KIRKLEES COLLEGE CORPORATION

CURRICULUM STRATEGY COMMITTEE

**Minutes of a meeting held from 1000 to 1230 on 11 June 2024**

**Held in the Conference Centre, Waterfront Centre, Huddersfield**

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| Present | | E Highfield  R Blackburn  D Harding  C George  J Robinson  P Singh  100% | Independent Governor (Chair)  Independent Governor  Independent Governor  Independent Governor  Staff Governor  Executive Governor  KPI 80% Quorum: 3 (60%) | | | |
| In Attendance: | | J Arechiga  L Buckley  P Hughes  D Rayneau  H Rose  S Rawson  C Tague | Deputy Principal, Curriculum & Innovation  Vice Principal, Curriculum & Performance (virtually)  Vice Principal, Quality & Student Experience  Vice Principal, Business Systems, Information & Technology  Vice Principal, External Relations and Apprenticeships  Head of Marketing, Student Recruitment & Careers (Item 9)  Director of Governance & Compliance (clerk) | | | |
| **Item** | |  | | | **Action/**  **Synopsis Item** | |
| **PRELIMINARY ITEMS** | | | | | | |
| **1** | | **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**  The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. | | | |  |
| **2.1** | | **NOTICE AND QUORUM**  Due notice of the meeting had been given and the meeting was quorate. | | | |  |
| **2.2** | | **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**  No apologies for absence were received. | | | |  |
| **2.3** | | **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  No interests were declared. | | | |  |
| **3.1** | | **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES** | | | |  |
|  | | **RESOLVED:** The minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2024 were approved as a correct record. | | | |  |

