**The Corporation of Newham Sixth Form College**

**Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 March 2022**

**Members**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Julia Shelton (Chair) | Independent Member | Present |
| Fiona Clarke | Staff Member | Apologies – College commitments |
| Mandeep Gill | Principal & Chief Executive | Present |
| Jane Lofthouse | Independent Member | Apologies – family commitments |
| Ebby Maps | Parent Member | Present |
| Yvonne Odai | Student Member | Present |
| Aaliyah Patel | Student Member | Present |
| Martin Rosner | Independent Member | Present |
| Mandeep Sahotay | Independent Member | Present |
| Paddy Salter | Independent Member | Present |
| Elizabeth Scott | Independent Member | Apologies – work commitments |

**Non-Members in attendance**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Magdalena Johnson | Vice Principal Student Achievement & Progress | Present |
| Robin Jones  Martin Reed | Clerk to the Corporation  Assistant Principal Student Services | Present  Present |
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**1 MEMBERSHIP OF THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

The Committee NOTED that:

1. Hafsa Naeem had resigned from membership of the Corporation and therefore the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee
2. Aaliyah Patel was the new Students’ Union President and had joined the Corporation and the Committee.

The Chair, on behalf of Committee, welcomed Aaliyah to the meeting.

**2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Committee NOTED that the following had submitted their apologies for absence:

1. Fiona Clarke had a College commitment
2. Jane Lofthouse had a family commitment
3. Elizabeth Scott had a work commitment

The meeting was quorate throughout.

**3 DECLARATION 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.

**4** **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2021**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee held on 18 November 2021 were agreed to be a correct record.

**5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2021**

The Committee agreed that there no issues to be addressed from the Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee held on 18 November 2021 which were not addressed in the published Agenda or in planned actions.

**6 STUDENT REPORT**

The Committee received the Student Report which covered the Students’ Union and the Student Council.

Student Members Aaliyah Patel and Yvonne Odai introduced the report and highlighted a number of key points including:

* In the current year there are 17 Students’ Union Officers each with their own roles and responsibilities
* The training provided for the Students’ Union Officers to prepare them for their roles and to get to know each other through working as a team
* Catering – discussions with the Executive and the Catering Company using feedback from the Student Council on key issues such as costs and opening hours
* Impact of the industrial action and the opportunity to ask the Executive questions with issues being covered in the briefings provided by the Principal & Chief Executive for all students
* Engagement with the preparation of the new College Strategic Plan
* Students’ Union events – Freshers Fair, Black History Month and Christmas Event
* Campaign Champions and Equality Champions – training and activities
* Motions from the Student Council in December 2021 – You Said, We Did approach
* Security around the College
* Police presence in College and if being in uniform was always appropriate
* Students travelling by bus and if the College card could be shown when the Oyster Card was forgotten
* Students airdropping inappropriate content on the phones and other devices of fellow students and if this could be addressed

The points raised in the report prompted a wide ranging discussion by Members and the Executive.

There was particular interest in the security related issues and the actions taken by the Executive to address the concerns raised by students.

An immediate action was to review the contract with the Security Company which provided personnel who focussed on what was happening in and around the College entrance. To make best use of the resources the College has appointed 4 new Youth Workers – 3 have already started and 1 will join the College shortly – with a much wider brief than the personnel provided by the Security Company in that they walk the buildings covering all areas of the College.

On a related point to security the Principal & Chief Executive explained that Duty Managers with pink high visibility jackets were in the Reception Area at appropriate times of the day to welcome students when they arrive and address any issues that occur as it was recognised that it was important that the College environment was one where students and staff felt safe and supported.

A Member asked if there was any data on the number of fights in and around the College before the appointment of the Youth Workers and now that they are in post. It was explained that a learner voice survey was being carried out.

Safety was of importance to all members of the College community and the New Build project provided an opportunity to review and improve on current arrangements. To inform planning the Architects would be meeting students after the Easter break to discuss related issues and to hear directly the student voice.

The Architects had already received some feedback as a result of the mapping exercise which had been carried out with students on the areas where they feel less safe at present. The immediate action was to ensure that these areas were visited regularly by the Youth Workers when patrolling the site.

Another point highlighted concerned the importance of communication with students such as when classes were cancelled due to a member of staff being absent. This was being addressed by the College as it was recognised that it was not appropriate for staff to contact students using their personal number.

The Committee agreed following discussion:

1. To thank the Student Members for presenting the report to the Committee and highlighting the key issues
2. To note with interest the responses of the College Executive to the issues raised including the appointment of Youth Workers in the place of some of the personnel provided by the Security Contractors
3. To look forward to receiving at the next meeting an update on the range of issues of interest and concern to the student body including the outcomes from the learner survey

**7 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS APPROPRIATE TO THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

The Committee received the updated report relating to the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the College which fell within the Terms of Reference to be tracked by the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee on an ongoing basis.

