



PART OF  
**CITY OF  
PORTSMOUTH  
COLLEGE**

## Minutes of the Learning & Quality Committee Meeting held at 4pm on 4pm 22 February 2022

Present: Prue Amner (chair), Tim Jackson, Samantha Miller (staff) & Kit Peet (student)

Apologies: Mark Cooper & Mike Stoneman

In Attendance: Graham Morley - Interim CEO

Frances Mullen - DP Student Services (Mins 015-022)

Matt Phelps - Senior Director, Quality, Monitoring & Improvement

Paola Schweitzer - Director of Governance

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## Minutes

### 1 – Standing Items

#### 015 Attendance and Participation

Prue welcomed Samantha Miller (staff governor) and Kit Peet (student governor) to their first meeting. Mark Cooper and Mike Stoneman sent their apologies. Mike attended the Ofsted and QIP training section of the meeting (minutes 025 & 026).

#### 016 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 017 Minutes

The Minutes of the Meetings held on 10 November 2021 and the Notes of the inquorate meeting held on 24 November 2021 were **Agreed** as accurate records. Governors **Noted** the agreement that the updated Quality Improvement Plan, as presented on 25 January 2022, was uploaded to the ESFA website alongside the final and approved Self Assessment Report for 2021/22.

#### 018 Matters Arising

Governors **Noted** that matters arising were either reported on in the QIP or on the agenda.

#### 019 Scorecard/Performance Data

Matt shared the balanced scorecard on his screen, noting it contained data following the January ILR upload, and drew governors' attention to key points.

The variable income was tracking against the budget, with the RAG rating showing three amber areas of concern: adult apprenticeships, full cost courses and other income. The College had a high number of out of funding (OOF) apprentices, meaning they were still learning but the College was no longer receiving funding. Mitigating actions had been put in place but this area remained a concern. In response to a question, Matt confirmed that 20% of apprenticeship funding was linked to achievement so the College would receive further funding if apprentices achieved.

Graham noted that whilst staff expenditure as percentage of income was green against the budget, it was higher than where it ought to be given the College needed to invest in its future.

Multiple variables meant the learner headcount at R06 January 2022 was amber. Risks included apprenticeships (continuing learners and through to completion) and adult learners. Tim noted that challenges with adult learners were being experienced by other colleges and asked if numbers were lower than anticipated. Matt stated that there was a financial gap between what the College was delivering and what it needed to deliver and there was a plan in place to manage this.

Attendance was not yet good enough to make a significant improvement in achievement. Attendance was not currently RAG rated as actual data had only just been received. Achievement was amber, although Matt noted it was more useful to monitor progress and high risk learners at this point in the year. Retention was a key measure for 2021/22 and the College was currently in a good position for this point in the year. Matt noted that better attendance led to better retention and better achievement. Matt confirmed the data was live, with no withdrawals waiting to be processed (although there were some high/at risk learners). Tim noted the College's good position with regards to retention and asked that governors' thanks be passed to the senior management team.

There had been a lot of change over the Christmas period concerning the staff headcount with an average of 629 over the year (702 last month) . Graham noted that 11% staff turnover was slightly high. One governor believed staff headcount was only a problem if there was no one to deliver and asked if there were any unfilled vacancies. Graham stated there were shortages in some areas but not so much with teaching staff. The College had a bank of part-time workers to call on and could flex existing employees' part time hours. There was a weekly meeting to discuss staff vacancies.

Governors thanked Matt and Graham for the scorecard/performance data.

## **020 Learning & Quality Risk Register**

Graham stated that Maria was proposing a new approach to risk management meaning that risk items would no longer be referred to Committees. The proposed risk management framework would be brought to Corporation on 15 March 2022.

## 021 Equality & Diversity Monitoring

Matt shared equality and diversity monitoring on his screen. Graham stated that the College was behind the curve in this area as performance against equality and diversity measures would usually be assessed in the SAR but given the absence of targets, Matt and his team were ascertaining what could be done in year with a view to being a better position by the end of the academic year. Matt confirmed that recently received data would be considered by the Equality & Diversity Board which would identify actions for the QIP.

