

Kirklees College Corporation

CURRICULUM STRATEGY GROUP

Minutes of a meeting held at 15.00 on 4 October 2023 in the Conference Suite, Waterfront Quarter and by Teams videoconference

Present:	Mrs C George	Independent Member (Chair)
	Mrs R Blackburn	Independent Member
	Ms J Firth	Co-opted Member
	Mr D Harding	Independent Member
	Mr E Highfield	Independent Member
	Mr P Singh	Independent Member
Attendance:	6/6 = 100%	KPI 80% Quorum: 3
In Attendance:	Mrs J Arechiga	Vice Principal - Curriculum and Innovation
	Mrs L Buckley	Assistant Principal Apprenticeships
	Ms J Green	Director of Governance & Compliance
	Mrs P Hughes	Assistant Principal Quality and Curriculum
	Mrs H Rose	Director of External Relations & Apprenticeships

Item		Action/ Report Item
PRELIMINARY ITEMS		
0	WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS AND APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR	
i	<u>RESOLVED:</u> (i) With immediate effect, to appoint Mrs C George as Committee Chair for this meeting only. The Chair welcomed everyone and introductions were made.	
1.1	NOTICE AND QUORUM	
i	Due notice of the meeting had been given and the meeting was quorate.	
1.2	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
i	There were no apologies.	
1.3	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
i	No one declared any interest in the business to be transacted at the meeting which they were required by the Instrument of Government or otherwise to disclose.	
2	QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES SUMMARY PAPER	
i	There had been no questions before the meeting.	
GOVERNANCE		
3	COMMITTEE REMIT AND AIMS – AND POTENTIAL SOURCES OF ASSURANCE	
i	The Director of Governance & Compliance Ms J Green (“JG”) had produced a paper which described the Group’s purpose, recalling the Corporation’s vision for the College and the goal of providing an inspirational teaching environment and preparing learners for the world of work.	

Item	Action/ Report Item
<p>v</p> <p>vi</p> <p>vii</p> <p>viii</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Digital and Technology was a key focus area for the Local Skills Improvement Fund. ➤ Apprenticeships were a growth area, especially construction, engineering and manufacturing; Also Adults Level 4 construction. ➤ There was high demand for English for Speakers of Other Languages. <p>The opening of a digital innovation hub was one of the College's strategic priorities and LB said good progress had been made and the Huddersfield-based hub would soon be opening. Risks around the digital strategy were discussed; if the College failed to innovate or went in the wrong direction, it could lose market share to more digitally-savvy or more influential competitors. There was also a need to adjust teaching and assessment methods to provide students with a good grounding in the use of artificial intelligence while also maintaining the integrity of assessment. The College was at the 'interested, looking, testing' stage; it had not committed to any significant changes; it was using its networks to work collaboratively in the space, for example with Jisc and Hull College's Executive Director of Digital Transformation.</p> <p>Action: Share the Digital Strategy with the Group as it develops.</p> <p>It was noted that the College's Higher Education ("HE") & Skills provision had underrecruited. A shift of focus was needed, potentially to modular provision and Higher Apprenticeships.</p> <p>Action: Discuss the HE strategy at a future meeting.</p>
RESPONSIVENESS	
<p>6</p> <p>i</p> <p>ii</p>	<p>RECAP ON THE ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT</p> <p>The 'Accountability Framework' had replaced annual grant funding agreements, with 'Part One' setting out the expectations of colleges in return for Education & Skills Funding Agency funding and 'Part Two' committing them to a small number of focused targets, to reflect their contribution to the priority sectors identified within their LSIP. It was noted that the College's Accountability Statement would be a public document, reviewed annually to ensure it remained relevant and responsive to local needs.</p> <p>The Accountability Statement had been recirculated for information and further discussion. Director of External Relations & Apprenticeships Mrs H Rose ("HR") said the targets it contained were all achievable and business planning would be mapped to the Accountability Statement going forwards.</p>
<p>7</p> <p>i</p> <p>ii</p> <p>iii</p>	<p>PARTNERSHIP WORKING, STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT, COLLABORATION</p> <p>The Accountability Statement included a section on stakeholder engagement. Page 26 listed the significant partner organisations the College had consulted with to determine its curriculum plan and ensure its fitness for purpose in terms of responsiveness.</p> <p>The West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Kirklees Council, the Mid Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce, and the West Yorkshire Colleges Consortium, were all strategically important partners, along with Huddersfield New College.</p> <p>In its recent Ofsted inspection, the College was graded as making a 'Reasonable' contribution to local skills needs. Ofsted had seen evidence of strong contributions in some areas but for others it had been too early to see an impact. This would be a key area of focus going forwards, as the new skills element was expected to become a contributory grading in future inspections. The Committee would have a role to play in monitoring progress and ensuring the College maintained strong relationships. It was noted that HR was co-chair of the local strategic Employer Board, which brought together local partner organisations to discuss the skills needs of Kirklees.</p>

