

Preston's College

**Redacted and Abridged ¹Minutes of the Quality and Standards Committee Meeting held on 4th
March 2021
at 5.00 pm via Zoom**

Present:

Mr M Collard	Chair
Dr E Smith	Principal and Chief Executive
Mrs J Garcia	
Ms H Boulton	Until Minute 13
Mr J Jepson	
Mrs L Mason	
Miss A Renfree	
Mr J Tansley	

In attendance:

Ms Haworth	Vice Principal - Quality, Teaching, Learning and Learner Support
Ms J Melling	Interim Head of Quality, Teaching and Learning
Mr M Noblett	Vice Principal - Curriculum Delivery and Planning
Mrs C Rayner	Clerk to the Board

1. Appointment of Chairperson

The Clerk asked for nominations for Chairperson. Mr Collard was nominated and appointed unopposed.

Mr Collard assumed the Chair.

2. Welcome and apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting

It was noted that a quorum was present.

3. Declarations of Interest

It was noted that Ms Boulton, as an employee of the University of Derby, had an interest in agenda Item 13, Higher Education Update and Item 14, Student Protection Plan, and would leave the meeting for the discussion of these items.

4. Teaching and Learning Update

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Please note that any matters which the Corporation is satisfied should be dealt with on a confidential basis have been removed from these minutes.

The Chair explained that this was an opportunity for governors to discuss the virtual governor engagement event held with staff and learners on 25th February 2021. Members discussed the events and commented:

- that the sessions had gone very well and provided governors with an invaluable opportunity to meet with staff and learners and hear about their experiences of remote learning and teaching;
- positively on the enthusiastic feedback from learners from which it was evident that teaching staff had risen to the challenge of lockdown and had quickly developed innovative ways to engage learners remotely;
- positively of the levels of engagement of learners who had demonstrated that they had motivation to work independently.

During discussion with management, governors noted:

- plans to ensure that curriculum planning going forward utilised the positive aspects of virtual learning and continued to develop learners' independent study skills alongside on campus provision;
- learners were keen to return to campus for some sessions and would be phased in from week commencing 8th March with most adult sessions on campus from week commencing 15th March;
- re-induction plans for 16-19 learners;
- confirmation that a further engagement session with governors and second year scholarship learners would be arranged before the end of the academic year;
- ongoing lateral flow Coronavirus testing for learners and staff on arrival to campus and at home. It was noted that the testing was not mandatory.

The Committee recorded thanks to staff and students for their time and contribution to the evening.

Resolved: The Committee noted the discussion.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19th November 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

Resolved: The Minutes of the meeting held on 19th November 2020 were approved.

6. Matters Arising

The Committee noted the matters arising report. The Clerk referred members to the report on members' declaration of interests which she had prepared in response to a Continuous professional development (CPD) training request from the Committee. She reported that she

had prepared the report pending arrangement of Charity Law/insolvency training with governors which had been postponed in December 2020.

Resolved: The Committee noted the matters arising report.

7. Performance Against KPIs

Mr Noblett, Vice Principal - Curriculum Delivery and Planning, and Ms Haworth Vice Principal - Quality, Teaching, Learning and Learner Support, presented a report on Performance Against KPIs making reference to:

- the 2020/21 Curriculum Quality Performance Indicators report at Appendix A;
- on going quality monitoring by performance reviews by Heads of Schools;
- monitoring of learner attendance and retention particularly for including Level 1 16-18 provision, Construction, Health, GCSE English and Maths and functional skills;
- continued close monitoring of apprentice provision, recruitment and quality due to the ongoing challenges posed by the lockdown;
- risks relating to outcomes for Apprenticeships continued to be monitored closely. However, nationally apprenticeships had been impacted by the pandemic with some apprentices being furloughed and some had a break in learning or had lost their apprenticeship. There were also delays in end point assessments. It was noted that targets had been set in line with the last academic year outcomes were commensurate with a 'good grade' but the national picture for apprenticeships remained difficult to predict due to the pandemic;
- support for learners had been enhanced and plans to restart face to face delivery with practical delivery sessions to take priority when the learners are able to return to campus.

The Committee noted the report on Performance Against KPIs. During discussion with management, and in response from questions from governors, members noted:

- confirmation of weekly monitoring of learner attendance for English and Maths with at least one session per week to be held on campus;
- attendance issues varied and it was not always the same learners;
- all Level 1 learners would return to campus.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report on progress against key Quality key performance indicators (KPIs) targets for the period up to February 2020/21.

