development of facilities to support the expanding sports offer and development of the catering and hospitality provision. • Expansion of support staffing to manage growth • Impact of lagged funding on future development opportunities. • Investment in the further development of an online A Level Platform. <p>The Committee was further informed of recent updates around the Adult Education Budget, which will have a different focus as the Adult Skills Fund. The VPHEs advised that there are five engineering ‘boot camps’ starting in September. The Committee felt there are missed opportunities around the Adult Education landscape, and it will need more resource as the current curriculum is more reactive rather than proactive to make it more commercially focused. The Deputy Principal agreed but advised that the College is still waiting for more Government guidance over this before agreeing anything further.</p> <p>The Committee were also informed that the number of adult students, HE students and apprentices needing learning support has increased. The College is running a pilot of a new system for the assessment of the learning need. There are 120 apprentices across the College for FE and HE who need an assessment and many of these were conducted in February and March. The new assessment system will then be rolled out for next year.</p> <p>For Art and Music, there have been 110 applicants and AAQ will now come into force in 2025 and the College is already working on this now. There was a recommendation from the College that it does need to invest in an online platform for A Levels. This was started three years ago with only 6 applications, and the College now has 56.</p> <p>It is to be noted that Martin McNeill left the meeting at 17.39 hours.</p> <p>The Committee felt that some of these key curriculum issues should be discussed at the Governors Strategy Day meeting.</p> <p>The Committee questioned how the College will embed AI in its future planning. The Deputy Principal confirmed that work has already started on AI, and it is included in the 5 Year Plan.</p> <p>It is to be noted that Sally Osmond left the meeting at 17:54 hours.</p>	
8.	SKILLS	
8.1	<p>LOCAL SKILLS NEEDS</p> <p>The VPHEs advised the Committee on the reports submitted explaining that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 1 of the report highlights current College provision mapped against courses highlighted as a priority in the 2023 – 24 Thames Valley Berkshire Local Skills Improvement Plan (TVBLSIP) and identifies courses that have been identified for future delivery. • Section 2 outlines the progress made against the College Accountability Statement, provides information on our successful bid for Local Skills Improvement Funds (LSIF) and an update on LSIP and LSIF meetings that have happened since the start of this term. 	Paper - 51

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 3 provides information on the key employers that have engaged with the College so far this term that has led to developments and new business or additional opportunities for our students. The Roadmap in Section 4 provides information on the ongoing work that is being carried out to develop the College Skills agenda and to progress toward the College making a 'Strong' contribution to Skills at the next Ofsted inspection. <p>The Committee noted that the report was very comprehensive and that there is a meeting on 15 April of Berkshire employers who will discuss with the College its first collaborative provision and sign off what the College is doing, along with considering what next to work on collaboratively.</p>	
9.	POLICIES	
9.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access and Participation Statement – Approved Equality Duty Policy and Procedure – TM to provide comments and amendments necessary. Not approved Quality Assurance Policy – CW to provide comments and amendments necessary. Not approved. ESF and EST Match Funding Policy – Approved Teaching, Learning and Assessment Policy – Approved Safeguarding – Approved with necessary updates and will be substantially revised over the Summer <p>Action: TM to provide comments and amendments to the Equality Duty Policy and Procedure Action: CW to provide comments and amendments to the Quality Assurance Policy. Action: DSS to bring Safeguarding Policy back to the Committee in the Autumn term</p>	Paper - 60
10.	<p>AOB There was none.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Meeting Closed at 18:34 hours</p>	Verbal

Signed:



Gavin Brooks (Jul 8, 2024, 9:34am)

(Chair) Date:

08 Jul 2024



Issuer Newbury College

Document generated Sun, 7th Jul 2024 13:51:37 UTC

Document fingerprint 2eb6bf1707a08e647bfa581a0c2eb971

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Mon, 8th Jul 2024 9:34:44 UTC	Gavin Brooks - Signer (4f9fc5e01690d9048a32bad82a460955)

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Mon, 8th Jul 2024 9:33:31 UTC	Gavin Brooks opened the document email. (31.104.216.101)
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