**The Corporation of Newham Sixth Form College**

**Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee**

**Unconfirmed Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 March 2024**

**Members**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Julia Shelton (Chair) | Independent Member | Present |
| Jayne Dickinson | Independent Member | Present |
| Mandeep Gill | Principal & Chief Executive | Apologies – not available |
| Trevor Harris | Staff Member | Present |
| Aleeza Hasaan | Student Member | Present |
| Jane Lofthouse | Independent Member | Present |
| Ebby Maps | Parent Member | Present |
| Matthew Odeyemi | Student Member | Present |
| Mandeep Sahotay | Independent Member | Apologies – hospital appt |
| Elizabeth Scott | Independent Member | Present |

**Non-Members in attendance**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Miranda Coles | Interim Executive Director Finance, Estates & Marketing | Present |
| Janet Davidson | Interim Executive Director Skills & Employability | Present |
| Susanne Davies (known as Davies) | Interim Principal | Present |
| David Francis | Executive Director Student Services | Present |
| Sue Hadfield | Interim Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality | Present |
| Robin Jones | Head of Governance | Present |
| Lorna Langridge | Interim Head of Quality | Present |
| Muhammed Miah | Student – Observer | Present |
| Sijul Miah | Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality | Present |
| Dayo Ogunjobi | Interim Executive Director MIS, Exams and IT | Present |
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**1 MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE**

The Head of Governance reported the recent changes to the membership of the Corporation which impacted on the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee:

* the resignations of Yolanda Valery and Martin Rosner
* the appointment of Jayne Dickinson

**2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

* Mandeep Gill – not available
* Mandeep Sahotay – hospital appointment

Four Members joined a little late due to their other commitments – the Staff Member, the 2 Student Members and Ebby Maps.

Elizabeth Scott had made known prior to the meeting that she had to leave at 10.45 as she was attending a funeral.

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 29 JANUARY 2024**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee held on 29 January 2024 were agreed to be a correct record.

The Head of Governance advised Members that the unconfirmed Minutes had been presented to Corporation on 21 February 2024.

**5 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 29 JANUARY 2024**

The Committee agreed that the issues to be addressed from the Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee held on 29 January 2024 were covered in the published Agenda or in the Follow Up Tracker – see item 6 below.

**6 CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE – FOLLOW UP TRACKER**

The Committee received and reviewed the Follow Up Tracker which had been updated following the meeting on 29 January 2024.

The following items had now all been addressed in so far as the immediate actions were concerned and could be removed from the Tracker as at the date of this meeting notwithstanding that these would continue to be reviewed and progress challenged through the Risk Register and other improvement plans:

* Quality Improvement Plan
* KPIs
* Examinations Action Plan
* College Recovery Plan
* Student Report – see below
* Safeguarding – Update – see below
* Learner Surveys
* Complaints

The remaining items would remain on the Tracker and be addressed at forthcoming meetings of the Committee.

**7 SECURITY IMPROVEMENTS**

The Committee noted with interest that the CCTV coverage at the front of the College had been reviewed and improvements made in terms of removing “blind spots”. This item had been progressed following the attacks on students in October 2023.

**8 SAFEGUARDING – UPDATE**

The Committee was advised that to support vulnerable students the completed Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) were being held at Reception and were, therefore, available to all who needed to access.

The Interim Principal took the opportunity to report that a fire drill had been held last week and was completed in 14 minutes.

*Note: Trevor Harris, Matthew Odeyemi and Aleeza Hassan joined the meeting the following item.*

**9 INSPECTION OF NEWVIC**

The Committee received with the published Agenda the report of the Interim Principal which outlined the outcomes from the recent Ofsted inspection of the College.

The Interim Principal explained that the previous day the College had received, in confidence, the draft Ofsted report with an invitation to comment on points of fact within 5 working days. The Committee, therefore, focused the discussion on the draft report and in doing so noted that there were some statements which warranted comment back to Ofsted.

It was good to see that some “green shoots” of improvement had been acknowledged in the draft report and some of the issues included were very much about the past and not present. Although the inspection outcome was largely as expected from the College’s SAR, Members expressed concern and disappointment with the situation in which the College now finds itself and the volume of work that needs to be done.