Tim noted that retention was an issue and asked if the data showed any in year equality and diversity concerns. Matt stated that there weren't any issues at present but emerging issues would be addressed through the QIP. Broadly male learners at the Highbury Campus achieved less well than their female counterparts, 16-18 year olds performed well at the Tangier Road Campus and adults performed less well and this was the inverse at the Highbury Campus. Matt stressed the importance of ensuring consistency across all College campuses.

Prue thanked Graham and Matt for this information, noting that the College had come a long way since the start of the year, and asked that the document be brought to the Committee's next meeting, noting that targets would be set for the subsequent year and monitored through the QIP by the Committee.

## 022 Student Wellbeing & Safeguarding Report

Frances presented the Student Wellbeing and Safeguarding Report (paper 107/22/L&Q) consisting of draft minutes of the Safeguarding, Health and Wellbeing Board held on 27 January 2022 and safeguarding statistics across the College.

Frances drew out the key elements of the report including

- The new safeguarding team structure comprising two Senior Safeguarding Officers each supported by a Safeguarding Assistant.
- Students received safeguarding information through Fresher's/Welcome Day and plans were being developed to keep them informed throughout the year.
- There was refresher safeguarding training for staff in January 2022 which included the new safeguarding staff structure and an update on peer on peer abuse, banter and low level behaviour.
- Included with the report was a snapshot of safeguarding incidents broken down by Campus since the start of the academic year. Areas of concern included self-harm and harassment/bullying. In response to a question, Frances confirmed that the number of incidents was similar to other colleges. Further work would take place so that reports could be run by categories of students (one of the biggest challenges was collating data from the various College systems). Governors noted that there needed to be an awareness of gaps in the data for example Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).
- Frances would undertake a second random sampling of the Single Central Record after half term.

- Work was underway to create a single health and wellbeing strategy for students based on current practices.

Prue asked how the implementation of the Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS) was going. Frances stated that IT had approved the system and it would be soft launched however it needed current EBS data. The system was used on secondary schools and so its use would facilitate the transfer of information.

Kit stated that as a student at the Tangier Road Campus she found the environment relatively tolerant and whilst there were occasional issues, overall it was a friendly and mature place. Tim noted that he went to both Tangier Road and Highbury campuses the previous week, both of which seemed quiet.

Governors **Noted** the Student Wellbeing and Safeguarding Report, in particular how statutory requirements were being met in relation to staff training, Single Central Record and the activities undertaken to strengthen safeguarding practices.

Frances left the meeting.

## **023 Committee Terms of Reference**

Paola presented the Committee's Terms of Reference (paper 108/22/L&Q).

Subsequent to the Committee's consideration of its Terms of Reference (ToR) on 10 November 2021, Search & Governance Committee had reviewed all Committee ToR and suggested a number of additional changes to ensure Committees took on a more dynamic and proactive role. These changes had been integrated into the ToR appended to the report. Further changes had also been suggested following a review of the College's quality activity.

There was a discussion about the revised ToR's removal of the reference to the College's curriculum offer, with Prue and Tim stating that this was a core Committee responsibility. Governors agreed that the Board was responsible for the College's educational character and mission and so was responsible for the curriculum strategy. The Committee was responsible for monitoring how the strategy and plan were implemented and the impact on teaching, learning and assessment. Graham noted that governors needed to be mindful that the curriculum plan was a lengthy and operational document. Paul noted that at its next meeting on 15 March 2022 Graham would advise Corporation on the strategy to deliver the strategic objectives and that this would include a reference to the curriculum strategy. Prue also noted that the Committee would receive an annual complaints and accolades report.

Due to the merger the College was not following the usual curriculum planning process this year but a robust cycle would be in place for 2022/23 namely:

- October: start of curriculum planning process
- April: fully costed curriculum plan
- May: consultation with employer advisory boards.
- June: L&Q Committee to consider curriculum and HE strategies

- July: Corporation to consider curriculum and HE strategies.

Governors **Agreed** that Matt and Paola would amend the ToR to capture the Committee's role in the curriculum process. With this additional amendment, governors **Agreed** the Committee's revised Terms of Reference.

## 024 How Terms of Reference Responsibilities will be discharged

Paper 109/22/L&Q set out how the Committee's responsibilities would be discharged throughout the year. Prue thanked Graham and Matt for the helpful document and governors **Noted** how the Committee's terms of reference responsibilities would be discharged.