| **Item** |  | **Action/**  **Synopsis Item** | |
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| **3.2** | **MATTERS ARISING NOT ON THE AGENDA**  No matters were raised. | |  |
| **3.3** | **UPDATE ON AGREED** **ACTIONS**   1. **It was agreed that the Committee would monitor implementation of the CEFSS recommendations on a light touch basis.** – added to the workplan and scheduled for February 2025. 2. **The report on the breakdown of the apprenticeship cohort in terms of sex, age, ethnicity, disability, etc. and the relationship to growth and performance to be submitted to the EDI group for discussion.** - actioned 3. **Analysis of the annual Employer Survey to be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.** – on agenda at Item 8 4. **The ABS consultation document be forwarded to all governors for information.** - actioned | |  |
| **Curriculum Development: LSIPs, curriculum reforms and innovation** | | | |
| **4**  4.1  4.2  4.3  4.4  4.5  4.6  4.7  4.8  **4.9** | **POST 16 QUALIFICATION REFORMS UPDATE**  P Hughes (PH) Vice Principal of Quality & Student Experience presented a report which provided an update on the post-16 qualification and reform position for the College and outlined the future curriculum offer 2025-26, challenges, risks and actions.  In presenting the report, PH highlighted the turbulence and potential for further uncertainty following the general election results.  The Committee were advised that a consultation regarding potential reforms at Level 2 and below had now closed. The AoC had issued a strong response that the proposals were not fit for purpose and did not consider the breadth of the further education cohort.  The potential financial implications of the curriculum reforms were noted and concerns raised as to the personal impact on students, particularly the significant numbers of students who would no longer have a clear progression route due to the defunding of qualifications.  Members were advised that work was underway in a number of areas over the summer period to ensure that plans were in place prior to the defunding of some of those progression pathways.  The Committee asked that an update as to the number of students affected and the outcome of activities to support progression be reported to the next meeting.  Whilst the principle of improving skills for employment was supported, the potential impact of limiting opportunities to access level 3 qualifications on aspiration was acknowledged and a member emphasised the need to communicate this to MPs through continued lobbying.  Members were assured that the risks had been recorded and considered as part of the risk management process and despite the national uncertainty, business planning processes were robust, qualifications were being reviewed and tested and early indicators mitigated where there was potential risk with pathways and progression.  **Action: An update as to the number of students affected by the defunding of qualifications and the outcome of activities to support progression be reported to the next meeting.** | | Synopsis 1  **PH** |
| **5**  5.1  5.2  5.3  5.4  5.5  5.6  5.7  **5.8** | **2024-25 CURRICULUM PLAN**  J Arechiga (JA) Deputy Principal of Curriculum & Innovation presented a report which provided an overview of the College’s Curriculum Plan for 2024/25 and the draft curriculum planning by site.  The proactive approach to curriculum development and the rigorous business planning process was outlined and this alongside analysis of curriculum portfolios, skills priorities and LMI data was utilised to ensure that the curriculum offer would best meet the needs of individuals, the economy, employers and communities.  In welcoming the summary and the work outlined, a question was asked as to the significant increase in construction numbers and whether the site was big enough to accommodate the growth. The challenge of ensuring estate capacity continued to match demand was acknowledged and activities such as the building of a mezzanine floor at Brunel, co-delivery with engineering and the introduction of twilight sessions were underway.  Curriculum leaders were challenged as to space utilisation during the business planning process and the proposal of a strategic priority in this area, alongside the estates review would ensure a full understanding of space utilisation. It was noted that SLT had a strategic overview of curriculum links and Brunel was already delivering in this respect.  Demographic challenges, which would peak in 2027 and abate thereafter, would also need to be factored into estate and curriculum planning.  With regards to the pie chart representation of head count by level, it was noted that the current decline in level 3 numbers had not fed through into the data. Whilst the college was ‘holding its’ own’ in terms of level 3 provision, this was an area of ongoing concern.  Level 3 – 5 programmes continued to be developed but as illustrated in the previous discussion on qualification reform, accessibility was an issue.  **Action: The 2024-25 Curriculum Plan be included on the Corporation Consent agenda for information.** | | Synopsis 2  **JA** |
| **Employer Engagement: employer voice, partnerships and apprenticeship growth** | | | |
| **6**  6.1  6.2  6.3  6.4  6.4  6.5  6.6  6.6  **6.7** | **EMPLOYER SURVEY RESULTS**  H Rose (HR) Vice Principal of External Relations & Apprenticeships, presented a report which set out the results of the annual employer survey carried out between 15 January and 9 March 2024.  141 responses had been received which was a return rate of 20%, which whilst disappointing, was an improvement on the 101 responses received in 2023. The results of the survey were also improved, with 92% of employers stating that they were likely to recommend the college to other businesses, up from 76% in the previous year. Qualitative feedback in the form of comments was also much more positive than in previous years.  Feedback from individual areas was scrutinised in Apprenticeship Performance meetings and additional employer visits made where required and remedial actions put in place where necessary.  As to whether a rolling survey carried out on completion of the training programme might be more effective in gaining employer feedback, it was felt that this could delay opportunities to pick up and address any issues at an early stage.  It was suggested that survey data be triangulated with anecdotal feedback. This could include employer boards being asked for feedback as part of meeting discussions and consideration given as to how best to use business development and contract teams to bring together additional feedback.  The importance of a forthcoming separate survey for employers on the National Apprenticeship Website was highlighted, as this formed part of the Apprenticeship Accountability Framework. Kirklees College was currently rated at 3 Stars (Good) which was above the 2.5-star threshold for intervention.  Details as to when employers would be contacted to complete the survey were known as yet, but a proactive approach would be taken to communicating the importance of the survey and its completion.  In concluding the discussion, it was noted whilst the number of responses might be lower than hoped, the response rate was steadily increasing and 20% was statistically a good sample size. The qualitative responses provided confidence as to performance as did the positive distance travelled in terms of employer recommendation.  **The Committee welcomed the information reported.** | | Synopsis 3 |
