

Kirklees College Corporation

CURRICULUM STRATEGY GROUP

Minutes of a meeting held at 12.00 on 6 December 2023 in the Conference Suite, Waterfront Quarter

Present:	Mrs C George Mrs R Blackburn Ms J Firth Mr D Harding Mr P Singh	Independent Member (Chair) Independent Member Co-opted Member Independent Member Independent Member
Attendance:	5/6 = 183%	KPI 80% Quorum: 3
In Attendance:	Mrs J Arechiga Mrs L Buckley Ms J Green Mrs P Hughes Mr J Robinson Mrs H Rose Ms K Sykes Mr J Wilson	Vice Principal - Curriculum and Innovation Assistant Principal Apprenticeships Director of Governance & Compliance Assistant Principal Quality and Curriculum Staff Governor Observer Director of External Relations & Apprenticeships Higher Education and Skills Manager Head of Faculty, Quality & TLA (by videolink Item 5 only)

Item	Action/ Report Item
PRELIMINARY ITEMS	
0 i ii	WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS AND APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR <u>RESOLVED:</u> (i) With immediate effect, to appoint Mrs C George as Committee Chair for this meeting only. The Chair welcomed everyone, in particular the new Staff Governor Mr J Robinson. Introductions were made.
1.1 i	NOTICE AND QUORUM Due notice of the meeting had been given and the meeting was quorate.
1.2 i	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE There were apologies from Committee Member Mr E Highfield and for lateness from Committee Member Mrs R Blackburn.
1.3 i	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST 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.
2.1-2	MINUTES OF 4 OCTOBER 2023 MEETING <u>RESOLVED:</u> (i) To approve the 4 October 2023 minutes as an accurate record.

Item		Action/ Report Item
2.3	MATTERS ARISING NOT ON THE AGENDA	
i	No matters were raised.	
2.4	UPDATE ON AGREED ACTIONS	
i	<u>Share business planning meeting dates with Governors:</u> Actioned.	
ii	<u>Share the Digital Strategy as it develops:</u> This would be touched upon in the first substantive item on the Agenda and a full report would come to the next meeting.	
iii	Action (rolled over): Update the Committee on the developing Digital Strategy.	NS, KP
iv	<u>Discuss the HE strategy at a future meeting:</u> On this meeting Agenda.	
v	<u>Discuss the Employer Engagement strategy and employer satisfaction measures:</u> This would be on a future Agenda.	
vi	Action (rolled over): Discuss the Employer Engagement strategy and employer satisfaction measures.	HR
vii	<u>Bring a curriculum efficiency report to the Committee:</u> A report comparing the contributions of the curriculum areas and explaining the College's approach to calculating contributions to come to the next meeting.	
viii	Action (rolled over): Bring to the Committee a report comparing the contributions of the curriculum areas and explaining the College approach to calculating contributions.	JA
ix	A Members asked if such a report would be required, since the Corporation was about to receive a report on a recent Curriculum Efficiency and Financial Sustainability Support review. Members were uncertain about what would be in that report and, in discussion, established that they had a shared general concern about the effectiveness of the governance arrangements for monitoring the strategic priority actions. It was noted that the Finance & Resources Committee had identified a similar concern in relation to the sustainability priority actions.	
x	Corporation report: The Committee is concerned that the oversight arrangements for the strategic priority actions may be insufficiently robust. The Curriculum Efficiency and Financial Sustainability Support review has benefited from significant Link Governor scrutiny and involvement but it will go directly to Corporation without any prior discussion at Committee stage. This Committee is concerned that this does not allow for adequate engagement with, or full absorption of, the business-critical information it contains by Governors in line with their legal duty to use reasonable care and skill.	Report Item 1
xi	Action: Bring the Curriculum Efficiency and Financial Sustainability Support review report to the next Committee meeting, following discussion at Corporation.	tbc
3	QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES SUMMARY PAPER	
i	As there had been no questions before the meeting, there was no paper.	
WEST YORKSHIRE DIGITAL INNOVATION PROJECT		
4	WEST YORKSHIRE DIGITAL INNOVATION PROJECT	
i	The Director of External Relations & Apprenticeships Mrs H Rose ("HR") spoke to the Local Skills Improvement ("LSIP") funding the College was to receive and recapped on the LSIP aims, the six strands, the funding timelines, and the anticipated impact.	

