**The Corporation of Newham Sixth Form College**

**Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 November 2023**

**Members**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Julia Shelton (Chair) | Independent Member | Present |
| Mandeep Gill | Principal & Chief Executive | Apologies – ill health |
| Trevor Harris | Staff Member | Present |
| Aleeza Hasaan | Student Member | Apologies – personal commitments |
| Jane Lofthouse | Independent Member | Present |
| Ebby Maps | Parent Member | Apologies – IT problems |
| Matthew Odeyemi | Student Member | Present |
| Martin Rosner | Independent Member | Present |
| Mandeep Sahotay | Independent Member | Present |
| Elizabeth Scott | Independent Member | Apologies – IT problems |
| Yolanda Valery | Independent Member | Apologies – work commitment |

**Non-Members in attendance**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Miranda Coles | Interim Executive Director Finance, Estates & Marketing | Present |
| Susanne Davies (known as Davies) | Interim Principal | Present |
| David Francis | Executive Director Student Services | Present |
| Sue Hadfield | Interim Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality | Present |
| Jasmine Idang | Student – Observer | Present |
| Robin Jones | Head of Governance | Present |
| Sandra Prail MBE | External Reviewer | Present |
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**1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, welcomed Sandra Prail MBE to the meeting as an observer as part of the external review of governance. Members and others present introduced themselves.

**2 MEMBERSHIP OF THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

The Committee noted that, at the meeting on 11 October 2023, the Corporation had determined the membership of the Committee for 2023/24 as follows:

* Julia Shelton (Chair)
* Mandeep Gill
* Aleeza Hasaan
* Trevor Harris
* Jane Lofthouse
* Ebby Maps
* Matthew Odeyemi
* Martin Rosner
* Mandeep Sahotay
* Elizabeth Scott
* Yolanda Valery

**3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Committee NOTED the apologies for absence submitted prior to the meeting:

* Mandeep Gill - ill health
* Aleeza Hasaan – College commitments
* Yolanda Valery - work commitments.

During the meeting Ebby Maps and Elizabeth Scott submitted their apologies as they were unable to join online due to technical difficulties.

The meeting was quorate throughout.

**4 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.

**5** **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 28 SEPTEMBER 2023**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee held on 28 September 2023 were agreed to be a correct record.

**6 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 28 SEPTEMBER 2023**

The Committee agreed that, in the main the issues to be addressed from the Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee held on 28 September 2023 were covered in the published Agenda or in planned actions. However, the following issues were highlighted at this stage of the meeting:

* Six Dimensions Report – this relates specifically to sixth form colleges and shows how one college compares to others – based on the latest data NewVIc achievement outcomes was between 10 and 20/% below other sixth form colleges – the report would be made available to Members before the next meeting rather than waiting until the publication of the next Agenda
* Honours Project outcomes in 2023 – overall and based on ProAchieve 5 students achieved which is 12.8% - however in total 17 learners achieved the qualification (recorded on the AQA website). The reason for the difference in numbers is that 12 failed their first attempt but passed at the second attempt which is not funded. Had it been possible to record on ProAchieve the achievement rate would have been 43%.

Finally, the Chair asked for future meetings an Action Log be prepared and published with the Agenda so that issues to be addressed could be tracked.

*Note: Trevor Harris joined the meeting having just finished teaching*

**7 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR OF THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 2023/24**

The Committee agreed to appoint Jane Lofthouse as the Vice Chair of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee for 2023/24.

*Note: At this point of the meeting the apologies for absence of Ebby Maps and Elizabeth Scott were reported*

**8 STUDENT REPORT**

The Committee received and discussed the Student Report which was thought to be very informative and well written by and on behalf of the Students’ Union Officers and wider student body.

It was noted that the Chair of the Corporation had attended the recent meeting of students’ with a representative of SLT which he had found interesting with the issues covered reflected in the report before the Committee.

The Committee recalled the earlier discussions with regard to the value of increasing the links with the Students’ Union Executive, the Student Council and the wider student body by the Chair of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee and or the Chair of the Corporation attending at least one such meeting a term. This would enable the Members to gain a greater understanding of the issues of concern to students. The students present at this meeting confirmed that the Chairs would be most welcome and arrangements would be made to confirm future dates and times.