## 025 Introduction to Ofsted Monitoring Visit, April 2022

All governors had been invited to join this part of the meeting to understand more fully the focus of the forthcoming Ofsted monitoring visit and the College's quality monitoring including the quality cycle, the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and RAG rated teaching and learning progress.

Learning & Quality Committee governors present were Prue Amner, Tim Jackson, Samantha Miller, Kit Peet and Mike Stoneman. Governors in attendance were Ashley Cullen, Katie Hill, Graham Morley, Rob Nitsch, Paul Quigley and Pauline Tiller. Also in attendance were Matt Phelps and Paola Schweitzer.

Prue welcomed everyone to the meeting, stating that teaching and learning was the College's core business so it was important governors understood the quality cycle, particularly as Ofsted would want to meet with them during the monitoring visit.

Graham stated that a full inspection would take place within three years of the merger, with a monitoring visit usually taking place beforehand if one or more of the predecessor colleges was *Requires Improvement* or *Inadequate* (Highbury College was *Requires Improvement*). The visit would focus on the merged college's progress as well as themes from the previous inspection report(s) and would culminate in a published report. Any concerns about risks arising from the visit could lead to an earlier full inspection. The College expected its monitoring visit in April or May 2022 and central to the visit would be the College's quality cycle. Matt Phelps, Senior Director Quality, Monitoring & Improvement, had developed the quality cycle picking up on the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) approved by Corporation in December 2021 and developing the QIP to ensure it was fit for purpose. Learning & Quality Committee was responsible for reviewing the QIP and ensuring progress against the targets.

Matt gave a PowerPoint presentation identifying the likely themes of the visit:

- What progress have leaders and managers made in evaluating the quality and impact of teaching on students' progress and the standards of their work?
- What progress have leaders and managers made in improving rapidly students' attendance at lessons?

- What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring teachers and assessors help students develop and apply their skills in English and mathematics?
- What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that teachers and assessors plan and teach lessons using the information they have about students' and apprentices' prior learning and potential, so that they excel?

Matt then outlined the three key documents setting out how the College managed the quality of its provision:

- The Quality Cycle - how the College implemented quality assurance, quality improvement and monitoring.
- The Quality Improvement Plan - the live document used by leaders and staff throughout the academic year to measure progress in achieving the areas for improvement identified in the annual Self Assessment Review (SAR) process.
- RAG rated learner progress – the documents used by teaching staff to identify high risk learners where interventions were needed to drive up attendance, retention, pass and achievement rates. This was a key area for improvement identified in the QIP multiple times.

The QIP was RAG rated to indicate progress against the targets. It was necessary to show clear evidence of impact. At present there was no impact evidence although this would change significantly between now and the Committee's next meeting in June. One of the challenges was the multiple systems in use within the College.

Matt set out the College's monitoring visit position statement:

- We have a clear QIP that clearly aligns to the College SAR
- The QIP actions align to previous legacy college Ofsted reports
- We can evidence a clear intent to tackle the identified areas for improvement
- We can evidence the implementation of targeted actions
- We can evidence fledgling impact from implementing those actions in many areas
- This will secure at least a "making reasonable progress" judgement against the areas by which we will be measured.
- The impact of achieving the actions outlined in the QIP will fully materialise in the autumn term and it is from there that we can then build towards a *Good* or better full inspection outcome.
- I suspect that inspection will come during the latter part of 2023.

## **026 Quality Monitoring including Quality Cycle, Quality Improvement Plan and Teaching & Learning Progress RAG Rating**

Matt presented paper 110/22/L&Q setting out Quality Monitoring including Quality Cycle, Quality Improvement Plan and Teaching & Learning Progress RAG Rating.

At present both predecessor colleges were operating their own quality cycles but there would be a single cycle from 2022/23 (it was not possible to change mid-year), as set out in the report. Prue welcomed this clear document. The quality assurance document showed the layers within the quality cycle and included students, course,

faculty, Senior Management Team (SMT) and the Board. For the benefit of governors who were new to a college's quality activity, Tim clarified that carrying out remedial action identified in the SAR was a continual process and not contingent on Board approval at the end of the calendar year. Prue noted that curriculum areas were self-assessing against the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) criteria.