8. Progress and Performance Against the Quality Improvement Plan

Ms Haworth and Mr Noblett presented the report on Progress and Performance Against the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). They made reference to:

- the QIP 2019/20 at Appendix A;
- key impacts in January 2021 including CPD sessions planned throughout the year to support staff and digital transformation delivery;
- importance of continuing to develop self assessment and internal monitoring;
- induction programme for Year 11 to ensure learners are on the right programme when they join the College;
- learning walks had taken place up until the end of 2020. Management continued to monitor quality remotely during 2021 and staff observations had been positive.

The Committee noted the report on Performance Against KPIs and during discussion with management, and in response from questions from governors, noted:

- the impact on apprentices during lockdown was unprecedented and the College had provided support where possible including recruitment of student co-ordinators and increased referrals to the College's Learner Support Centre. It was noted that some apprentices had found work;
- potential risks relating to quality during lockdown and how this was addressed by the College;
- Schools within College had developed new and different ways to teach and work during lockdown to meet the differing needs of their School and learners;
- the curriculum on return to College would vary with some courses weighted to practical and some to remain mixed;
- support for individual learners if they were hesitant about returning to College, particularly as it was important for learners to gain practical skills;
- the College was engaging with examination boards and awaited confirmation of examinations;
- Page 4 of the QIP would be updated to reflect that the partnership with the University of Derby would end in 2021;
- it would be helpful for management to share with the Committee more information dynistic to provide members with greater insight into how management monitored cohorts and individual learner progress by course or subject area.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Progress and Performance Against the Quality Improvement Plan.

Action: Management to share further information with the Committee on dynistics.

9. Curriculum Development and Planning Update

Mr Noblett presented his report on Curriculum Planning 2020/21. He referred to:

- Heads of School's responded to the curriculum intent statements approved by the Board in 2020 when planning and designing curriculum;
- a summary of the College's Curriculum Offer by School at Appendix A;
- ongoing plans for curriculum development in 2020/21 and preparation for 2021/22;
- when curriculum planning management continued to innovate and respond to the market;
- increased funding for adults (24 and over) for which the College would develop new 2021/22 curriculum opportunities;
- Adult education intake and apprenticeships such as engineering and health and beauty had been particularly affected by Covid restrictions;
- risk of the College's Adult Education Budget contract due to the pandemic, subject to the government's tolerance levels;
- there had been considerable demand for the College's new female only construction programme with positive press coverage on Radio Lancashire;
- plans related to the introduction of T Levels in construction, health and science with capital building work due to start in the next academic year;
- positive response to date to the partnership with Preston North End with a 27% increase in sports studies learners.

Mr Noblett provided an update on the management's intention to end the formal partnership with the one of its partners and the rationale for this. During discussion with governors Mr Noblett responded to questions on: the number of learners this affected and response of the partner organisation.

The Committee noted the update on Curriculum Development and Planning and during discussion with management, and in response from questions from governors, noted:

- reasons for the increase in 16-18 recruitment. The Committee noted that were a number of factors including significant engagement with feeder schools, increased 16-18 demographic and an increasing number of learners that wanted to progress to an apprenticeship pathway rather than go to university. It was noted that was likely to increase further as T Levels were introduced;
- governor comments that in his workplace apprenticeship places were significantly oversubscribed and a suggestion that unsuccessful candidates could be signposted to the College;

- impact of Covid on GCSE examinations in 2021.

Resolved: The Committee noted the report and management's intention to end one of the College's partnerships.

10. Further Education Admissions Policy Update

Mr Noblett presented his report on the development of a new Further Education Admissions Policy and referred members to the draft Further Education Admissions Policy at Appendix A. The Committee noted the existing Admissions Policy 2016 and Admission Procedure 2018 had also been made available separately on the Governors' Portal for reference. It was noted that procedures were under constant review by management.

Mr Noblett responded to questions on development of the policy with partners and comparison with other policies. It was noted that there was a separate HE Admission Procedure.

The Committee recommended the revised Further Education Admissions Policy for approval to the Board.

Resolved: The Committee recommended the revised Further Education Admissions Policy for approval to the Board.

11. Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy Update

Ms Haworth presented her report on the development of a new Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy and referred members to the draft Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy at Appendix A. The Committee noted the existing Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy with track changes had also been made available separately on the Governors' Portal for reference.

In response to questions on the draft policy Ms Haworth confirmed:

- that the draft had been reviewed from a Safeguarding and Prevent perspective and information on hate crimes added;
- the College did not need to use the policy regularly as most complaints were dealt with via the Student Disciplinary Policy;
- the College could remove learners without appeal in cases of gross misconduct.

