

Minutes of the Learning & Quality Committee Meeting held at 2pm on 07 December 2022

Present: Prue Amner (chair), Mark Cooper, Tim Jackson, Samantha Miller (staff) & Mike Stoneman

Apologies: None

In attendance: David Byford, Director of Business Engagement, Apprenticeships & Partnerships
Chris Caddemy, VP Information Services
Tess Cole, VP Foundation & Adult Learning
Matt Phelps, Deputy Principal/Deputy CEO Curriculum & Quality
Emily Pountney, VP Young People's Academic & Linked Vocational Learning
Paola Schweitzer, Director of Governance
Sarah Warren, VP Vocational Learning

Minutes

051 Attendance and Participation

There were no apologies for absence. Prue welcomed Shirley to the meeting noting that she would, subject to Corporation approval on 13 December 2022, join the Committee within the context of her role as lead safeguarding governor.

052 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

053 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 October 2022 were **Agreed** as a correct record.

054 Matters Arising

Governors **Noted** that matters arising were in hand for Corporation on 13 December.

055 Self-Assessment Report 2021/22

Matt presented paper 288/22/L&Q setting out the first City of Portsmouth College self-assessment report (SAR). The SAR covered the 2021/22 academic year.

There were 64 academic and support area SARs across the College. Each of which had been validated through a robust process involving senior managers and external support (governors had attended almost all validation meetings), within the context of the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF). Managers had been asked to review and resubmit their SAR in the light of feedback and a desktop review validated the final grade. The SARs had then been pulled together to form a single College SAR.

The College's overall effectiveness was graded *Requires Improvement*. The intent of quality improvement activity was clear and reasonable progress was being made in implementing actions to deliver the intent but the evidence of impact was fledgling. There were five *Outstanding* curriculum departments: Humanities (Academic), Health and Social Care (Academic), Community Learning (VT), Foundation Prospects (VT) and ESOL (VT). There were twelve *Good* curriculum departments and support service areas, sixteen *Requires Improvement* including leadership and management and five *Inadequate* departments/areas: Automotive, Digital and Media (Apprenticeships), Professional Services (Apprenticeships), Business Intelligence and IT Services.

Prue noted that there was little mention of IT and how it had impacted on teaching and learning, to which Matt replied that most IT issues occurred at the start of 2022/23 and were therefore out of scope. Prue then noted that the feedback concerning staff not valuing teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) observations was referenced in the quality strategy and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) but not the SAR. Matt stated it was in the quality of education section but needed amplifying.

Mike noted that the College had been involved in a pilot SEND inspection with the City Council. It had been a positive inspection with a few areas for development including the transition to post 16 education and widening employment choices. He believed that whilst it was not an official inspection, nor did it focus specifically on the College, it was worth reflecting the feedback. Tess agreed, noting that the SAR showed work experience was good and destinations were positive and the QIP picked up actions concerning transitions, progression and annual reviews. In response to a question, Matt clarified that a positive destination meant a learner moved on to education/training linked to their course.

Tim noted within the context of his role as an adviser for the FE Commissioner's team, he had seen a lot of SARs and believed this was an honest and detailed assessment, capturing what the Committee had reported to Corporation throughout the year and with actions reading through to the QIP. He asked for further details on how the College was meeting local skills needs, as assessed through the EIF. Matt believed the SAR would stand up to this scrutiny and Tess stated that the College was well plugged into the city at community level but employer engagement was inconsistent across the College, with some areas well developed and other areas non-existent/underdeveloped. Governors agreed that it was a well-written, honest and well-evidenced appraisal of the College and one on which Corporation could place reliance.

Governors **Noted** the proposed 2021/22 SAR grade profile and the identified key strengths and areas for improvement.

056 Quality Improvement Plan 2022/23

Matt presented paper 289/22/L&Q setting out the 2022/23 quality improvement plan.

As with the SAR process, the QIP was built from the bottom up with every course, department and support service submitting a QIP which was then rigorously tested. All red or amber RAG rated actions in the final 2021/22 SAR and areas for improvement identified in the 2021/22 QIP were carried into the 2022/23 QIP. The following key areas for development were identified: GCSE English and maths, functional skills English and maths, attendance, retention and achievement rates, teaching, learning and assessment, support for learners, High Needs learners, apprenticeships, programmes for young people, adult learning programmes, online teaching, learning and assessment and governance, leadership and management. The focus in 2022/23 was to complete all QIP actions, meaning the College would be able to evidence positive impact from actions taken. The College would then be well placed to achieve

a *Reasonable Progress* judgement during the Ofsted Monitoring Visit (likely to take place in the next two months) and a *Good* or better full inspection outcome (likely to take place during the 2024/25 academic year). The QIP was still in a copy version, with a more glossy report to be shared with governors before Christmas.