It was recognised that the had been an impact on the performance of the College of the Covid 19 pandemic, staff absences and more recently the industrial action on the part of members of the NEU.

It was a concern that the data relating to two key questions showed a reduction in the level of positivity – these concerned feeling safe at College and recommending the College to a friend. In addition to the actions mentioned earlier in the meeting relating to safety, the College was organising focus groups with students to understand the concerns and suggestions. An update would be provided at the next meeting.

Notwithstanding the reduced number of students saying that they would recommend the College to a friend, NewVIc had seen a 16% increase in the number of applications for a start in September 2022. It was thought NewVIc was still seen as a “good College” in the wider community.

The programme of lesson observations had been delayed due to the recent industrial action but was now underway with the intention of completing by mid May 2022. Action plans were being prepared to action areas where improvements in practice were thought to be appropriate. It was not a matter of waiting until all observations were completed.

The College was providing a programme of additional evening and weekend sessions in all Curriculum Areas to try to mitigate the adverse impact of the pandemic, staff sickness and the industrial action.

The Committee was also advised of the approach within the College to bring about improvements such as “attendance awards”.

The Committee AGREED following discussion:

1. To note the updated KPI report as presented including the actions being progressed to address the ethnicity achievement gap which was currently 11%
2. To look forward to receiving at the next meeting the updated KPIs plus reports on the outcomes from the learner survey now underway and the learning points from the lesson observations
3. To note the 16% increase in the number of applications received from potential students wishing to join the College in September 2022 and to join with the Principal & Chief Executive in thanking the College Marketing Team for the strategy including the use of social media

**8 STRATEGIC PLAN – 2022 TO 2025**

The Committee was reminded that a Special Meeting of the Corporation had taken place on 19 January 2022 primarily to discuss the key aspects of the proposed new College Strategic Plan for the three year period starting on 1 August 2022.

The Principal & Chief Executive explained that from the consultation so far, including with Members at the Special Meeting of the Corporation on 19 January 2022, key words had been identified for inclusion in the Mission Statement and Vision Statement and these would be reflected in the draft update to be presented to the Corporation on 30 March 2022. There was, however, more consultation planned and this would be taken into account in the final version which it was hoped would be approved by the Corporation on 13 July 2022.

The Clerk advised that at the meeting of the Finance & Resources Committee held on 9 March 2022 a Member had asked about such relatively new areas of provision as the T Levels and if these would be explicitly tracked. It was noted in response that this issue would be addressed by the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee and there was an opportunity to review the KPIs that were needed to enable the new Strategic Plan to be tracked.

The Committee agreed following discussion:

1. To note that the Principal & Chief Executive would be presenting an outline working draft of the new Strategic Plan to the Corporation on 30 March 2022
2. That at this time there was no need to change the KPIs reported to and considered by the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee other than to include data on Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2 data as currently the main focus was on A level and Level 3 Vocational provision

**9 SAFEGUARDING UPDATE**

The Committee received the Safeguarding Update and the Prevent Duty Risk Assessment / Action Plan for 2021/22.

The key themes from the Safeguarding Update included the following:

* Changes to the College Welfare and Safeguarding Team
* Arrangements for supporting students
* Student Finance
* Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges
* Installation of a new tracking software system

The Committee recognised that the earlier discussion on the Student Report covered in some detail the safety related concerns and the actions taken by the College to address.

Whilst it acknowledged that the current engagement with the local Police was better than it had ever been, there was more to be done particularly in terms of ongoing communication.

It was stressed that the online safety of students remained a challenge for the College.

The Clerk, on behalf of Elizabeth Scott who was not present at the meeting, asked if any consideration had been given to the possibility of having Chaplaincy provision. The return to using the Multi Faith area for the purpose intended (it had become the Covid test centre) provided an opportunity to revisit but in the context of the commitment to the College supporting a Multi Faith approach and not a single faith. The position at comparable colleges to NewVIc would be explored.

The Committee agreed after a wide ranging discussion:

1. To receive and note the Safeguarding Update
2. To look forward to receiving further updates at future meetings of the Committee
3. To APPROVE the Prevent Duty Risk Assessment / Action Plan for 2021/22

*Note: Martin Reed left the meeting*

**10 ACTIONS TAKEN TO IMPROVE VOCATIONAL OUTCOMES**

The Committee received the report prepared by the Vice Principal Student Achievement & Progress outlining the actions taken to improve vocational outcomes.

The following points were highlighted:

* The impact of baseline assessments to measure the distance travelled
* Remodelling of Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) courses to provide learners with an additional opportunity to sit BTEC examinations in January
* Curriculum delivery changes on Level 2 Transition Programmes leading to a greater focus on English and Maths and progression onto T Levels
* Improved Value Added monitoring
* Challenges around attendance and the use of disciplinary process
* Use of 16-19 Tuition Fund across Curriculum Areas

Members took the opportunity to seek clarification of the various approaches by the Executive and recognised that there were many initiatives; the intention of the college was to focus on what was best for students and changes would be made if thought to be appropriate.

