Newbury College Corporation
Curriculum & Quality Committee

Minutes of a meeting held on Monday 21st June 2021, 4.00 PM via Teams

Present	Name	Role
Membership	Sam Dibas (SD)	External Member (from Item 5.2)
	Matt Grimston MG)	Student Governor
	John Knight (JK)	External Member – Vice Chair
	Sally Osmond (SO)	External Member
	Simon Thompson (ST)	External Member
	Shelly Van Meter (SVM)	Staff Governor
	Iain Wolloff (IW)	Principal & Chief Executive
	Sue Wood (SW)	External Member – Chair
In Attendance	Jo Houghton (JH)	Director of Business and Partnerships
	Lee Hunt (LH)	Vice Principal
	Gill Parkinson (GP)	Clerk to the Corporation
	Cathy Wright (CW)	Director of HR and Support Services
Apologies	Jayne Steele (JS)	Director of Finance and Estates
Quorum:	Three members required	Meeting quorate, 8 members present

Item No.		Action
1.	**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** There were apologies from Jayne Steele. Rachel McCleary (16-19 Student Governor) was not present. SD joined the meeting at Item 5.2.	
2.	**DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS** There were no declarations of interests.	
3.	**MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** **The Committee approved the Minutes of the meeting held on 8th March 2021.**	
4	**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES** SW confirmed that she had sent all previous signed minutes to the College. **ACTION:** GP to file all minutes.	*GP*

	Item 3 SW asked whether the College could provide her with an electronic signature to sign the minutes. **ACTION:** GP to contact Richard Elwell to set up electronic signature for all Chairs. **Item 7.1** Equality & Diversity Annual Report - IW explained that the RAG rating had now been defined more clearly. **Item 7.2** Complaints - definitions of Formal and Informal had completed by LH for the next time this is on the agenda.		*GP*
5. 5.1	**CURRICULUM** **Curriculum Development & Planned Courses 21-22** LH introduced his report. There are now 70 sector pathways and the 3-5-7 approach taking students through 3, 5 or 7 years of study,providing opportunity to progress their career options and take breaks in learning where required. This links to the College intent – Careers not Courses – which is a key Ofsted focus running through all aspects of the curriculum. A total of 53 FT courses are planned for the academic year 21/22, with a focus on 12 sector specific areas, 3 pathways planned to support learners with SEND and 39 pathways planned to support Part Time and Apprenticeships (some apprentices also infill into the full-time courses), and 33 Higher Education (HE) programmes for 7 sector specific areas. Additionally: - Growth in curriculum is supported by the current increase in student applications and the growing positive reputation of the whole college. With this comes different challenges linked to resourcing and the Estate. - Development of Curriculum supports the Skills White Paper. The skills initiative is not just courses but quality, personal development, behaviours, and attitude with 50% of the study programme linked to these last area. - Development of A Level online pilot – an opportunity to develop a pilot with low risk. - Expansion of Sports and Sports Science curriculum. The Football Academy had given more opportunities – working towards 2022-23 HNC/D and degrees. - Development of new degree programmes to expand the UCN offer. JH added that the College had been validated for a BA in Management and Education and had written a Digital degree in software engineering, for which validation from the University of Northampton was pending. - Issues of concern were around Maths and English delivery, Enrichment and Senior Tutor development, Student support – PASC/Job Coach staffing and future development to support the expanding curriculum offer, including the Adult Community Learning offer which had been impacted nationally with a reduction of 40% in participation.		

	SO noted (p12) that applications were very low for some courses and enquired whether it is too early to decide viability. LH agreed that the next few months would be crucial for additional applications for some courses. **JK queried the numbers.** LH explained that 'applications' in the table referred to the number of courses, not to student applications. **ACTION:** LH to amend wording of application to courses and resend to the Committee. **JK asked whether the Climate Change degree is in partnership with Northampton.** LH confirmed that it is but the programme would not run until 2022, with the College hosting the University's delivery of their programme at first. **SW asked what additional resources the team needs.** LH replied that additional personal care facilities were needed if the College were to further expand its provision for students with high levels of care need. This would be a significant investment and the team were currently looking at the extent of future demand.		*LH*
5.2	**T Levels** The College was selected as a Wave 3 T level provider commencing in September 2022 and in preparation there had been several tasks completed and reports submitted to both DfE and ESFA. The momentum for the implementation had increased and the Project Team had been formed. Key actions were identified, which are being supported by the Education & Training Foundation (ETF) and the DfE. The ETF TLPD Leadership and Organisational Readiness Development Plan was included in the Committee's papers. The focus for the forthcoming year is the development and preparation of staff across the whole college to understand, support and deliver the T level specifications for 3 routes and 5 pathways, with more routes to be introduced between 2023 and 2025. The focus would be Health, Engineering (including Motor Vehicle x 2 pathways within Engineering) Digital and Business. LH highlighted: • The College would deliver Pathways in Digital Production Design and Development, Digital Support and Services, Onsite Construction, Building Services for Engineering, and Business and Management. • He further clarified that T levels are the new vocational L3 qualification. • Governors now needed to be involved - training and participation in the T level implementation was detailed in the TLPD Leadership and Organisational Readiness Development Plan, 'Staff roles and responsibilities' link to Governors understanding of T levels. LH suggested the nomination of a T Level lead Governor (s) to work closely with him and impart information to the other Governors and be seen by external stakeholders as part of the team. SO and IW had discussed, and this would be on the agenda at the FCM - **ACTION:** To be added to Corporation agenda by GP. **SW asked if all curriculum areas are covered? LH replied** Digital, Construction and Business and Management were the areas covered in the pilot with Construction linking into renewables. Health and Engineering are also areas of interest. Engineering would link into hybrid and electric cars.		*GP*