A student governor suggested that reference could be added to the Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy that it also applied on transport to and from College and was not restricted to College campus. Miss Haworth reported that this was already included in the Student Disciplinary Procedure and undertook to include in order to align the two policies.

With this addition, the Committee recommended the revised Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy for approval to the Board.

Resolved: The Committee recommended the revised Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy for approval to the Board with an additional reference to the scope of the policy as agreed.

12. Student Council and Learner Voice Update

Mr Noblett referred members to the Student Council and Learner Voice Update. Miss Renfree, Student Governor 16-18 and Chair of the Student Council, reported that the Student Council was developing:

- a Charter that clearly outlined the aims and purpose of the Student Council and the role it played at Preston's College;
- a proposal for College consideration relating to a Student Council 'incentivisation' scheme as it felt that this would support the recruitment and engagement of learners
- a proposal for a permanent location in College for the Student Council.

The Committee discussed Learner Voice activities and noted that due to the challenges posed by the pandemic a learner survey had also been introduced. The Committee noted the responses to date summarised in the report. The Committee discussed with the student governors the impact of Learner Voice and noted that action was taken in response to learner feedback as part of the *You Said We Did* initiative. It was noted that HE learners could also feed into the survey and take part in Learner Voice. Following discussion, it was agreed that it would be helpful for the Committee to see all the comments submitted during a Learner Voice cycle.

During discussion the Committee noted that:

- the Board had held a Question Time event in December 2019 which had provided an opportunity for governors to meet with learners and answer questions. It was noted that it had not been possible to repeat the event in 2020 due to the pandemic but similar events could be arranged in the future;
- Student Council meetings were now held on MS Teams which enabled learners that were not in College that day to attend.

Resolved: The Committee noted the Student Council and Learner Voice Update.

Action: To provide the Committee with all the comments submitted during a cycle of Learner Voice.

13. Higher Education Update

Ms Boulton reported on the decision of the University of Derby to end its partnership with Preston's College.

Ms Boulton left the meeting.

Ms Haworth presented her Higher Education Update report. Making reference to:

- the decision of University of Derby to terminate the partnership with the College, following notification to the College on 9th February 2021;
- impact on existing learners and learners due to start in 2021. It was noted that teach out plans were in place for existing students;

- the College's communications the Office for Students (OfS) regarding this and the response of OfS to date;
- the College had instigated the Student Protection Plan which set out how current students can continue to complete their studies with College 'teach out', and awarded through the University of Derby;
- considerable and ongoing efforts of management and staff to support learners and prospective learners.

The Committee discussed the impact on current and new learners and the risks involved. It was noted that a successful partnership review had taken place with University of Derby and the College in October 2019.

The Committee recorded thanks to management and staff for the work undertaken in response to the University of Derby's termination of its partnership with the College.

Ms Haworth reported that the College had reviewed the current Access and Participation Statement, at Appendix B, which set out how Preston's College as a Higher Education provider would improve equality of opportunity at undergraduate level for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress in higher education from 2020/21. She proposed that the Access and Participation Statement was extended for 2021/22. The Committee agreed to recommend to the Board that the Access and Participation Statement was extended for 2021/22.

Resolved: The Committee:

- **noted the current internal and external factors impacting on the College's Higher Education provision, in light of the COVID 19 pandemic;**
agreed to recommend to the Board that the Access and Participation Statement was extended for 2021/22.

14. Student Protection Plan

Ms Haworth presented her report on the Student Protection Plan. She referred to:

- the proposal that the Student Protection Plan was extended until 31st July 2021;
- the Covid 19 addendum.

Resolved: The Committee:

- **agreed to recommend to the Board that the Student Protection Plan was extended until 31st July 2021;**
- **noted the Covid 19 addendum to the Student Protection Plan.**

15. Any other Business

The Chair reported that this would be the Principal and Chief Executive's last Quality and Standards meeting and on behalf of the Committee thanked the Principal and Chief Executive for her contribution to the College over the last ten years. Members also paid tribute to the Principal and Chief Executive's key role in the revitalisation of the College.

The Principal and Chief Executive thanked members for their comments. She explained that she had very much enjoyed working with staff and governors on Teaching, learning and quality and paid tribute to the achievements of staff in teaching and supporting learners, particularly during the pandemic and lockdown.

16. Date of next meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting of the Quality and Standards Committee would take place on 24th June 2021.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting closed at 6.45 pm.