The next steps required the preparation of a Post Inspection Improvement Plan which could also cover the issues from the various elements of the College Recovery Plan.

The Interim Principal explained that at the meeting of SLT earlier in the week it had been agreed to focus on the elements of the Improvement Plan which covered the period to the end of the current year, 2023/24, with the aim of maximising student achievement.

Based on the initial feedback it was understood that the College would have two monitoring visits by Ofsted prior to a new inspection in about 15 months time. The first monitoring visit was expected in September 2024.

The first monitoring visit should see the completion of the summer examinations without students experiencing difficulties, an increase in achievement rates, a smooth enrolment with a good induction programme supported by efficient and effective timetabling.

The Improvement Plan would use a RAG rating to show progress and where there had not been the anticipated developments and impact. The SLT were urged not to expect to move too quickly to green and find the College falling back on early progress that proved unstainable. A Member also questioned that too many risks and progress were currently rated Amber when Ofsted had only recently completed their assignment and judged this otherwise. This was also covered under item 11 below.

Finally, the Interim Principal spoke of the College having “turned the corner” and “was on the way up” and the SLT was looking forward to working with Corporation Members to bring about the necessary improvements.

The Committee agreed following discussion:

1. to note the draft Ofsted report which had been shared in confidence and this would remain so until the final report was published on about 16 April 2024
2. to note that there were several points to be raised with Ofsted on the draft inspection report of a factual nature and these would be shared with Members before they were confirmed but when preparing the response care would be taken so as to focus on the really key issues
3. to note that the College was working on a marketing campaign to respond to the issues which would be raised by the media and to address what was expected to be negative publicity which could, potentially, impact adversely on enrolment for 2024/25
4. to look forward to receiving and considering the draft Improvement Plan which would be a comprehensive document
5. to be reassured that the SLT would ensure that all appropriate issues would be covered in the Quality Improvement Plan and or the Risk Register and these would be graded appropriately so as to indicate clearly the importance / level of risk
6. that it was essential that the Corporation as a whole was engaged in reviewing and commenting on the Improvement Plan whilst the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee would carry out the detailed consideration on an ongoing basis.

*Note: Ebby Maps joined the meeting during the following item*

**10 COLLEGE RECOVERY PLAN**

The Interim Principal explained that there was no single College Recovery Plan document / table as had been requested as her approach provided for the necessary policies and procedures to be updated or introduced as appropriate to bring about the required improvements in practice leading to a better student experience.

The Committee noted that appropriate aspects of the elements of the Recovery Plan would be included in the comprehensive Improvement Plan being prepared post the recent Ofsted inspection. .

**11 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The Committee received the updated Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2023/24 which continued to be refined in the light of developments and experience.

Members challenged the different view of the College Executive and the Ofsted Inspection Team about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The QIP suggested that the majority of the 84 staff observed so far in the current year had met the expectations whereas this was not reflected in the inspection outcomes. It was explained that the College used the DfE professional standards criteria and not a more challenging approach. This was being addressed and discussions were underway with the Union Officers with a view to introducing a more appropriate observation approach in 2024/25.

It was understand that at least three of the staff observed by Ofsted had been identified as requiring further support by the College and this was being provided to bring about improvements in professional practice.

There was an acknowledgement by Members that there was a shortage of suitably qualified and experienced teachers in FE and, therefore, recruitment was a challenge for NewVIc as it was for most if not all other colleges. As part of the recruitment process candidates were required to deliver a micro lesson and this informed the arrangements to support ongoing improvements in performance. Staff as a whole benefited from CPD sessions and the intention for teachers was to split these between what was required by HR (keeping up-to-date with Safeguarding, Prevent etc) and sessions led by or at least organised by the Quality Team.

The position with regard to retention and attendance was highlighted. Given the attendance data it had to be asked if the retention number of 95% was too optimistic. The need to understand reasons for poor attendance was acknowledged. For example were there child care or other care responsibilities which needed to be noted and taken into account when considering how best to support individual learners. A Member asked for greater detail on attendance so that Members fully understood where specific issues needed addressing and where better practice was in evidence.

The Student Members made the point that attendance can be affected by the proximity of examinations and how they are preparing in their best interests.

