

## SPECIAL QUALITY, PERFORMANCE & STANDARDS COMMITTEE

### Minutes of a special meeting held from 16.00-17.30 on 9 February 2023 by Microsoft Teams videoconference

Present:	Dr A Williams	Independent Member (Chair)
	Dr W Bailey	Independent Member (from 16.40)
	Mrs C George	Independent Member
	Mr D Harding	Independent Member
	Mr P Singh	Executive Member (from 16:05)

Attendance: 5/7 = 71%      KPI 80%    Quorum: 3 (40%)

In Attendance:	Ms J Arechiga	Vice Principal Curriculum
	Ms L Buckley	Assistant Principal
	Mr P Doherty	Vice Principal Finance & Resources
	Ms J Green	Clerk to the Corporation
	Ms P Hughes	Assistant Principal
	Mr J Wilson	Director of Quality

**Action/  
Synopsis Item**

PRELIMINARY ITEMS		
<b>1</b>	<b>WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS</b>	
i	The Chair declared the meeting open and welcomed everyone.	
<b>2</b>	<b>NOTICE AND QUORUM</b>	
i	The Clerk confirmed that due notice of the meeting had been given pursuant to clause 11.5 of the Instrument, that the requirement for all persons participating to be able to communicate with one another was satisfied and that the meeting was quorate.	
<b>3</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b>	
i	Apologies were received from Independent Member Mr G Hetherington and Co-opted Member Mrs R Blackburn.	
ii	The Chair invited disclosures of interests. All confirmed that, except as previously disclosed, they had no direct or indirect interest in any way in the business to be transacted which should be disclosed.	
<b>4</b>	<b>MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS AND MATTERS ARISING</b>	
i	<b><u>RESOLVED:</u></b>	
	<b>(i) To approve the 14 November 2022 minutes and the 28 November 2022 Self-Assessment Report Validation Panel minutes as an accurate record.</b>	
ii	There were no matters arising from the minutes.	
QUALITY, PERFORMANCE & STANDARDS		
<b>5</b>	<b>EXTERNAL QUALITY REVIEW REPORT AND LEARNING</b>	
i	Vice Principal Curriculum Ms J Arechiga ("JA") spoke to the report, which had been prepared by consultancy firm FE Associates ("FEA") following an external quality audit, a	

ii	key objective of which had been to meet the professional development needs of College leaders and managers, there being a sizeable cohort of new Curriculum Area Managers in post following internal promotions. Staff had responded positively and had appreciated the investment the College had made.	
iii	Members were pleased to note that the FEA review findings reflected those of the Quality Team (per the Self-Assessment Report) and there had been no surprises. As such, there were some very positive findings alongside some areas for improvement, which the Committee was already very familiar with. JA said FEA had described the overall direction of travel as positive and found good evidence of progress.	
iv	A key risk highlighted in the report was attendance. While Members acknowledged that the picture was improving and the whole sector was experiencing difficulties, there was strong agreement that attendance was too low. Members were pleased to hear that FEA had endorsed the robust action plan the College had put in place at the beginning of the year, and had made no further recommendations.	
v	JA said the consultants provided useful advice and asked thought-provoking questions, including about the relationship between social deprivation and some of the College's key metrics. This had prompted further analysis and the findings would be shared with the Committee in due course. Members agreed that it was important to gain a fuller understanding of the relationship between poverty and, for example, attendance.	
vi	A Member asked if, at any point during the quality audit, any of the College's grade judgements were called into question, particularly given FEA's recommendation that College leaders provide more granular evidence to support their views. JA said this was not about the evidence base for the overall judgements but specifically the levels of confidence among some staff when interviewed. The consultants had suggested that staff would benefit from receiving regular data reports with accompanying analysis from the Quality Team and this had been actioned.	
vii	Observing that FEA had highlighted a need for further improvements in the High Needs provision, a Member said presumably, some action had already been taken to address the identified issues (which were around evidencing progress and the adequacy of stretch and challenge). While Assistant Principal Ms P Hughes ("PH") assured the Committee that it had, she emphasised that the issues were local to the Health and Social Care provision (an identified risk area due to significant management changes) and did not affect the whole of High Needs.	
viii	A Member asked if Governors could be satisfied that, had FEA selected the areas for review, rather than acting on the College's direction, there would still have been no surprises. PH said the College had carefully selected its higher risk areas where there was an identified need for further improvements, as well as the areas it considered particularly strong which it would expect to use as examples of good practice. She said FEA had confirmed the College's view in each case, and this provided as good a level of overall assurance as the Corporation could reasonably get. This was agreed.	
<i>16.40 Committee Member Dr W Bailey joined the meeting.</i>		
ix	FEA had confirmed the Quality Team's findings and had not identified any issues that might undermine the College's self-assessment judgement of "Good". The feedback on the English and maths provision was particularly pleasing; the area had moved from 'Inadequate' to 'Requires Improvement' in March and the FEA review had confirmed it was still on an upwards trajectory. JA said one FEA consultant had observed a lesson which he described as 'the best he had ever seen'. English for Speakers of Other Languages (a substantial part of the Adult provision) had also come out as strong in the review.	