JK asked what the minimum class size of 14 applies to? This is for each route. Occupational specialisms are pathways. Not all current Level 3 provision will be covered by T Levels. Currently 13,000 courses deliver a vocational L3 qualification, and these would reduce. **SO asked about new funds required for additional space and where it is in the budget.** LH confirmed that additional space is not currently required for the delivery of T Levels, given the current development of the Renewables Centre and the existing facilities for digital and for business. (SD joined the meeting). **JK asked about employer involvement.** LH replied that this involves significant industry placements as part of study programmes. The College worked with 452 employers over the past 3 years and JH added that employer collaboration is key, including with employers with no students at the College. **JK thought it would be useful to have a table providing details of the types of engagement with employers and their organisation/sector. ACTION:** LH to provide employer information for the next meeting. **SW asked about the transition pathway.** LH explained this is part of the preparation for T Levels. **ACTION:** LH agreed to make an explanatory video on T-levels to send to Governors. **ST asked what the alternatives are to T Levels.** LH explained there will still be other vocational qualifications, but T Levels will be the leading vocational course, reputationally taking over from BTEC with the same academic worth as A Levels and mapping to apprenticeships. They have the support of all the political parties with high currency and standing, so ensure the College is competitive with sixth forms.	*LH* *LH*

| 5.3 | **Student Applications 2021-22**
LH explained there are currently 881 applications, an increase of 307 on 2020-21 broken down as:

	2021	2022	Variance
16-18 FT*	356	545	189
19+FT	99	135	36
Part Time**	119	201	82
Total	574	881	307

*Does not include returning or progressing students (Level 3 year 2)
**Excludes apprentices

These needed to convert to enrolments and the monitoring process is robust. The demographic and reputation of the College had improved substantially.

JH added that the UCN did not have a history of 'direct entry' students (i.e. those not undertaking their HE programme as apprentices) so this year was a new offer.

The College was hosting activities to promote the offer. IW noted that the pandemic appeared to have led to more applications because jobs were uncertain, although there is the opposite effect for apprenticeships as there is currently low employer confidence. Student applications are monitored through the management information systems and tracked weekly | |

6	**QUALITY**
6.1	**Quality Improvement Plan Update**

	A review of the QIP actions had been undertaken, with the current progress updated and BRAG rated in line with the college status and definitions protocols. The overall position is positive with 18 areas identified for improvement for the academic year 2020-21. To date 6 have been completed, 8 are on track, 3 are mainly on track with some minor issues and 1 is not on track with significant issues.

LH highlighted the new BRAG (blue, red, amber, green) status definitions. **JK asked why a number are Blue (completed) when action is not yet completed.** LH explained that the actions were complete but the impact cannot yet be measured. The actions could still be included again next year although were completed in-year. ST agreed that this was consistent with schools. He suggested changing the word completed (Blue) to embedded. **ACTION:** LH

JK asked about engagement and reliance being green when there were still concerns (p30). LH explained that expected outcomes were met but ratings are subjective. IW said there were 3 uses of the BRAG rating systems and that the QIP was using the first of these (delivery against the plan).

LH highlighted problematic areas:
- Tutorial process – LH explained that this requires improvement and the pandemic had impacted on this.
- Work placements were also affected by the pandemic (p35). LH noted that engagement with employers is essential, and the placements were important to any study programme but had dropped during this academic year. The rules had now eased but employers are nervous as there is uncertainty about the future. Overall 84% of students had undertaken a work placement but the target should be 100%.
- Enrichment Programme –a new scheme of work was being created and implemented. | *LH* |
| **6.2** | **Quality Data - in-year**
The Committee received an update on students' attendance and retention.