Prue asked at what level progress monitoring would take place and Matt confirmed that all action lines in the QIP would be RAG rated at departmental level, with a termly update to the Committee (term 1 update would be brought to the spring term meeting). Prue noted there was a good focus on digital/IT and suggested marketing required strengthening. Matt stated this would be a focus for 2022/23 and had been the subject of discussion at the Operational Management Group meeting earlier in the day.

Mike believed provision for 14-16 year olds and entry level, levels 1 and 2, particularly retention and achievement, were not referenced as strongly as he would have liked. Matt stated that the departmental QIPs would pick out these areas in more granular detail for example there would be a sub action on retention and achievement, within which there would be different groups. Tim noted that the QIP picked up the themes identified in the SAR and asked what would happen next to ensure that QIP targets were SMART and had clear ownership. Matt stated that this would take place over the next two weeks and would lead to a learning and quality dashboard, sitting beneath the Corporate Dashboard. Tim then noted that whilst it would be helpful to have a top level RAG rated summary of the QIP, it would also be useful to enable governors to deep dive into certain areas. He believed this would support governors' link meetings and was good governance, as long as governors were mindful of the distinction between governance and management (*noses in, fingers out!*). He was keen that this should not generate any additional work for staff. Matt stated this would be achieved through the learning and quality dashboard including links to notes from quality review meetings.

Governors **Agreed** the key areas for improvement identified in the QIP.

057 Curriculum Plan 2023/24 Update (paper 290/22/L&Q)

Chris provided an update on the 2023/24 curriculum plan.

The report provided an overview of the College's approach to curriculum planning for 2023/24 and summarised the planning lifecycle, including data to be used to support the decision-making process.

A new curriculum planning process had been adopted this academic year and would evolve over time. The first round of planning meetings took place in November 2022 and examined enrolment including lessons learnt and liaison with schools as well as new/soon to be defunded programmes/ qualifications. The next round of meetings in January 2023 would scrutinise data in more depth including employer engagement, admissions etc and identify any additional resources required. The final round of meetings in March 2023 and would finalise the 2023/24 curriculum, providing sufficient time to make alternative arrangements with students if changes were necessary. In response to a question, Matt confirmed that the plan would be brought to Learning & Quality and Finance & Resources Committees with final sign off in March 2023.

Prue asked about how the process captured local market information from Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) led by Hampshire Chamber of Commerce. Chris confirmed that the College was already in dialogue with key actors in these areas and data would be reviewed in January 2023. Matt noted that the LSIP CEO would speak at the governors' day on 24 January 2023. Tim was impressed with the clear and objective document and sought confirmation that the College had robust data on skills requirements in the Solent area, noting that the College should not hesitate to reengineer the plan in the light of the LSIP which was

still in its infancy. Matt confirmed that the College had a clear view on the skills gap, future needs and priority sectors and that this had partly been achieved by accessing capital funding in collaboration with local colleges. Tim believed that the curriculum planning process needed to start with Corporation, supported by market intelligence, and including contribution analysis. He believed there might be cases where Corporation believed certain courses should continue even if they did not make a financial contribution. Prue stated that she would shortly attend an event for FE governors in the Solent area and that she would report back.

Governors **Noted** that curriculum planning meetings had started in November 2022 and that there would be three meetings in total, each having a specific activity and intent. Governors also **Noted** that the curriculum plan would be signed off and agreed by March 2023 and would act as the baseline for the College's budgeting process commencing in April 2023.

058 Strategic Plan Update

Matt presented paper 291/22/L&Q providing an update on the strategic plan strategies. The report drew governors' attention to the key headlines in the following strategies: HE, quality, work experience and industrial placements, tutorial and schools liaison. The employer engagement and apprenticeships strategies would be brought to the Committee's following meeting. Progress against each strategy would be measured by the Committee and Corporation through the Corporate Dashboard.

