**The Corporation of Newham Sixth Form College**

**Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 June 2021**

**Members**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Julia Shelton (Chair) | Independent Member  | Present  |
| Mandeep Gill  | Principal & Chief Executive  | Present  |
| Habib Said Midh-Hir | Student Member | Absent |
| Yvonne Odai | Student Member | Present  |
| Edet Okon | Staff Member | Absent |
| Martin Rosner  | Independent Member  | Present  |
| Mandeep Sahotay | Independent Member | Apologies  |
| Paddy Salter  | Independent Member  | Present  |
| Miklos Sarosi | Parent Member | Present |
| Elizabeth Scott | Independent Member  | Apologies  |

**Non-Members in attendance**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Magdalena Johnson | Vice Principal Student Achievement & Progress | Present  |
| Robin JonesMartin Reed | Clerk to the Corporation Assistant Principal Student Services & Human Resources | Present Present |
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**1** **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Corporation NOTED the apologies for absence submitted by Mandeep Sahotay and Elizabeth Scott.

Two other Members were not present – Habib Said Midh-Hir and Edet Okon.

**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

The Members confirmed that there were no declarations of interest to be recorded on this occasion at this stage of the meeting based on the published Agenda.

**3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 MARCH 2021**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee held on 11 March 2021 were agreed to be a correct record.

**4 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 MARCH 2021**

The Committee agreed that there were no issues to be addressed from the Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee held on 11 March 2021.

**5 REVIEW OF AGENDA**

The Committee agreed to reorder the published Agenda to enable the Student Member to participate before needing to leave the meeting given another commitment.

**6** **SAFEGUARDING – UPDATE**

The Committee received the report of the Assistant Principal Student Services & Human Resources which provided an update on Safeguarding which a particular focus on:

* Supporting students
* Counselling and mental health
* Emerging issues affecting students
* Work with external agencies
* Student mental health and wellbeing
* Prevent
* Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges

The Committee noted that the Corporation Link Member for Safeguarding, Paddy Salter, had recently met the Assistant Principal Student Services & Human Resources to review the key issues as covered in this latest update.

A significant issue for the College was the reduction in Bursary funding for allocation to students due to the review of the basis of the disadvantaged factor. Apparently the London Borough of Newham was no longer as disadvantaged as it was although this was due, it was thought, to relatively better off people moving into the area although this did not mean that students attending NewVIc no longer had financial needs. If this was not addressed there may be an adverse impact on student attendance and retention in 2021/22 and beyond.

The national discussion regarding sexual violence and sexual harassment between young people was highlighted. It was noted with interest that this was now an issue of concern for Ofsted.

Regrettably it was thought that many young people had experienced such behaviour – violence and harassment – whilst at school and by the time they arrived at NewVIc they were of the mindset that there was no point in reporting incidents as little or anything would change.

The Committee agreed following a wide ranging discussion:

1. To welcome the update on safeguarding and related matters
2. To note, in particular, the reduction in Bursary funding to provide students with financial support and that the College would seek to address when considering the Annual Budget for 2021/22 to be presented to the Finance & Resources Committee on 30 June 2021 and then the Corporation on 14 July 2021
3. To note the increase in mental health cases being addressed by NewVIc and that alternative approaches were being pursued to increase capacity such as delivering group sessions and working with external agencies
4. The ongoing issues of poor communication with the police although on a more positive note it was good to know that the Police Liaison Officer was spending more time in College
5. To note the national attention now being given to sexual violence and sexual harassment amongst young people in schools and colleges
6. To note that, as yet, the national update to the Keeping Children Safe in Education arrangements had not been published and, therefore, it was appropriate to roll forward the current College Safeguarding Policy for the time being so that there was a framework in place for the start of 2021/22
7. To look forward to receiving (1) further updates on safeguarding and related matters and (2) the proposed Safeguarding Policy for 2021/22 reflecting the revised Keeping Children Safe in Education arrangements at future meetings of the Committee.