| **7**  7.1  7.2  7.3  **7.4** | **KEY PARTNERSHIP AND PROJECT UPDATE**  H Rose (HR) delivered a presentation which provided an update on partnerships and projects. Key points of note included:-   * Partnership working with local trusts and the NHS * Potential opportunities to develop CPD support to local schools * Growth in employer boards * New business potential in the food and drink sector   The Committee were advised that the latest version of the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) was due out in July.  It was also noted that the first Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) claim had been made, with all capital items to be bought by the end of the year and outputs to be delivered the following year and monitored by the DfE. Curriculum areas were enjoying working with the new kit and were sharing learning across the West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges.  **The Committee welcomed the update and marketing activity outlined.** | | Synopsis 4 |
| **Marketing/Growth: student recruitment; marketing updates, activities and strategy** | | | |
| **8**  8.1  8.2  8.3  **8.4** | **GROWTH STRATEGY**  H Rose (HR) presented a report which provided an overview of the College’s approach to the development of the Growth Strategy 2024-26.  In considering the Strategy, it was suggested that the SWOT analysis should include (i) curriculum reform as a threat as well as an opportunity; and (ii) reference to the alignment of the Estates Strategy and growth in numbers.  The Committee welcomed the Strategy, in that it was well articulated and easy to digest. It was suggested that it should be published on the College’s website and circulated to employer boards.  **Action:**   1. **The SWOT analysis to include (i) curriculum reform as a threat as well as an opportunity; and (ii) reference to the alignment of the Estates Strategy and growth in numbers; and** 2. **Subject to 2 minor amendments to the SWOT analysis, the Growth Strategy is recommended for Corporation approval.** | | Synopsis 5  **HR**  **HR** |
| **Governance & Committee Self-Assessment** | | | |
| **9** | **PUBLICATION OF AGENDA PAPERS**  **RESOLVED: Items marked confidential on the meeting agenda shall not be published.** | |  |
| **10**  10.1  10.2  10.3  10.4  10.5  10.6  10.7  **10.8** | **COMMITTEE SELF-ASSESSMENT**  As part of the Corporation’s annual review, the Curriculum Strategy was asked to reflect on its’ performance over the past year and consider whether any changes were needed in terms of its’ practice and approach, membership, training and development for members, frequency of meetings, etc.  Being newly established, the Committee considered its’ role and were satisfied that there was a clear differential between its’ work and that of the QPS Committee. There were no issues in terms of committee membership or training requirements raised.  **Remit & performance**  A report by the Director of Governance & Compliance compared the Committee’s remit (per its Terms of Reference) with the work it had undertaken over the course of the year. The analysis showed one gap, namely:-  *To provide advice and assurance … on the effectiveness and impact of the College’s HR and People Development strategies in contributing to the delivery of employer engagement strategies, skills strategies, and the curriculum.*  In discussion, it was agreed that whilst reporting had made reference to potential skills gaps when considering curriculum developments, future reports would cover this more explicitly where appropriate.  In concluding the review, it was felt that the Committee could provide good assurance that it had attended to everything within its remit.  **Terms of reference**  It was noted that the Terms of Reference had not been amended when the Corporation agreed that the Curriculum Strategy Committee should report directly to the Corporation and the proposed changes to reflect this, as well as a number of factual changes such as amendments to job titles, were agreed.  **Business Schedule 2024-25**  In discussing the schedule, it was agreed that as the Committee’s role was to provide strategic direction and oversight, two meetings would be sufficient, on the proviso that an additional meeting would be arranged if and when required.   It was agreed that the first meeting be scheduled in November, with the proposed date in February held as a provisional meeting and date in May agreed.  **Action:**-   1. **Future reports to make explicit reference to potential staffing skills gaps and CPD where appropriate;** 2. **The amendments to the Terms of Reference be submitted to the Corporation for approval; and** 3. **The Schedule of Business be amended as discussed and recommended for Corporation approval.** | | Synopsis 6 |
| **Marketing/Growth: student recruitment; marketing updates, activities and strategy** | | | |
| *1135* | *S Rawson, Head of Marketing, Student Recruitment and Careers joined the meeting.* | |  |
| **11**  11.1  **11.2** | **MARKETING ACTIVITY**  S Rawson gave an presentation which provided an update on marketing activities, which included the following:-   * 16-18 and Apprenticeships – there had been a significant increase in applications and participation in recruitment-based activity. * Adults & HE – currently lower numbers but targeted advertising underway. * Creating a more positive image of the college – award nominations and publicity were highlighted. * Internal communications and intelligence – strong working relationships developed with the CAMS and LMI utilised to support curriculum development and business planning. * Relationship building with local schools - high engagement levels in local schools resulting in an increase in Year 11 applications from schools within the Kirklees and Calderdale areas. Currently 1700 young people were booked in for a Year 10 school visit, compared to 1350 in the previous year. * Dewsbury – the college were now actively engaged with the Dewsbury Town Board and were working together on marketing the ‘town’ element of the campaign. * Future developments – a new secure application and enrolment account was in development for 2025 cycle and a new college intranet was due to be delivered in December 2024.   **The Committee welcomed the update and marketing activity outlined.** | |  |
|  | **CLOSE**  There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 1200. | |  |