HE Strategy: The strategy's objectives included developing full and part-time higher-level provision where the College had proven strengths in its FE curriculum and there was evidence of demand, working independently and in partnership to develop suitable provision of sub-degree qualifications for high/medium priority areas in response to local learner and employer needs and ensuring progression to level 4 in priority sectors. Sarah noted that high quality HE provision would be the College's key focus. Mark attended the College's HE strategy group on behalf of the University of Portsmouth and noted that the University/College relationship was going from strength to strength. He wholeheartedly endorsed the College's approach to HE and the strategy. Governors believed the document to be comprehensive, strong and well-evidenced.

Quality Strategy: The strategy's objectives included creating a single coherent system of quality assurance and improvement, ensuring ownership and responsibility for quality management and improvement actions rested with curriculum managers and developing staff skills targeted through the quality assurance processes. Prue was pleased to see continuous improvement referenced in the strategy. Mike asked if staff felt there was consistency across the four College sites. Emily responded that a single approach was beginning to emerge but the College was at the start of a journey as it concerned culture change. Matt believed this journey was likely to take three years. Prue asked Samantha if she felt this change as a member of teaching staff. Samantha believed there was a lot happening but change had not yet been achieved. She would shortly leave the College as she was unable to progress in her current role. Tim asked if there was a separate teaching, learning and assessment strategy and if this strategy was intended to cover business support areas such as IT and estates (identified by Ofsted as impacting on student achievement). Matt stated this had been the subject of much debate and management had concluded there would be a single quality strategy focusing on teaching, learning and assessment. To clarify it was agreed that the strategy would be called Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy. There was ongoing discussion about what vehicle could be used to support quality improvement in support areas.

Tutorial Strategy: The purpose of this strategy was to provide the rationale and direction for tutorials across the College, providing clarity on how the College would

support the curriculum and provide students with the opportunity to develop skills, knowledge and behaviours beyond the curriculum. Leigh noted that there was a consistent tutorial framework but approaches differed according to campus. Matt noted that tutorials was one of the most significant areas identified in the QIP and whilst they been introduced in 2022/23, it was evolving. Emily confirmed that tutorial observations were part of the quality cycle. Prue noted that there wasn't anything explicit in the strategy linking to safeguarding, prevent and equality, diversity and inclusion. Mike noted that he wasn't clear of the focus of the strategy or how tutorials would be embedded. Matt stated that the College was still developing its thinking and an implementation plan would provide further detail. He believed it would always be challenging to ensure both a consistent approach to tutorials and to tailor them to different student cohorts. Samantha agreed, noting that she delivered tutorials to students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and found some of the information was targeted at students with HE aspirations. She believed there needed to be a greater focus on well-being, mentoring and restorative work. Shirley believed health and wellbeing needed to be embedded for all students.

Work Experience & Industrial Placements Strategy: The purpose of this strategy was to provide the rationale and direction for work experience and industrial placement within the College. It provided clarity on how the College would provide students with the opportunity to develop skills, knowledge and expertise and apply vocational and technical learning in a real context and to fulfil the requirements of the vocational, technical and academic study programmes. In response to a question, Leigh confirmed that the strategy applied to all students including those on 16-19 student programmes. Mike stated that the strategy read well, but the baseline figures and targets were not looking good. Matt agreed, noting that this area was identified in the QIP and was a challenge in the post-Covid environment.

Schools Liaison Strategy: The purpose of this strategy was to provide the rationale and direction of the College's engagement with schools and their pupils in Portsmouth and the local region. It provided clarity on how the College would ensure that the well-established relationships would continue to strengthen and grow to deliver the College's intent to increase market share from local secondary schools from 52% to 65% between 2022 and 2026. Leigh noted that the College was well embedded with local feeder schools and that the target of 50 additional local students had already been exceeded for 2022/23. Prue noted that this was a comprehensive strategy and highlighted the important role that parents played in determining where their child studied. Leigh stated that the strategy's supporting engagement plan included parents. Tim suggested that the strategy reference how schools and Portsmouth City Council had contributed to this strategy. Mike agreed, suggesting the strategy reference the Portsmouth Education Partnership which brought together city secondary heads.

Governors **Noted** each strategy's key headlines. Matt stated that implementation plans sat beneath each of these strategies and that they would be brought to the Committee's next meeting.

Matt thanked his team for bringing this work together at speed and in sometimes difficult circumstances. Prue agreed, noting that governors appreciated their work.

The meeting ended at 4pm