The Committee also discussed the setting of SMART targets for individual students when it was confirmed that currently 23% had been set by staff and there was also a question as to how many were truly SMART.

The Committee agreed after discussion:

1. to receive and note the updated Quality Improvement Plan and the required developments to improve on the College wide arrangements
2. to note the discussion on a wide range of issues related to the Quality Improvement Plan such as the planned review of the arrangements for carrying out the observations of teaching, learning and assessment and to look forward to receiving updates at future meetings
3. to receive more detailed data on student attendance at future meetings.

**12 EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION AT NEWVIC**

The Committee received and discussed a report presented by the Interim Executive Director with responsibility for MIS, Exams and IT which covered the issues associated with the administration of examinations at the College.

The report addressed the following:

* Overview
* Some key achievements
* Staffing challenges and solutions
* Training and development programmes
* Better use of technology
* Enhanced quality assurance measures
* JCQ inspection – recommendations from January 2024

It was explained that an Exams Task & Finish Group had been established in College with a focus on the forthcoming summer series of examinations to ensure effective exam management.

An exams specialist has been engaged to support the College and interviews for established exams staff were taking place this week with what was thought to be a good field of candidates.

A number of laptops had been ordered to support the examinations process.

The Committee had previously been alerted to investigations being conducted by Pearson and it good to hear that 3 had been cleared and it was expected that the remaining one would be closed shortly – confirmation was expected possibly later today.

Members were aware that some issues had been identified during the January examinations but it was thought by the Executive that it was not appropriate to discuss these points in such an open meeting. An update would be provided shortly but outside of the meeting.

The Committee agreed after discussion:

1. to receive and note report provided by the Interim Executive Director relating to examinations administration
2. to look forward to receiving further updates at the forthcoming meetings of the Committee
3. to request that email updates be provided for Members on the outcome of the interviews for examinations staff and the decision by Pearson with regard to the outstanding investigation
4. to look forward to receiving when thought to be appropriate the position with regard to the issues identified during the January examinations.

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

The Committee received the updated KPI report and a separate report prepared by the Executive Director Student Services relating to student attendance.

The current attendance KPI position was noted to have improved by 2% to 82.7% against a current low overall target of 82%.

The current position with regard to student retention and the number of teachers who had met expectations during recent observations had been discussed at length earlier in the meeting.

The Committee agreed:

1. to note the updated KPI report and the associated report on student attendance
2. to look forward to receiving further updates at future meetings.

**14 STUDENT REPORT**

The Committee received and noted the latest comprehensive Student Report.

A focus was on student led activities supported by the College. A challenge was the extent of engagement and it was appreciated that timetabling was an issue to enable increased student involvement. Many activities are scheduled for Wednesday afternoons as based on current arrangements this was thought to be the best time.

An up and coming event concerned the planned hustings in anticipation of the forthcoming General Election. The planned Democracy Week had been subject to lots of promotion with posters displayed around the College. These events were thought to be important as it provided the opportunity to make known to students the need to register to be able to vote once they reached the age of 18.

The Committee agreed following discussion:

1. to welcome the latest Student Report which was read with great interest
2. to welcome the news that the timetabling for 2024/25 will take into the need to provide maximum possible opportunities to enhance student enrichment activities

**15 CURRICULUM OFFER**

The Committee received and had with interest the report on the curriculum offer which would be held over for discussion at the next meeting.

**16 SAFEGUARDING – UPDATE**

The Committee received and noted the comprehensive Safeguarding Update presented by the Executive Director Student Services.

A number of key points were highlighted from the report and the presentation including:

* the Corporation Link Member for Safeguarding and the Executive Director meet regularly to discuss issues
* The public consultation on Martyn’s Law closed on 18 March 2024 to take views on the proposed legislation to ensure it does not duly overburden small businesses
* The number of safeguarding cases were supported by the College – as of the previous day there was a total of 133 cases with 20 cases currently active
* The College enrolled 23 children who are looked after (known as LAC) of which 5 have withdrawn
* 7 staff cases had been referred to the LADO but had been passed back to the College for internal review on the basis that they did not meet the LADO threshold for investigation

The report also included the updated Safeguarding Action Plan based on a RAG rating which showed progress against the progress actions and the expected impact.