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| **AGREED ACTIONS** | | | | |
|  | **Who** | **Action** | **Min** | **By** |
| 1 | PH | An update as to the number of students affected by the defunding of qualifications and the outcome of activities to support progression be reported to the next meeting. | 4.9 | 14/11/24 |
| 2 | JA | The 2024-25 Curriculum Plan be included on the Corporation Consent agenda for information. | 5.8 | 10/07/24 |
| 3 | HR | Growth Strategy - the SWOT analysis to include (i) curriculum reform as a threat as well as an opportunity; and (ii) reference to the alignment of the Estates Strategy and growth in numbers. | 8.4.1 | 10/07/24 |
| 4 | HR | Subject to 2 minor amendments to the SWOT analysis, the Growth Strategy is recommended for Corporation approval. | 8.4.2 | 10/07/24 |
| 5 | JA | Future reports to make explicit reference to potential staffing skills gaps and CPD where appropriate. | 10.8.1 | Ongoing |
| 6 | CT | The amendments to the Terms of Reference be submitted to the Corporation for approval. | 10.8.2 | 10/07/24 |
| 7 | CT | The Schedule of Business be amended as discussed and recommended for Corporation approval. | 10.8.3 | 10/07/24 |

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| **ITEMS OF REPORT TO THE CORPORATION** | | |
|  | **Details** | **Min** |
| 1 | The Committee received an update on the post-16 qualification and reform position for the College and considered the financial implications for the College and the potential impact on a significant number of students due to the proposed defunding of qualifications and subsequent loss of progression routes.  The Committee heard that the risks had been recorded and considered as part of the risk management process and despite the national uncertainty, were assured that business planning processes were robust, qualifications were being reviewed and tested and early indicators mitigated where there was potential risk with pathways and progression. | Item 4 |
| 2 | The Committee received the College’s Curriculum Plan for 2024/25 and it is submitted as part of the Corporation’s Consent Agenda for information.  The proactive approach to curriculum development and the rigorous business planning process was outlined and this alongside analysis of curriculum portfolios, skills priorities and LMI data was utilised to ensure that the curriculum offer would best meet the needs of individuals, the economy, employers and communities.  In welcoming the summary and the work outlined, the challenge of ensuring estate capacity continued to match demand was acknowledged and the Committee were advised of a number activities in train to address this. | Item 5 |
| 3 | The Committee welcomed the Employer Survey results, noting that whilst the 141 responses received might have been lower than hoped, the response rate was steadily increasing and 20% was statistically a good sample size.  The qualitative responses provided confidence as to performance as did the positive distance travelled in terms of employer recommendation ie 92% of employers stating that they were likely to recommend the college to other businesses, up from 76% in the previous year.  The Committee also welcomed the proactive approach outlined to addressing negative feedback and putting remedial actions in place where necessary. | Item 6 |
| 4 | The Committee were advised of a number of positive partnership developments and were pleased to hear that the first Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) claim had been made and new items of kit were being utilised and learning shared across the West Yorkshire Consortium of Colleges. | Item 7 |
| 5 | The Committee welcomed the Growth Strategy as a well-articulated and easy to digest document and recommend for Corporation approval.  It was suggested that the Strategy should be published on the College’s website and circulated to employer boards if approved. | Item 8 |
| 6 | The Committee successfully and diligently discharged all responsibilities delegated to it in 2023-24 and were satisfied that there was a clear differential between its’ work and that of the QPS Committee. There were no issues in terms of committee membership or training requirements raised  Some changes to the Committee Terms of Reference following designation as a Corporation sub-committee are proposed and the draft Schedule of Business is recommended for Corporation approval. | Item 10 |