Item	Action/ Report Item
ii	Kirklees College was leading on Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering (capital funding £417k) partnering with Bradford College and Leeds City College on the development of 3D Printing, fluid power automation and Virtual Reality within the Motor Vehicle Department.
iii	Although not 'lead college', the College would also receive capital funding in the areas of Construction (£168k), Creative (£47k) and Health & Social Care (£180k).
iv	Members agreed that the investment was extremely positive news for the West Yorkshire colleges and their communities; the colleges had worked together through the West Yorkshire Colleges Consortium to secure the funding and it was a good example of effective collaboration. One of the outputs would be 90 new or modified courses at Levels 3-5, including 14 new courses at Kirklees College. Over 4,000 new starters, 700+ teaching staff accessing CPD and a big employer engagement piece.
v	There was discussion about possible risks. There were restrictions on how and when the capital and revenue funding could be used and potentially there could be risk around staffing and recruitment as there would inevitably be some time pressure. The College would need to pay upfront for purchases, so there would be some short-term financial commitments - but it would claim the money back. The only significant risk was failure to achieve the outputs but Manufacturing and Engineering were the areas where the College was strong. Another risk was failing to maximise the opportunity, for example, the Higher Education & Skills team might be able to support the delivery of the fund objectives. There was a risk that a department or curriculum area's capacity to contribute could be overlooked.
vi	It was noted that Huddersfield University was to open a new centre focusing on Health & Social Care. The Principal Mr P Singh said the University's plans were at an early stage and, although the College was not part of the conversation yet, it expected to be, as there was a strong relationship. There would be opportunities for L3 and 4 progression.
vii	Corporation report: The Committee discussed the College's Local Skills Investment Funding; we are to lead on Manufacturing and Engineering and will also be substantially involved in the Creative, Construction and Health & Social Care strands. This is an exciting opportunity for the College; the substantial additional funding will have a hugely beneficial impact in terms of resourcing and innovation.
HIGHER EDUCATION & SKILLS	
5	HE & SKILLS STRATEGY, ACCESS & PARTICIPATION PLAN AND KEY RISKS
<i>13.00 Head of Faculty, Quality & TLA Mr J Wilson joined the meeting via Teams.</i>	
i	Higher Education and Skills Manager Ms K Sykes ("KS") reminded Members that the thrust of the HE & Skills Strategy was to design and offer curriculum offering logical progression from College Level 3 (and below) technical qualifications, closely mapped to the Local Skills Improvement Plan priorities to provide clear routes into careers.
ii	Despite some early set-backs, including the recent 2023-24 under-recruitment, the strategic plan was progressing, with new curriculum about to launch and marketing plans in place.
iii	The news that Pearson ¹ was charging £1k to validate a new Higher Technical Qualification ("HTQ") in Construction prompted discussion about value for money. Members also discussed the risks around both student and staff recruitment; in particular given the scarcity of staff with the skills to deliver higher level qualifications.
iv	After a successful Skills Injection Funding application, the College would receive £286k to support the growth of HTQ provision at Levels 4 and 5. KS outlined the plans for the

¹ Pearson is the UK's largest awarding organisation offering academic, vocational and work-based learning qualifications.

Item		Action/ Report Item
v	money and warned of the risk of clawback if recruitment targets were not met. The College was gearing up to deliver stackable HTQ modules from 2025 in anticipation of the launch of the Lifelong Loan Entitlement. It would also provide short professional courses. Members sought assurance that the College sales team had the necessary expertise to promote the courses to employers. HR said the sales team had with both subject specialists and generalists; it was split by sector. The funding for subject experts was business critical and management would need to look at how to fund them once grant funds were exhausted. <u>Office for Students</u>	
vi	There was further discussion about value for money in terms of the hefty fee the College paid to remain on the Office for Students (“OfS”) Register of Providers. KS said the work required to ensure compliance with the OfS regulatory framework was putting a lot of pressure on resources and Members queried whether the increasing compliance burden, particularly the new requirements for Access & Participation Plans was worth the benefits, particularly given the relatively small number of learners it affected.	
v	Action: Take an Office for Students registration cost benefit analysis paper to SLT.	KS
vi	Corporation report: The Committee discussed the Higher Education provision. This is a complex income line for further education colleges and the burdensome regulatory compliance requirements apply irrespective of the small size of our cohorts, so there was much discussion in the Committee meeting about value for money. Governors will recall that, after we made a significant investment in the research and development of a new degree programme last year, our validating partner pulled out and we were not able to market the course. This had substantial consequences in terms of both lost fee income and lost opportunities for young people. We now have some new courses lined up and are preparing for an anticipated demand for stackable modular courses in 2025, so we are feeling more optimistic.	Report Item 3
13.25 Mr J Wilson left the meeting.		
APPRENTICESHIPS		
6	APPRENTICESHIPS STRATEGY AND KEY RISKS	
i	The meeting discussed the performance of the Apprenticeship provision in terms of both carry-in and new starts. Delays in employer sign-ups and systems issues had contributed to a slight overall underperformance but the College had maintained its position in a contracting market while many colleges had lost substantial business. Assistant Principal Mrs L Buckley (“LB”) said the team was pulling out all the stops to get back on track.	
ii	Unplanned carry overs had significantly reduced. LB said this was mainly due to rigorous tracking and diligent management. The College’s investment in setting up its own End Point Assessment centres had paid dividends and management was now looking at setting up an electrical centre as well. LB said, even with the best initial advice and guidance, it was impossible to eliminate unplanned carry overs entirely as Apprenticeships were long courses and unexpected life events were inevitable.	
iii	Despite achievement rates taking a dip nationally, the College had held up better than most. There was a lot of positivity within the team and a recent curriculum visioning day had gone well, with high energy and enthusiasm, especially around employer relationships on the back of the launch of a new furniture manufacturing apprenticeship standard. The employer feedback had been encouraging - and there were other opportunities out there.	
iv	Action: Report on the breakdown of the Apprenticeship cohort in terms of sex, age, ethnicity, disability, etc. and the relationship to growth and performance.	LB