The increased use of CPOMS data was explained and the arrangements to finesse the reporting system so as to provide staff and Committee Members with updates including the provision of comparable data so as to identify trends.

A Member asked about the issue raised previously of students not feeling safe outside of the College. It was explained that there was contact with the Safer Schools Partnership and that a new Police Officer had recently been assigned to the College.

The Committee agreed:

1. To note the Safeguarding Update
2. To look forward to receiving further updates at future meetings of the Committee specifically more detail and comparative data on the type of issues affecting our students.

**17 READY TO PROGRESS – STUDENT CONDUCT POLICY & PROCEDURE**

The Committee received the report prepared by the Executive Director Student Services relating to the Ready to Progress Policy which concerned student conduct.

It was explained that the Policy had been introduced at the beginning of the current year, 2023/24, but has since been the subject of review and change in the light of experience.

Member Elizabeth Scott, who had left the meeting due to another commitment, had left some related observations with the Chair of the Committee and which would be passed over to the Executive Director for consideration as part of the review for 2024/25.

One of the students suggested that there may be value in considering providing students with the opportunity to join course sessions online when they are unable, for whatever reason, to attend in person. The Executive Director Student Services agreed to continue the discussion with the Student Council as soon as this could be arranged. The outcome of this discussion would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Committee agreed:

1. to APPROVE the Ready to Progress Policy for 2023/24 as presented
2. to consider at a forthcoming meeting of the Committee the arrangements for 2024/25 having regard to the outcome of (1) the review of the observations shared by Member Elizabth Scott and (2) the suggestion from a student that consideration be given to allowing students join course sessions online.

*Note: Student Members Matthew Odeyemi and Aleeza Hassan left the meeting at this point so as to attend timetabled classes*

**18 CAREERS STRATEGY**

The Committee recognised that the original intention when drafting the Agenda for this meeting was to consider a possible update to the Careers Strategy for 2024/25 and possibly beyond. However, in the light of developments including the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection, the intention was now to bring together the Careers Strategy with the new overarching College Skills Strategy. This would be presented to an early meeting of the Committee.

The Interim Executive Director Skills & Employability took the opportunity to explain that the Terms of Reference for the proposed Employers Panel were being prepared and would be shared with Members of the Committee.

The Committee agreed to look forward:

1. to receiving and considering the new Skills Strategy incorporating the Careers Strategy
2. to hearing more about the Employers Panel including the associated Terms of Reference.

*Note: Staff Member Trevor Harris left the meeting during this item due to a teaching commitment*

**19 COMPLAINTS POLICY**

The Committee received the updated Complaints Policy which had been updated as at 1 December 2023 and agreed by the SLT.

It was appreciated that the Complaints Policy required the approval of the Committee on behalf of the Corporation and it was agreed, therefore:

1. to APPROVE the Complaints Policy as presented until at least the date of the next scheduled meeting of the Committee – 13 June 2024
2. to review the document in more detail at the earliest opportunity with a view to agreeing for the period to 31 July 2025

**20 LEARNER SURVEY – AUTUMN TERM 2023**

The Committee received and noted the report of the Interim Head of Quality on the outcomes from the Learner Survey carried out during the Autumn Term 2023.

As indicated on the published Agenda this item will be considered fully at the next meeting of the Committee.

**21 LINK MEMBERS – FEEDBACK**

The Committee noted that at the next meeting Members would receive a report drawing on the feedback from the Link Members given their contact with the Curriculum Areas during the current year and in doing so identify if there were any learning points for the Link Members Protocol adopted by the Corporation.

The Head of Governance advised the Committee that at the meeting of the Corporation on 27 March 2024 Members would be invited to fill the vacancies for Link Members which have resulted from the resignations of three of the Independent Members.

**22 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS – 2023/24**

The Corporation NOTED the date of the final scheduled meeting in 2023/24:

* Thursday 13 June 2024

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.

Given the number of issues that required continued attention it was proposed that at least one additional meeting be arranged with the date and time being agreed once the Corporation had considered the key items including the outcome of the recent inspection on 27 March 2024.

To aid discussion it was also agreed that the forthcoming meetings of the Committee would take place in College it all possible.

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