The QIP was constructed from areas of improvement identified in the SAR as well as themes from the last Highbury College inspection report. Actions were red or amber.

GCSE English and Maths attendance required improvement. There were many reasons for poor attendance including inappropriate timetabling and the need to engage learners more fully in learning. Mike asked if Covid had had an impact. Matt didn't believe Covid was the issue instead, from speaking with teachers and learners, he believed that not enough learning was inspiring or engaging and that whilst there were pockets of good practice, these needed to be shared more widely. Some learners wanted to do vocational learning but not Maths or English and so staff needed to reframe the importance of this learning.

Katie believed that some students were victims of overly generous Teacher Assessed Grades (awarded in place of exams) and might not have performed so well if they had sat exams. She believed this was a national issue. Matt agreed, noting this was consistent with teacher feedback and highlighted the importance of ensuring that initial teacher assessment was robust so the College could be sure about the distance to travel. Tim noted that achievement was a function of retention and retention rates were looking good across the College.

Purlos had produced an interim destination report which indicated that the Tangier Road Campus was excellent at getting learners into higher education but less effective at getting learners into work, whereas the Highbury Campus was the opposite. Matt believed this was a good point to land on but further work was required, particularly with regard to narrowing achievement gaps between, for example, learners in receipt of a bursary/non bursary learners.

Teaching, learning and assessment was the College's core activity and the SAR identified that the quality of teaching was not consistently high. A Teaching Excellence Team would provide a relentless focus on improvement between now and the end of the academic year, particularly to ensure consistency of lesson planning and use of the white folder (identifying the group profile of each class including learners with diagnosed learning needs and schemes of work). Prue asked if curriculum leads audited the white folder and Matt confirmed that audits were now built into the process. Shared folders had now been created on Microsoft Teams and Google Classrooms to ensure the sharing of resources, teaching methods and best practice. There would be a planning week at the end of the academic year to review lesson planning and make sure everything was in place for the start of the new year.

Matt noted that apprenticeships were the College's Achilles heel at present and had the potential to undermine work in other areas. There was a large percentage of out of funding (OOF) apprentices. Apprentices were more likely to drop out if they were

past their end date so an emergency plan was in place to ensure they achieved by the end of the academic year. It was important that End Point Assessments (EPAs) were identified at the start of the apprenticeship, thereby giving students something to work towards and this wasn't always the case. Rob noted there was a shortage of EPAs in some areas and suggested that Matt speak with the independent training provider PETA who were facing similar problems. Pauline asked if the problem with apprenticeships was historic or if an apprentice starting the following day would encounter the same problem. Matt confirmed there was a risk of the same problem occurring as actions had not yet been completed.

Paul noted that Matt had undertaken a huge amount of work since his appointment. In response to his question, Matt confirmed that emerging themes were added to the QIP and completed actions removed as part of a continuous review cycle.

Matt stated that the final documents showed the frameworks for reviewing progress, identifying high risk learners and putting interventions in place across the College. There was consistency between the frameworks although there were differences in how a GFE and 6<sup>th</sup> form operated. The frameworks addressed the theme identified in the Highbury College Ofsted inspection report and SAR to improve how learner progress was measured. Improvement needed to start with teaching staff and this would feed into the balanced scorecard considered by governors at Corporation. The frameworks had been well received by staff. Matt confirmed that governors were more than welcome to attend quality review meetings to understand the College's teaching, learning and assessment activity more fully. Dates would be circulated shortly.

Graham confirmed that Ofsted would receive the methodologies and documents presented to governors. The presentation and a crib sheet summarising key issues and themes and linking to core documents would be circulated to governors. In response to a question, Graham confirmed it was possible the monitoring visit could trigger a full inspection but Matt had undertaken a significant amount of change within a short space of time so it was less likely. In response to a query, Matt confirmed that there was strong data from Learner Voice and surveys demonstrating that learners felt safe in the College. Graham stated that College staff received four or five safeguarding referrals every day. Prue confirmed that the Committee had received safeguarding statistics earlier in the meeting demonstrating how many and what types of issues were being experienced.

Prue noted that this line of work had been her business for many years and she believed the College was very lucky that Matt had taken the quality monitoring and assurance role and she looked forward to more developments in the future. Prue concluded by thanking Graham and Matt for the informative presentation.

The meeting ended at 7pm