The issue of the cost and quality of food etc available in the College Cafeteria was a current concern for many students given the cost of living crisis. It was explained that a tender process was underway to appoint new caterers from the beginning of the Spring Term in January 2024. Quality and pricing were key considerations. It was also reported that the Bursary Scheme had been reviewed and the daily payment for eligible students had been increased from £3.50 to £5. Also the availability of free breakfasts had been expanded. It was anticipated that the catering service would be far better as from January 2024 than it had been in the recent past.

The issue of the safety of students directly outside of the College was raised having regard to the incidents in October when 3 students had been attacked and stabbed. It was explained that the CCTV coverage at the front of the College was being extended and lighting was being reviewed.

A Member asked if anything could be done in partnership with the Local Authority and the Police to bring about even more improvements. This would be pursued.

The Committee agreed after discussion:

1. to receive the Student Report as presented
2. to note the issues of particular interest and concern such as the Cafeteria and safety and to look forward to receiving updates at forthcoming meetings
3. to note that the Chair of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee and or the Chair of the Corporation planned to attend some of the forthcoming meetings of the Students’ Union Executive , Student Council and other fora to hear first hand the sort of issues of interest and concern to students so that possible improvements can be discussed.

**9 SAFEGUARDING – UPDATE**

The Committee received the comprehensive Safeguarding Update which covered a range of issues including:

* meetings held over the last couple of months including with the Link Member for Safeguarding
* Safeguarding Action Plan
* Serious incidents since the start of the current term
* E-safety
* Use of College premises by external organisations
* Martyn’s Law
* Safeguarding cases – data

The various incidents were outlined – also mentioned during the earlier discussion of the Student Report – and the lessons learned such as the need to replace the radios used for internal communication, provision of stab vests for Security staff and the engagement of 2 additional security personnel.

Also in terms of security a new security hut had been provided with the intention of stopping “tailgating” when outsiders try and gain access to the College site.

The College was working in partnership with the Police on seeking to stop young people carrying knifes. This would involve the use of the arch similar to what was seen in airports. The Police arranged for spotters to be in the vicinity to see if any students turned away from the College once they realised that checks were being made.

Whilst a number of initiatives had been progressed in the light of recent experience such as the installation of additional CCTV and reviewing lighting around the College it was acknowledged that more may be able to be done so as to keep students and staff as safe as possible.

The recent experience as a result of the incidents and the closing off of roads had caused some distress for vulnerable students as their normal going home route was not available to them. This would be addressed by the College so that students felt safe.

The draft Bill – known as Martyn’s Law- was now being progressed by the Government which, when enacted, would involve organisations such as NewVIc undertaking effective activities to improve preparedness for a possible terrorist attack.

The College had benefited from the donation of 150 professional hours which would be used to support students needing support.

The Committee agreed following a wide ranging discussion:

1. to receive the comprehensive Safeguarding Update covering such a wide range of issues
2. to look forward to receiving updates at the next meeting on the issues requiring attention particularly those arising from the recent security incidents such as supporting vulnerable students whose normal arrangements for going home were affected as was the case in October.

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

The Committee noted the need to review the College KPIs and agreed that this was an issue for discussion at the Corporation Planning & Development Session on 18 November 2023. The intention was then to present recommendations, including challenging but realistic targets, to the Corporation on 13 December 2023.

**11 EXAMINATIONS ACTION PLAN**

The Committee received the updated Examinations Action Plan for the period to August 2024 which set out:

* Areas for development
* Lead
* Actions and controls
* Progress update
* Deadlines – some were specific and some ongoing.

The reviews by the Awarding Bodies of the practices in place at NewVIc were ongoing and more appropriate and robust arrangements were being put in place.

The Committee agreed to note the updated Examination Action Plan and to look forward to receiving an update at the next meeting by which time a number of issues should have been progressed.

**12 QUALITY OF PROVISION**

The Committee received a comprehensive report prepared by the Interim Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality which set out how the Executive planned to bring about the required improvements in the quality of provision.

