

Minutes of the Learning & Quality Committee Meeting held at 4.30pm 02 July 2025

Present: Prue Amner, Huw Chapman, Tim Jackson (left the meeting at 7pm), Lyndsey Mason (staff governor) & Shirley Nellthorpe

Apologies: Mariia-Olena Hodell (student governor) & Mike Stoneman

In attendance:

Chris Bilton	Director of Data Services
Tess Cole	VP Foundations & Adult Learning
Matt Phelps	Deputy CEO and Deputy Principal
Emily Pountney	DP Quality of Education & Digital Innovation
Paola Schweitzer	Director of Governance
Jo Shankland	VP Student Experience
Sarah Warren	VP Curriculum and Quality

Minutes

172 Attendance and Participation

Mariia-Olena Hodell (student governor) and Mike Stoneman sent their apologies.

173 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

174 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting on 12 March 2025 were **Agreed** as a correct record.

175 Matters Arising

Min 167: The College would soon learn whether it would be selected for a PFA audit.

Corporation Min 306: Breaking down apprenticeship data was a work in progress. As a first step, an additional tab had been created in the dashboard identifying the top 10 barometers and these would be tracked between meetings.

Governors thanked management for responding to feedback at the previous meeting resulting in easier to read reports and summaries.

176 Learning & Quality Dashboard (paper 825/25/L&Q)

The dashboard set out the current best case position for the 2024/25 academic year for education and training, apprenticeships and attendance data. The report also compared data to the same point in time for previous years.

There had been continuing improvement in whole College attendance which had led to sustained improvement in retention rates. This was forecast to lead to year on year improvement in pass and achievement rates across all provision types. One governor suggested benchmarking attendance data against year 10 and 11 attendance, Emily noted that secondary school attendance in Portsmouth had significantly improved to

just above 90% as a result of targeted government funding. One governor asked that 2024/25 retention data was added to future reports. There was a discussion about T levels with governors noting that they didn't make a good financial contribution (higher funding received was offset by increased teaching hours). Sarah confirmed that student numbers were increasing in Health and Early Years T Levels but other areas were less popular. Tim confirmed this was common in the sector and reflected the fact that Health & Early Years more closely represented previous qualifications. Having reviewed the data, governors **Noted** the 2024/25 L&Q dashboard.

177 Quality of Education (paper 827/25/L&Q)

This report provided an update on the quality of education across all provision types. Emily noted that the quality of education was solidly good, with incremental gains in all areas. She drew attention to key developments that will be implemented for 2025/26:

- Faster, sharper, time-limited intensive care process providing interventions to individuals and teams
- Focus on improving collaboration between Quality and Student Experience
- Increased focus on impact, identifying what was working and how
- Increased emphasis on aspirations following a recent peer quality review.

One governor suggested using AI for lesson observations and there was a brief discussion about AI namely how it was being taken forward through the digital strategy and the recent statement on how Ofsted looks at AI during inspection and regulation. Governors were assured of the progress being made to improve the learning experience of students and apprentices and **Noted** the quality of education report update.

178 Apprenticeship Spotlight (paper 739/25/L&Q)

This report outlined actions to improve apprenticeship provision, evaluating the impact on current performance and providing a year-end forecast in relation to the accountability framework. Key points to note were:

- In-year achievement was 52.3% and end of year forecast achievement was 50% (in line with PIMS target)
- 7 of the 8 accountability framework measures were being met
- The only at-risk measure was apprentices past planned end date (21.8% over 180 days and 4% between 90-180 days). The long term OOF rate could not be materially reduced in year, but the short term rate was beginning to improve
- Following the FEC visit, the apprenticeship meeting framework had been streamlined with monthly QRMs
- The 2025/26 apprenticeship strategy rationalised the offer to Construction, Building Services, Automotive and AAT (aligning with local skills priorities and the College's USPs)

Sarah stated that the recent FE Advisor Support visit had not presented any surprises but rather provided an effective catalyst for change and reassurance that the College was doing the right things. The tender process for the CRM system to support employer engagement was about to start (costs included training/support). One governor welcomed the progress being made with apprentices but noted that the EPA failure rate was still high and believed there was scope for more employer engagement. He asked for regular updates to the Committee. Matt stated that the College was developing industry boards (an enhancement of the existing EABs) and that he would look into how best to embed employer engagement into the existing Apprenticeships SMT and L&Q reporting. In response to a question, Matt stated that a great deal of

progress had been made to move apprenticeship data to OneFile by the 31 July deadline. Finally, one governor shared good practice from the recent AoC Governors' Summit. Having reviewed the report including action being taken and progress made to improve apprenticeship provision, governors **Noted** the apprenticeship spotlight.