Item		Action/ Report Item
v	Corporation report: The Committee looked at Apprenticeship performance against target and discussed the reasons for the variance. While it is not yet an outstanding picture, the College has performed well relative to the sector on both Apprenticeship recruitment and outcomes. Good employer relationships are critical for Apprenticeship products, so we were pleased to hear some positive news in that regard; the College has a strong expert sales team and curriculum staff are geared up to work with industry leaders, having regular exposure to clients. The recent successful launch of a new furniture manufacturing apprenticeship standard is hopefully a taste of things to come.	Report Item 4
ADMINISTRATION		
7	REVIEW OF MEETING	JG Report Item 5
i	The Committee reflected on the need to put clear blue water between itself and the Quality, Performance& Standards Committee – but acknowledged the need to continue to have common Members Committees, to help avoid silos. It was acknowledged that each Committee would have some crossover with the other’s agenda, for instance, quality would impact on growth prospects. Hopefully the strategic away day would provide an opportunity to review the committees’ remits.	
ii	Action: Note the need for a terms of reference review in JG’s handover notes.	
iii	Corporation report: The Committee recommends that the Corporation should revisit its matrix of responsibilities and authorities, to ensure that the full compliance and strategic picture is covered, and to minimise duplication. In particular, the terms of reference of this Committee and of the Quality, Performance and Standards Committee should be revisited and refreshed.	
iv	In addition to the agreed actions, future agendas might feature: employer voice, the work of employer boards, enrichment, and the Ofsted skills judgement.	
8	DATE OF NEXT MEETING	
i	Wednesday 20 February 2024	
9	PUBLICATION OF AGENDA PAPERS	
i	<u>RESOLVED:</u> (i) The papers are not deemed confidential.	
10	CLOSE	
i	There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 2pm.	

Agreed Actions				
#	Who	Action	Min	By
1.	NS, KP	Update the Committee on the developing Digital Strategy.	2.4iii	Next mtg
2.	HR	Discuss the Employer Engagement strategy and employer satisfaction measures.	2.4vi	tbc
3.	JA	(Rolled over) Bring to the Committee a report comparing the contributions of the curriculum areas and explaining the College approach to calculating contributions (unless this is superseded by the next item 4).	2.4viii	Next mtg
4.	tbc	Bring the Curriculum Efficiency and Financial Sustainability Support review report to the next Committee meeting, following discussion at Corporation.	2.4xi	Next mtg
5.	KS	Take an Office for Students registration cost benefit analysis paper to SLT.	5v	Next mtg
6.	LB	Report on the breakdown of the Apprenticeship cohort in terms of sex, age, ethnicity, disability, etc. and the relationship to growth and performance.	6iv	Next mtg
7.	JG	Note the need for a terms of reference review in JG's handover notes.	7ii	18 Dec

Items of Report for Corporation		
#	Details	Min
1.	The Committee is concerned that the oversight arrangements for the strategic priority actions may be insufficiently robust. The Curriculum Efficiency and Financial Sustainability Support review has benefited from significant Link Governor scrutiny and involvement but it will go directly to Corporation without any prior discussion at Committee stage. This Committee is concerned that this does not allow for adequate engagement with, or full absorption of, the business-critical information it contains by Governors in line with their legal duty to use reasonable care and skill.	2x
2.	The Committee discussed the College's Local Skills Investment Funding; we are to lead on Manufacturing and Engineering and will also be substantially involved in the Creative, Construction and Health & Social Care strands. This is an exciting opportunity for the College; the substantial additional funding will have a hugely beneficial impact in terms of resourcing and innovation.	4vii
3.	The Committee discussed the Higher Education provision. This is a complex income line for further education colleges and the burdensome regulatory compliance requirements apply irrespective of the small size of our cohorts, so there was much discussion in the Committee meeting about value for money. Governors will recall that, after we made a significant investment in the research and development of a new degree programme last year, our validating partner pulled out and we were not able to market the course. This had substantial consequences in terms of both lost fee income and lost opportunities for young people. We now have some new courses lined up and are preparing for an anticipated demand for stackable modular courses in 2025, so we are feeling more optimistic.	5vi
4.	The Committee looked at Apprenticeship performance against target and discussed the reasons for the variance. While it is not yet an outstanding picture, the College has performed well relative to the sector on both Apprenticeship recruitment and outcomes. Good employer relationships are critical for Apprenticeship products, so we were pleased to hear some positive news in that regard; the College has a strong expert sales team and curriculum staff are geared up to work with industry leaders, having regular exposure to clients. The recent successful launch of a new furniture manufacturing apprenticeship standard is hopefully a taste of things to come.	6v
5.	The Committee recommends that the Corporation should revisit its matrix of responsibilities and authorities, to ensure that the full compliance and strategic picture is covered, and to minimise duplication. In particular, the terms of reference of this Committee and of the Quality, Performance and Standards Committee should be revisited and refreshed.	7iii