It was noted that the achievement of the improvement in the quality of provision would be by the implementation of a rigours quality assurance programme. This has already involved or will involve such activities as:

* Audit of schemes of work
* Lesson visits addressing attendance and learner engagement
* Deep dive of tutorials involving an external person who was also an Ofsted Inspector
* Learner voice via the Student Forum and an induction survey which was scheduled to close on 17 November 2023
* Staff training and development – some already delivered and more scheduled
* Formal observations now underway
* Engagement of Learning Coaches
* Introduction of Learning Walks

A number of documents were provided to the Committee in support of the report on the quality of provision:

* Annual Quality Cycle
* Observation Policy
* Teaching Learning & Assessment Policy – Improvement Strategy
* Observation characteristics
* SAR – QIP templates – process

A Member asked how they (Members of the Corporation) could be reassured that real progress and improvements were being made. Apart from receiving reports at future meetings Members were invited to come into College to see first hand what was being progressed. All activities were recorded and, therefore, the documentation was available for review if a Member wished to see. The Link Members were also key to gaining an insight into practice and impact. It was hoped that Link Members would make at least one visit to their allocated areas every term.

The importance of providing all learners with the opportunity to have a say on their experience at College was highlighted. The intention was to continue to increase the learner voice as an integral part of the improvement plans. The current survey was still open for completion by students but as at 7 November 2023 there were interesting and in some respects worrying feedback such as:

* Question 10 – would you recommend the College to a friend – no = 67.7%
* Question 11 – access to the resources needed to do well on the course – yes = 78%

There was a focus on the negatives to bring about improvements in terms of the student experience.

Members appreciated that as an integral part of the forthcoming external review of the College the Inspection Team would spend a lot of time talking to students and in doing so triangulating what they were seeing and being told.

The final outcomes from the survey would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

It was acknowledged that the various initiatives were stressful for staff but all were necessary to improve provision and outcomes. What could be said was that the culture in College was in the process of changing with it being clear to all that support was in place and available. To achieve improvements deadlines for specific actions were set and there was follow up.

The Committee agreed after a wide ranging discussion:

1. To note with interest the report and supporting documents on the range of initiatives being progressed to improve the quality of provision
2. To welcome the open approach in order for Members to engage in the quality processes
3. To look forward to receiving at future meetings updates on the impact of the initiatives and the outcomes from Learner Surveys together with the plans to address issues highlighted by students in the responses.

**13 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY – STUDENT RELATED DATA – 2022/23**

The Committee received a comprehensive report prepared by the Executive Director Student Services & Wellbeing on the student related equality & diversirty data.

The report had regard to such factors as:

* Legislative responsibility
* Ofsted requirements
* NewVIc approach including the current KPIs for narrowing achievement gaps in terms of gender, ethnicity, Students with Learning Difficulties/Disabilities (LDD), Students in receipt of free school meals (FSM)and Looked After Children (LAC)

The report also included a comprehensive action plan which set out actions, expected impact, progress review and the allocation of responsibility to a designated member of staff.

Members thought that the Action Plan needed further review so as to bring about meaningful improvements. For example the action to monitor the data was not thought to be sufficient.

It was also asked how issues were to be progressed across the College. It was explained that members of the SLT would be reviewing and the College E&D Group was scheduled to meet next week to consider issues. The Corporation Link Member was due to attend the meeting and would provide feedback from the perspective of a Link Member.

The Committee agreed after discussion:

1. to note the report as presented on the student related equality & diversity data
2. to welcome the Action Plan but to request that future updates have the key points highlighted so as to draw specific attention and further thought is given to planned initiatives so as to bring about meaningful impacts and improvements in terms of narrowing achievement gaps
3. to note that a brief presentation was scheduled to be provided at the Corporation Planning & Development Session on 18 November 2023 so as to raise the awareness of all Members in terms of the performance of students in the context of equality & diversity considerations.

**14 COLLEGE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT – 2022/23**

The Committee received the proposed College Self-Assessment Report for 2022/23.

Members appreciated that, as previously explained, the SAR was a backwards looking document. The Quality Improvement Plan focused on what needed to be done to bring about the necessary improvements based on the SAR and any emerging issues.

The discussion on the SAR concentrated on the gradings to be allocated having regard to the Inspection Framework. A judgement needed to be taken on if the College was one which “Requires Improvement” or is “Inadequate” given student achievement outcomes and other factors such as the quality of teaching and learning.