**7 STUDENT REPORT**

The Committee received the Student Report which, on this occasion, it was noted covered matters from the Student Council.

The Student Member was invited to make known any points that she wanted to highlighted and it was good to know that, in terms of the issues covered in the report, there had been a good response by the SLT.

Attention was drawn to the limited amount of funding available via the Student Bursary scheme and that it was thought that £40 was insufficient. The reduction in the College’s Bursary allocation was covered in the discussion of the Safeguarding Update and, specifically, consideration would be given to the total allocation when presenting the Annual Budget for 2021/22.

A related matter was the perception of stigma being attached to the Bursary Scheme and the need to embed the arrangements in the induction programme so that all students were aware of how one could go about applying. It was recognised that it was important that students themselves made known to their peers that the scheme was in place.

The Committee agreed, following discussion, to note and welcome the Student Report and to look forward to receiving further updates at future meetings.

**8 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR THE MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

The Committee received and discussed the updated KPI report.

Members appreciated that, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the KPI report did not include up-to-date national benchmarks and, as a result, it was difficult to understand the College position such as in terms of value added. The last true comparison was for 2018/19 but, as noted previously by the Committee, this had limitations when looking at 2019/20 and 2020/21 given, for example, teacher assessed grades and online delivery affecting engagement and attendance.

A major concern for the College was the perception of grade inflation when the outcomes for 2020/21 were published later in the summer. Indeed it was thought that grade inflation was inevitable. The College was confident that the arrangements put in place for teacher assessed grades would stand up to scrutiny.

An interesting question being posed across the sector was if examination boards were going to refund the fees paid by colleges and other institutions and if so how much and when?

The Committee AGREED:

1. To note the update on the KPIs relevant to the role and responsibilities of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee
2. To look forward to receiving at the meeting scheduled for 18 November 2021 comparisons of performance including by ethnicity plus the proposed actions to address any emerging issues
3. To join with the Principal & Chief Executive in thanking all the staff involved in progressing the teacher assessed grades which was a significant volume of work over and above what was normally expected of them

**9 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN – 2020/21**

The Committee received the update to the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2020/21.

As agreed following review by both the Committee and the Corporation the Key Areas for Improvement were set out with seven priorities to be addressed:

* Students make insufficient progress from their starting points on a significant number of vocational programmes
* GCSE maths 9-4 grades are below the College target and require improvement
* Progression on A level linear programmes from year 1 to year 2 requires improvement
* Attendance on the majority of study programmes need to increase
* Further reduce staffing costs
* Improve staff survey results
* Further improve online teaching and learning

The Committee AGREED following discussion:

1. To note the up-to-date Quality Improvement Plan
2. To look forward to receiving at future meetings updates on progress against the planned actions to bring about improvements in all of the areas identified
3. To request the Executive to review the presentation of the QIP so that it was easier to interrogate on screen

**10 COURSES OF CONCERN**

The Committee received the report of the Vice Principal Student Achievement & Progress on those courses which were of concern given achievement rates and the target for Value Added.

In summary it was noted that there were 6 A Level courses (Biology, Chemistry, Geography, Law, Psychology and the Extended Diploma in Business) plus GCSE Maths currently regarded as causing concern.

The Committee AGREED:

1. to note the update on courses causing concern
2. to note the reintroduction of one year AS levels which would, it was anticipated, lead to an improvement in student retention relative to two year programmes
3. to look forward to receiving further position statements at future meetings of the Committee when the basis for identifying courses causing concern would be explained in the then up-to-date context

*Note: Yvonne Odai left the meeting at this point given another commitment*

**11 COURSE OFFER – PROPOSED CHANGES FOR 2021/22 AND 2022/23**

The Committee received the report of the Vice Principal Student Achievement & Progress relating to the course offer in 2021/22.

In summary it was explained that the course offer would not be changed any further apart from the introduction of T Levels in Construction and Childcare and the possibility of A Level Fine Art.