Attendance
As at the 8 March report the overall attendance for 2020-21 had reduced by 5.5% from 2019-20. There was a recognised reduction on attendance levels since the beginning of the spring term lockdown. Before this attendance levels were slightly improved on 2019-20 (1%).

SW thought the attendance rate was a credit to the College although English and Maths (Essential Skills) were still problematic. LH explained these went online initially for the first lockdown in March 2020 but continued in September in order to maintain 'teaching bubbles'. The breakdown was: | |

2020-21		Curriculum Area	% Attendance March 19/20	% Attendance 1st March 20/21	% Attendance June 20/21
Cum to Date (All Learners)	82.9%	PPI	86%	88.2%	88.8%
Age Group	Attendance	Engineering	91.5%	87.8%	85.6%
16-18	79.2%	Essential Skills	73.50%	40.59%	40.1%
19+	89%	Foundation Learning	91.3%	83.7%	90.5%
Pre 16	100%	Services	88.8%	86.3%	84.7%
2019-20		Construction	84.6%	85%	85.1%
Cumulative to Date (All Learners)	85.50%	UCN	91.4%	92.6%	94.3%
Age Group	Attendance	ACL	89.1%	94.6%	94.2%
16-18	84.00%				
19+	88.70%				

SW asked how the College planned to improve Maths & English attendance. LH explained that a blended approach was planned for next year, depending on the new Study Programme rules i.e. half online and half face to face.

SW asked whether the College had been able to access Maths & English resources. Yes, but the online resources developed by the College Essential Skills team were very good, albeit it was challenging persuading students to go on-line to study these subjects.
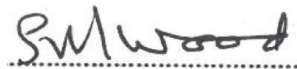
Retention

As of 11 June 2021, retention rates are **16-18s 95.6%** (reduction of 0.6%) and **19+ 97.6%** (reduction of 2.4%). The overall predicted student retention for 16 – 19 learners is strong and maintains its position as just above 95%, which is a significant improvement on previous years. The position is now linked to centre assessed outcomes and the Head of Student Experience and Quality is focussing on completing this work. The overall position to date is that although retention is strong, students are demonstrating challenges with their mental health and wellbeing. Although this is being supported, there is some concern about the impact on overall outcomes.

6.3	**UCN termly Report**	
	The UCN produces a termly review as part of the quality process, designed to bring together the actions and outcomes from a range of quality meetings held throughout the term. The document provides evidence of good practice and lessons to be learnt on a termly basis and provides the basis for the Self Evaluation Review (SER) at the end of the year. The 2019-20 SER QIP actions were incorporated into the circulated report to show the updated status of these actions. JH clarified that that this was reported since the start of the UCN to identify any issues each term. The format is based on QAA and HE quality measures.	
	SW asked whether the Access course was online? JH confirmed that the course was currently taught through blended learning and group teaching bubbles. Retention on these courses is always a key challenge, due to the range of other responsibilities that students typically have.	
	JK asked what is done to enhance academic support? Students benefit from a strong tutorial system and additional workshops on key academic topics. **JK thought it would be useful to know the breadth and depth of academic support — ACTION:** JH to add academic support details to her next UCN report.	*JH*
	SW noted the three-year trend of fewer females enrolling than males and asked whether widening of the scope of programmes would improve this? JH replied affirmatively. The College also also engaging employers in supporting underrepresented groups via bursaries etc. and targeting BAME and neuro diverse learners. SD was working to bring Vodaphone HR into the discussion.	
	SO asked about Safeguarding (p57) where students had fedback that they are not familiar with how to report a safeguarding concern, make a complaint and appeal an assessment decision**.** SVM confirmed that this is covered at induction and in the student handbook and revisited throughout the year, but would be more prominently featured in the HE landing page. MG thought this information had not been needed by students which could be regarded as a positive.	
7	**Student Experience**	
	An update on Services for Students had been included in the Committee papers. Potential improvements were listed as the enrichment programme linked to Digital skills, review and implementation of M&E Strategy, Student support for ACL/DL and Professional Courses and the Student Satisfaction Survey Yield which was much improved but still needed work.	
	SW queried the need for development of IT/Digital skills. LH explained this is about understanding what students need outside the classroom and how this is embedded in the enrichment package.	
	LH thanked MG for his outstanding contribution as this was his last C & Q meeting - he would be welcomed as an External Governor in the future should he decide to return. SW endorsed this and his contribution, and thanked him.	

| 8 | **AOB**
The meeting ended at 17.56. | |

Confirmed as a correct record:

Signature of Committee Chair

Date: 20th July 2021