179 Quality Improvement Plan – Term 2 Update (paper 828/25/L&Q)

This report provided a term 2 update on the quality improvement plan including progress and the impact of actions taken to address areas for improvement identified in 2023/24. Good progress had been made in areas such as the quality of feedback, student retention, initiatives such as 50:50 and some aspects of digital strategy implementation but further work was required to:

- Improve attendance and retention rates, particularly in English and maths
- Enhance curriculum including mapping enrichment activities to curriculum areas and addressing gaps in tutorial provision
- Ensure more consistent stakeholder involvement in curriculum areas.

There was a brief discussion about HE tutorials which were primarily academic in nature and would be delivered through discreet groups in 2025/26. Governors **Noted** the quality improvement plan term 2 update.

180 Digital Strategy Progress Update (paper 829/25/L&Q)

This report provided an update on progress against the digital strategy launched in January 2025. Plans and frameworks were now in place, meaning that the focus of activity in 2025/26 would be implementation, led by a new Head of Digital Innovation (interviews to place the following week).

Successes included a establishing a series of digital commitments alongside a set of digital basics to ensure all staff were competent in a set of digital tools, AI policies were in place as were tools and platforms to support and enhance the student experience. Work in progress included agreeing metrics to establish a baseline and measure progress, increasing collaboration between working groups to ensure a cohesive communications and training plan and developing quality standards. Ensuring consistency across the College would be a focus of activity. Lyndsey noted that whilst IT support and software was effective, the IT infrastructure was not keeping pace in her area (Hairdressing, Beauty & Catering). Emily reassured her that every department would shortly receive a bank of devices. Matt noted that Emily was working at pace with colleagues to embed the digital strategy across the curriculum, but at present was no equivalent role for business support although this was being addressed. Governors were keen to be kept informed of the strategy's progress and Paola and Emily would explore how governors might have oversight of activity in 2025/26 (current working groups would be changing). Having reviewed the report, governors **Noted** the progress being made to implement the digital strategy in relation to curriculum delivery and the student experience.

181 External Stakeholder Voice Update (paper 831/25/L&Q)

This report provided an update on external stakeholder voice and the efforts to go from a *Reasonable* Ofsted judgement to *Strong*. Key areas included:

- Curriculum areas were more aware of the importance of working with stakeholders and were better at recording the impact of stakeholder information. Feedback to stakeholders was still an area for improvement

- A new Business Development & Task & Finish Group was driving the College aim to be an Anchor Institution in the city by the end of 2025/26 (i.e. the first port of call for communities, businesses and individuals to access high quality learning opportunities)
- The College also needed to raise its profile across the region in readiness to local government reorganisation and the new devolved authority.

Matt noted that improvement in apprenticeships would lead stronger stakeholder engagement. One governor welcomed the report and asked if the College was maximising governors' role in driving up stakeholder engagement. Several governors used their networks in support of the College (e.g. Liz Rix, Liz Bryne, Ashley Cullen and most recently Shirley who had put the College in touch with a local author to support the College's English competition) however there were likely to be further opportunities. Paola would work with Matt and Tess to take this forward to S&G Committee which had made a commitment to consider this area. Having reviewed progress made to ensure a *Strong* contribution to skills outcome, governors **Noted** the external stakeholder voice update.

182 Student Voice Update (paper 832/25/L&Q)

This report provided an update on student voice activities including the 2024/25 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Survey, feedback from teaching, learning, and assessment activities, Student Voice meetings and the Student Union. Strengths included high levels of student satisfaction across all campuses with minor areas for improvement, positive feedback from lesson observations and focus groups and a stronger, more influential Student Union. Areas for development in 2025/26 were enhancing communication (through the App which included a parent portal), improving tutorial delivery, expanding digital tools and increasing access to enrichment and support services. There was a brief discussion about North Harbour Campus with Jo stating that social spaces were being developed and that there was now always a member of the Student Experience team onsite. Governors **Noted** the ongoing and future actions outlined in the student voice update.

183 Student Wellbeing & Safeguarding Report (paper 833/25/L&Q)

This report provided an overview of 2024/25 safeguarding disclosures and referrals to date and included updates on training, SCR and safeguarding monitoring and recording systems. Key strengths included increased safeguarding vigilance, effective use of technology, wellbeing support access, strategic oversight and forward planning. Key areas for development included referral volume and complexity, training completion gap, staff allegations management, data driven targeting, parental engagement and wellbeing integration.