The arrangements for the validation of the College SAR were noted which included panels involving an external independent person and Members of the Corporation.

It was appreciated that the College was due an Ofsted inspection but the current absence of the Principal & Chief Executive due to ill-health may mean this is deferred at least for a little time. The College SAR and the QIP would be key documents used by the Inspection Team although, of at least equal importance and probably more, was what was seen and heard in College during the inspection.

The Committee agreed unanimously after discussion:

1. to RECOMMEND to the Corporation on 13 December 2023 that the College Self-Assessment Report be approved subject to any points raised during the Corporation Planning & Development Session
2. to defer awarding a grade to the Self-Assessment Report for the time being to enable further thought to be given and to see what progress can be made against the various action plans to bring about improvements.

*Note: Trevor Harris left the meeting given a teaching commitment*

**15 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN – 2023/24**

The Committee received the proposed Quality Improvement Plan for 2023/24.

Members thought that the document was a concise statement of what needed to be addressed in the year to bring about the required improvements.

It was explained that the QIP would be presented to and considered by Members at the forthcoming Planning & Development Session taking place on 18 November 2023. This would provide an opportunity for Members to gain a greater understanding and comment prior to consideration by the Corporation on 13 December 2023.

The Committee agreed unanimously:

1. to RECOMMEND to the Corporation on 13 December 2023 that the Quality Improvement Plan for 2023/24 be approved subject to any feedback received during the forthcoming Planning & Development Session
2. to look forward to receiving throughout the year updates on the Quality Improvement Plan so that progress can be tracked and any slippage reviewed /challenged as appropriate.

*Note: The Students left the meeting given course commitments during the item on the QIP*

**16 QUALITY STRATEGY**

The Committee agreed unanimously to RECOMMEND to the Corporation on 13 December 2023 that the updated Quality Strategy be approved for the period to 31 July 2025 subject to ongoing review to reflect any significant changes in practice and or circumstances.

It was appreciated that the Quality Strategy is one of the responsibilities of the Corporation as set out in the Articles of Government.

**17 LEARNER NUMBERS**

The Committee received a report prepared by the Interim Executive Director Information Systems and the Interim Executive Director Finance, Estates & Marketing on the subject of learner numbers

It was appreciated that, whilst the main funding allocation for 16 – 18 year olds was based on the lagged system with no in year reductions, the funding for T Levels was subject to in-year clawback. The number of 16 – 18 year olds in the current year would be the basis for determining the allocation for 2024/25.

The preparations for next year would be based on an updated Curriculum Plan which would be a major focus for the College early in the new year.

The Interim Principal advised the Committee that the College was encouraged by the number of prospective students for September 2024 had attended the Open Day on 11 November.

The Committee agreed, following discussion:

1. To note the report as presented on learner number and the arrangements for preparing for 2024/25
2. To propose that, as last year, a joint meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee and the Finance & Resources Committee takes place in about mid February 2024 so that Members have an early opportunity to engage with the planning for 2024/25 and there was a clear understanding of what was being proposed by the Executive on students and staff.

Note: As with last year when the joint meeting of the two Committees was held on 30 January 2023 the Staff and Student Members would not be invited to attend given the possible impact of the evolving Curriculum Plan for 2024/25.

**18 COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT – 2022/23**

The Committee received the Annual Report on Complaints for 2022/23.

The Committee agreed following a brief discussion:

1. to note the Annual Report on Complaints for 2022/23 and the intention to change the current processes so as to track informal as well as formal complaints
2. to look forward to receiving at a future meeting the updated Complaints Policy and Procedure for consideration and approval.

**19 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS – 2023/24**

The Corporation NOTED the dates of the scheduled meetings for the remainder of 2023/24:

* Thursday 21 March 2024 (originally arranged for 7 March)
* Thursday 13 June 2024

In addition it was agreed that a meeting in late January / early February 2024 would be scheduled given the number of important issues currently being progressed and the need for Corporation Members to be updated and being able to challenge actions and progress.

It was recognised that other meetings will be arranged if and when thought to be appropriate to address issues falling within the Terms of Reference of the Committee.

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