The Committee agreed after discussion:

1. To note the report on the actions being taken to improve vocational outcomes
2. To recognise that a lot of learning opportunities had been lost in 2021/22 but initiatives were being taken to try to mitigate the adverse impact
3. To note that the various changes were being made and more would be introduced if thought to be in the best interest of the students and these were being tracked to judge the impact

*Note: Paddy Salter apologised for having to leave the meeting due to an urgent work issue – the meeting remained quorate*

**11 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN – 2021/22**

The Committee received the up-to-date Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2021/22 as approved by the Corporation on 15 December 2021 and now including the progress to February 2022.

It was recalled from the discussion on 18 November 2021 that the Key Areas of Development were set out with seven priorities to be addressed:

* Students make insufficient progress from their starting points on a significant number of Level 3 vocational programmes
* Achievement of students with high needs is low
* Achievement rates on pre-GCSE English and maths courses are below the national average
* Attendance on the majority of study programmes need to increase
* Staff satisfaction levels are low
* IT infrastructure is in need of investment to support effective curriculum delivery and to meet learners’ needs
* Student accommodation requires improvement

The theme of staff satisfaction levels being low had been addressed by the Finance & Resources Committee on 9 March 2022 and the Minutes would be presented to the Corporation on 30 March 2022 so that all Members were aware of the key points. The main aspect covered was that a firm called QDP had been engaged so that an additional staff survey could be carried out with data from a much larger number of colleges being provided for comparison purposes than was possible from the York Survey used by the College in the last 3 years.

The Curriculum Plan for 2022/23 and beyond, was being prepared and this would inform a range of planning needs including for the New Build project. This key piece of work would have regard to such factors as the funding allocation and competition for 16-19 year olds in the travel to learn area served by NewVIc.

To support the Curriculum Plan a policy statement was being prepared so that Members were aware of the factors that would be taken into account when considering course closures and amalgamations – decisions that need to be made immediately by the Executive during the enrolment period and first few weeks of the year in September and October.

A Member of the Committee commented on the new responsibility arising from the Skills Bill going through Parliament relating to meeting local skills needs. Unlike General FE Colleges for a Sixth Form College such as NewVIc this would be about the number of students progressing to Higher Education and professional training. The approach was yet to be confirmed although this was the expectation by all in the sector including Ofsted.

The 16% increase in applications from potential students was mentioned earlier in the meeting. Taken with the expected increase in the number of internal progressions the College may have some difficult decisions to take in September 2022 with regard to admissions. The demand would be more than the College could take given limited space – teaching and social as well as basic facilities such as catering areas and toilets – and, therefore, it was matter for careful consideration. Whilst the College was proud of its approach not to be selective there may be a need for clear criteria for admission.

The Committee agreed following discussion:

1. To note the progress on the Areas for Development as set out in the College Improvement Plan
2. To look forward to receiving the updated Quality Improvement Plan at the next meeting of the Committee
3. To note the Curriculum Plan would be a major Agenda item for the meeting scheduled for 16 June 2022
4. To note the 16% increase in the number of applications from potential students and that the Executive were addressing the impact for the College if this number sought admission in September 2022 given that, in past years, it could be assumed around 600 “no shows” from people who applied but then took no further action to enrol.

**12 COURSES CAUSING CONCERN**

The Committee received the report of the Vice Principal Student Achievement & Progress relating to the courses causing concern and noted in particular:

* There are currently 9 courses of concern due to achievement and low Value Added (VA)
* Assessment schedules have been standardised to include more opportunities for targeted learning checks in Humanities and Social Sciences
* A new assessment and internal verification Schule is in place for the Foundation Learning Department
* There are significant attendance issues particularly on Level 3 programmes
* A Level Religious Studies and Level 3 Mechanical Engineering are not on track to improve significantly
* Entry and Level 1 English and Maths courses are on track to improve significantly

The Committee AGREED following a review of the report:

1. To note the courses currently causing concern including the actions taken to bring about improvements
2. To note that one of the factors impacting on delivery concerned staffing difficulties such as in Engineering which it was appreciated was a sector wide challenge – the strategies to address included making contact with former NewVIc students who have progressed to Higher Education and the professions to see if there was any interest in teaching at the College
3. To look forward to receiving an update at the next meeting of the Committee.

**13 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS – 2021/22**

The Corporation NOTED the final scheduled meeting to take place in 2021/22 was on:

* Thursday 16 June 2022 at 9 am

It was recognised that other meetings will be arranged if and when thought to be appropriate to address issues.  The option was open to the Committee to meet in College or online depending on the wishes of Members. At present the intention was to continue meeting online.

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