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x	FEA had flagged a risk that, in apprenticeships and in the subcontracted provision, monitoring of safeguarding may not be as highly effective as elsewhere. PH said FEA had been prompted to raise this after identifying that subcontracted provision was not specifically referenced in the College's Safeguarding Policy. This had been remedied. It was noted that a report on the arrangements for monitoring and oversight of subcontracted provision was already on the agenda for the Committee's next Ordinary meeting and this would include assurance on the safeguarding arrangements.
xi	<b>Corporation report:</b> The Code of Good Governance for English Colleges advises governing bodies to periodically commission external validations of the internal assessments of the quality of teaching and learning. Accordingly, the College has twice engaged FE Associates to conduct external reviews, most recently this February. As on the last occasion (February 2022), the latest findings were largely positive and confirmed the College's own assessments, so there were no surprises among the areas for improvement. The Committee will continue to seek assurance in respect of the areas for concern that were identified in the review the main one being attendance, which is improving but remains some way below target.
6	<b>CURRICULUM RESPONSIVENESS: IMPLICATIONS FOR GOVERNANCE</b>
i	The Clerk recalled previous conversations about the readiness of the governance framework to respond to the national skills agenda. She said, at the Strategic Away Day, there was strong support for sharpening the focus on curriculum oversight/skills responsiveness and Governors said they were open to the option of introducing a new committee. She suggested that the next step was for the Committee to make a recommendation about how best to achieve this sharper focus, i.e. through the existing governance structure or by introducing changes.
ii	Committee Member Mr D Harding had written a discussion piece proposing the establishment of a new standalone sub-committee reporting directly to Corporation. He said this would provide a line of sight into local and national skills strategies and the economic landscape, as well as relationships with key stakeholders. It could look at apprenticeships and subcontracting and potentially other areas. He said colleges often failed to address skills effectively, having so strong a focus on quality and standards that it sometimes eclipsed the broader strategic agenda, with skills, apprenticeships and relationships with employers treated like an add on. He said there were some indicators that this was the case for the College, for example, the Corporation had not seen an employer perception survey.
iii	The Clerk said she favoured a two-stage approach to establishing the new sub-committee, whereby the QPS Committee would establish and parent it initially, to help ensure an appropriate split of responsibilities. The expectation would be that the Corporation would eventually adopt it as a standalone committee once it was ready to break away from the QPS Committee's oversight and report directly to board.
iv	<b>Corporation report:</b> The Scheme of Delegation provides for Corporation Committees to delegate to an appropriately skilled body. The QPS remit includes monitoring the curriculum, its relevance and intent, including in subcontracted provision, and we have agreed to delegate this to a sub-committee - which may eventually evolve to become a full Committee of the Corporation. The aim is to provide additional focus on the skills agenda.
<b>GOVERNANCE, MATTERS TO NOTE AND ADMINISTRATION</b>	
7	<b>PUBLICATION OF AGENDA PAPERS</b>
i	<b><u>RESOLVED:</u></b>  <b>(i) The FEA review report is commercially sensitive and shall not be published.</b>

Item		Action/ Synopsis Item
<b>8</b>	<b>DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 3pm, Monday 13 Mar 2023</li> <li>- 3pm, Wednesday 10 May 2023</li> </ul>	
<b>0</b>	<b>CLOSE</b>  i There being no other business, the Chair thanked all Governors for attending at short notice and giving up their valuable time. He declared the meeting closed at 17.15.	

Items of Report for Corporation		
#	Details	Minute
1.	The Code of Good Governance for English Colleges advises governing bodies to periodically commission external validations of the internal assessments of the quality of teaching and learning. Accordingly, the College has twice engaged FE Associates to conduct external reviews, most recently this February. As on the last occasion (February 2022), the latest findings were largely positive and confirmed the College's own assessments, so there were no surprises among the areas for improvement. The Committee will continue to seek assurance in respect of the areas for concern that were identified in the review the main one being attendance, which is improving but remains some way below target.	5xii
2.	The Scheme of Delegation provides for Corporation Committees to delegate to an appropriately skilled body. The QPS Committee's remit includes monitoring the curriculum, its relevance and intent, including in the subcontracted provision, and it has agreed to delegate this to a sub-committee, which may eventually evolve to become a standalone committee of the Corporation. This will hopefully provide the additional focus the Corporation is looking for around the skills agenda.	6iv