Governors asked why 100% of staff hadn't completed training. Jo assured governors that there was a 100% completion rate, with 13% having done face to face training during induction. One governor asked about home stay arrangements and Matt stated that a more rigorous process was being implemented (there were currently fewer than ten homestay families). Homestay checks for most global students were undertaken by an agency and were very thorough. In response to a question, Jo stated that the allegations raised against staff were not malicious. One governor thanked Jo for the impressive report, noting that it was encouraging to see the key safeguarding strengths and that the Committee could reassure the Board that safeguarding provision at the College was excellent. Having considered the report, in particular progress and ongoing actions as well as future actions and how these actions aligned with the

College's broader ambition to deliver excellence for all students, governors **Noted** the safeguarding student wellbeing & safeguarding report.

184 EED&I Policy & Report including Targets (paper 826/25/L&Q)

This report provided an update on progress against the Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EED&I) targets in 2024/25, outlining key initiatives, achievements and areas for development as well as proposing the updated EED&I policy. The refocused targets and KPIs aligned with the AoC EED&I pledge and Mental Health Charter as well as the Ofsted inspection reforms which had a renewed emphasis on inclusion. In response to a question, Jo stated that actions were being taken as a result of the recent Supreme Court ruling on gender/sex and that the sector was awaiting further guidance. There were no significant changes to the EED&I policy. Governors **Noted** the EED&I report and targets and **Agreed** to recommend the policy to Corporation for approval.

185 Curriculum Planning (paper 830/25/L&Q)

This report outlined the 2025/26 curriculum planning process including key decisions and strategies to ensure the plan was fit for purpose for the College and community. Planned numbers for 2025/26 were 3589 (3423 allocation). Key decisions included:

- **16 – 19 study programmes:** Applying underlying principles (maintaining breadth of provision, protecting progression opportunities for existing students, financial contribution etc) in response to the demand for places against the restricted allocation.
- **Adult Skills Fund:** Following a consistent approach to ensure the College would achieve its allocation by 110%. The curriculum remains aligned to local and national priority sectors and socio-economic groups.
- **Apprenticeships:** A more focused and rationalised offer building on the strengths identified by Ofsted and aligned to local and national priorities. 238 new starts were planned across the year, with 568 active apprentices in year.
- **Commercial:** Rationalisation of offer particularly in Gas, Automotive and Professional Studies and a focus on short courses in Gas and Refrigeration. Expanding pre-16 offer was now included in Commercial income and costs.
- **HE:** Rationalisation of offer, with a longer term approach to new curriculum development. Addition of one new course in partnership with University of Portsmouth and removal of two HNC programmes.

The College was awaiting the outcome of its Tier 4 application: 15 students would start at the College in 2025/26, infilling into classes. One governor noted that there were likely to be pressures at enrolment, requiring difficult decisions. Matt agreed, stating there would be tighter controls in the absence of any DFE announcement that in year growth funding would be available. Having considered the decisions taken to build a 2025/26 curriculum plan that protected the inclusiveness of the curriculum offer, futureproofed the College in light of emerging policy direction/market forces and protected its financial health, governors **Noted** the 2025/26 curriculum plan.

186 Career, Education, Information, Advice & Guidance Policy (paper 834/25/L&Q)

The Career, Education, Information, Advice & Guidance (CEIAG) Policy had been updated in accordance with latest guidance and Gatsby Benchmark updates. Governors **Agreed** to recommend the CEIAG policy to Corporation for approval.

187 HE (paper 835/25/L&Q)

This report concerned the annual review of HE documentation as required by the Office for Students as a condition of registration. The documents were:

- Self-Assessment on Management and Governance
- Self-Assessment on Guidance on Consumer Protection Law
- HE Appendix to Academic Appeals Procedure
- HE Appendix to Feedback (Compliments and Complaints) Policy
- Access and Participation Plan HE Student Contract.

There were no significant changes to the documents and they had all been reviewed by the HE Partnership Group (which included Mark Cooper). Governors **Agreed** to recommend the HE policies to Corporation for approval.

188 Committee Terms of Reference & Business Plan (paper 836/25/L&Q)

This report reviewed Committee performance against its terms of reference in 2024/25 and to ensure they remained fit for purpose. One governor asked about the reference to sustainability and it was agreed Matt and Paola would explore this further. Another governor suggested that the Committee examine pass rates by provision, starting with A Levels/Sixth Form Campus. Matt agreed to bring out a few areas to showcase in the SARs in the autumn term. Governors **Agreed** to recommend the Committee's terms of reference to Corporation for approval and **Noted** the 2025/26 business plan.

The meeting ended at 7.30pm