Item		Action/ Report Item
iv	The meeting discussed the College's own Employer Boards, which provided a forum for engagement with external industry experts and businesses to discuss skills gaps and support horizon-scanning and curriculum design. Curriculum areas that were further along in the maturity journey in this regard were actively sharing good practice.	
v	A Member remarked on the unusually high number of SMEs and microbusinesses in the local area and asked how the College's Employer Engagement Strategy dealt with this. HR said this was a key challenge, as it was more difficult to engage effectively with smaller outfits and impossible to reconcile all their individual skills needs, as compared to working with larger partners such as NHS services and Jobcentre Plus.	
vi	Nonetheless, she said, the College had formed good local relationships that were collaborative rather than transactional; feedback suggested that employers felt they got added value from their interactions with the College and were genuinely invested in consultation and collaboration. Employer satisfaction was a key impact measure.	
vii	Action: Discuss the Employer Engagement strategy and employer satisfaction measures at a future meeting.	Agenda
MARKETING AND REPUTATION		
8	MARKETING: STRATEGY UPDATE AND IMPACT OF RECENT ACTIVITY	
i	HR provided an update on the 2023-2025 Marketing Strategy, reminding Members that it was structured around eight key objectives and associated actions. She reported on each of the eight strands and Members were pleased to note that 'reasonable' or 'good' progress had been made on six of the eight, with only two requiring improvement. HR remarked in particular on enrolment for 2023-24 which was looking very strong indeed, and on the phenomenal success of the 'Together we are Mighty' promotional video, which had resulted in significant positive engagement. An increasingly impressive conversion rate for school pupils attending College visits was also highlighted.	
ii	The two elements of the strategy that required improvement were 'Use of Labour Market Intelligence to support Curriculum Development' (strand 4) and 'Improve Internal Communications' (strand 8).	
iii	Referring to strand 4, HR said uptake of the new labour market intelligence system 'Vector' had been slow, with many staff unwilling as yet to embrace change. An increased focus on training and support for new managers would hopefully result in more early adopters, edging the College closer to the tipping point for wider buy-in.	
v	As regards strand 8, HR said, in the 2023 Business Support Survey, there had been an increase in the number of staff members who said they were satisfied with KC News (the regular staff communication email). However, the 2022-23 staff survey had revealed some challenges around internal communications, albeit in terms of the dissemination of information through the line management chain.	
vi	Corporation report: The Group received an update on the 2022-2025 Marketing Strategy and noted that significant progress had been made on some aspects, while two of the eight aspects required some improvement. In discussion with management, the Group obtained good overall assurance and satisfied itself that controls were in place to maintain the good pace already set and to address the weaker areas.	Report Item 1
ADMINISTRATION		
9	REVIEW OF MEETING	
i	RESOLVED: (i) The contribution rates of curriculum areas should not be published. All	

Item		Action/ Report Item
ii	<p>other items shall be confidential or otherwise according to the markings on the Agenda.</p> <p>Corporation report: The Quality, Performance & Standards Committee's decision to establish the Group was clearly a good one; we had some very useful conversations, which threw up further items for future agendas; it is clear that a dedicated group of Governors could have a positive impact on curriculum design and delivery. We therefore recommend that, not only should the Group be maintained, but, in future, it should report directly to the Corporation, becoming a Corporation sub-committee.</p>	Report Item 2
10 i	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>Wednesday 6 December at 12pm.</p>	
11 i	<p>CLOSE</p> <p>There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 17:30</p>	

Items of Report for Corporation		
#	Details	Min
1.	The Group received an update on the 2022-2025 Marketing Strategy and noted that significant progress had been made on some aspects, while two of the eight aspects required some improvement. In discussion with management, the Group obtained good overall assurance and satisfied itself that controls were in place to maintain the good pace already set and to address the weaker areas.	8vi
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