It was appreciated that the determination of the course offer was an ongoing process and took into account a range of factors including a review of what was available at neighbouring colleges, data from open days, expressions of interest from potential students and Labour Market Intelligence (LMI).

The Committee AGREED following discussion:

1. To note the position with regard to the course offer for 2021/22
2. To note that the earlier suggestion that the Corporation Link Members should discuss with the responsible Curriculum Managers how the changes to their areas had been identified was not now thought to be the most appropriate approach
3. To look forward to receiving further updates on proposed changes to the course offer so that Members had a clear understanding and could be reflected in future reviews of policy falling within the remit of the Corporation and the Standing Committees – whilst appreciating that this was a complex area involving large amounts of data it was thought that 4 or 5 key points could be identified for each course.

**12 LEARNER SURVEYS**

The Committee received the report of the Vice Principal Student Achievement & Progress on the College’s approach to conducting learner surveys in 2020/21:

* in October 2020 420 students participated in the induction survey
* in March 2021 852 students took part in the teaching and learning survey
* in April 2021 425 students participated in the national digital experience insights survey.

A Member asked how the feedback from students was used and it was explained that it informed the self-assessment process and the various focus groups which met from time to time.

Particularly noteworthy was the national digital experience insights survey. Of the 425 NewVIc students who had responded 45.5% said that they would rate the quality of the College’s digital provision (software, hardware and learning environment) as “good or better” which had to be seen in the context of 66.87% nationally. Also 52.85% of learners said that they were supported “good or better” online in comparison with 68.57% nationally.

The College Executive was very much aware of the need to make further improvements to the digital provision. A Steering Group was in place which was looking at what needed to be done in the short-term, medium -term and longer-term. Of course the costs involved were substantial but as much as possible would be done year on year.

A Member asked if there was any external funding available. It was recalled that, as a result of the Covid pandemic and students working remotely, the College had received some external funding which had enabled some laptops and other kit to be purchased. The amount received, whilst helpful, was relatively small in the context of the costs involved to bring about the extent of improvements in the College’s digital infrastructure.

A Member also asked about the availability of any sponsorship which businesses may be prepared to make under the CSR response. Unfortunately, as the national arrangements stood at present colleges were not covered by the CSR scheme.

The Committee AGREED following discussion:

1. to note the report on the outcome of the three learner surveys conducted in 2020/21 including the responses from the national digital survey
2. to look forward to hearing more at future meetings on the improvements being made to the College’s digital infrastructure
3. to note that colleges were not covered by the national approach to CSR but to welcome any introductions which could lead to business sponsorship of NewVIc activities and facilities.

 *Note Paddy Salter left the meeting due to a business commitment*

**13 CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE - REVIEW OF 2020/21**

The Committee reviewed the approach to the conduct of business in 2020/21 with particular regard to the fact that this was the first year of operation of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee.

The Committee AGREED after discussion:

1. that the year had gone well with a wide range of appropriate issues addressed
2. it would be appropriate to spend some time in the next year reviewing the SARs for the College support areas
3. there was no need to suggest any changes to the Terms of Reference or the approach to operating

**14 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS – 2021/22**

The Committee NOTED the dates of the planned meetings to take place in 2021/22:

* Thursday 18 November 2021 at 9 am
* Thursday 17 March 2022 at 9 am
* Thursday 16 June 2022 at 9 am

The start time would be reviewed in discussion with Members to seek to ensure that all could attend given that not all Members were present on this occasion.

It was recognised that other meetings will be arranged if and when thought to be appropriate to address issues.

**15 CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE - MEMBERSHIP**

The Chair highlighted the fact that this was the last meeting to be attended by Miklos Sarosi in his capacity as Parent Member on the Corporation as the term of office ended on 31 July 2021.

Miklos was thanked for his contribution to the Committee since it was established at the beginning of the current year, 2020/21.

The Committee also recognised with concern that Staff Member Edet Okon had not attended any of the meetings or sent his apologies for absence. This would need to be addressed in readiness for 2021/22 so that there was a contribution to discussions from the view point of a Staff Member.

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_