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Standards & Performance Committee Meeting

Date: **Tuesday 1 November 2022**
Time: **2.00pm**
Venue: **Boardroom / Video Conference**

Present:
Dr Sue Lomax (Chair)
Andrew Fawcett
Chris Ball
Dr Bill Webster (Principal)
Fardean Farooq
Rebecca Davison
Tom Martin
Gulnaz Brennan

In Attendance:
Deborah Bradburn (Clerk to the Board)
Mark Burgoyne (Deputy Principal)
Tracy Clarke (Assistant Principal - Curriculum Development, Information and Technical Services)
Kate Wallace (Assistant Principal - Curriculum, Employer & Student Services)
Jill Hebden (Secretary)

1. SECTION A - BUSINESS MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION UNLESS INDICATED OTHERWISE

1.1 Election of Committee Chair

Members were invited to put forward a nomination and elect a Chair for the Committee.

Dr Sue Lomax was nominated.

RESOLVED:

Dr Sue Lomax be elected Chair of the Committee for the current academic year.

1.2 Welcome to Members/Officers

Members were welcomed to the meeting, which commenced at 2.08pm.

1.3 Apologies for absence

Apologies for the meeting were received from Dr Gill Waugh and Karen Westsmith.

1.4 Declarations of Interest

Members were invited to declare any interests in relation to any item on the agenda.

No interests were declared.

1.5 Request for an item to be unstarred

No requests were received.

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1.6*   **Minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 June 2022**

The minutes of the meeting held 21 June 2022 had been previously circulated to Members for consideration.

Agreed: that the minutes are approved as a correct record and authorised for publication.

1.7   **Matters arising from the previous minutes**

The action progress log was presented. It was noted that College staffing was stable but fragile with progression made in the appointment of new staff.

2.   **SECTION B - COLLEGE MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION UNLESS INDICATED OTHERWISE**

2.1   **Applications, Enrolment & Progress Report**

The Assistant Principal (Curriculum, Employer & Student Services) presented the Applications, Enrolment and Progress report noting the following key points:

Applications & Enrolments

- The recruitment for young people for 2021/22 was 2352 on study programmes and 54 on T Levels, which exceeded the overall allocation of 2371. Recruitment for 2022/23 was 2179 that was approximately 100 down on this time last year. This was in part due to the non-continuation with a partner that had accounted for 65 learners last year.

- The Senior Management Team continued to work with curriculum areas through performance enhancement reviews to maximise enrolments.

- Attendance remained a key driver for the College for 2022/23 with a new attendance policy and positive behaviour policy to ensure a trauma informed approach.

<u>**Governor Questions:**</u>

- Why are enrolment numbers down this year?

  The College has not been able to go into schools as a result of how schools manage COVID-19. More schools that have 6th form provision are retaining their learners and there has also been limited national marketing for T Levels.

- Will the new Minister for Skills address the issues with T Levels?

  There are a number of key ministers from education that have experience of apprenticeships and are fervent supporters of the skills agenda.

- Have the national issues relating to the health T Level affected stakeholder confidence in the qualification?

  There will be a reduced number of qualifications from next year and therefore decisions will need to be made at a national level to increase and intensify the marketing of T Levels.

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- What are staff impressions of T Levels?

  It is a tough qualification with a large placement requirement. The entry level of learners is high with some that have swapped from a T Level to an apprenticeship. The College is doing as much as it can through retraining and upskilling as part of staff development and where there are contacts with other colleges, good practice is shared.

- What might the recruitment numbers be?

  The College achieved 2303 at the end of November last year compared to the current 2179.

Apprenticeships

- Best case achievement for apprenticeships for 2022/23 was 78%. A number of apprentices would 'roll over' into 2022/23 due to not yet completing their end point assessment prior to 31 July 2022.

- Attendance for apprenticeships was below the level required. Where learners had moved groups, a data cleansing activity was underway to ensure that the information was accurate.

It was noted that there was an issue for apprentices in accessing the College IT systems that could affect learner achievement and progression.

Governor Questions:

- Is the attendance rate for apprenticeships at College or in the work place?

  This referred to College attendance.

- Does failed attendance place funding at risk?

  It may if 'off the job' training at the end of the programme is not met. The impact is an extension to the duration of the programme before the apprentice completes, more is at risk if the apprenticeship goes beyond the planned end date. However, each apprenticeship is monitored at performance boards.

- Do employers understand curriculum sequencing at the College?

  Each apprentice has a training plan and the sequence is discussed with the employer and uploaded to SMART assessor which is documented and a copy provided to the employer.

  Employer engagement advisors actively contact employers to ask questions which will inform the work-based tutor development activities. Work based tutors discuss planned activities with employers that provides them with an opportunity to suggest alternatives if it would be more beneficial for them in the workplace.

  'Deep dives' and triangulating all evidence to assess and address issues as they arise takes place. We know where we are good and where we may lack consistency with development in these areas showing significant change.

Adults and Community Learning

- Enrolment volumes increased significantly compared to the previous year, although enrolment was still down against pre-pandemic figures.

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- Enrolments were maximised at the start of the year with each area under constant review.

HE and Adult

- In 2021/22, 94 learners were on prescribed provision taught by the College. HE recruitment for 2022/23 was currently at 59 students that was 61% of target.

- HE attendance was low due to the lower volume of learners with a failure to recruit to catering and hospitality.

Governor Questions:

- Has the College considered collaboration with the University on HE courses?

  This has been considered as a possibility. The College does not wish to move away from HNCs and HNDs despite some lower numbers and continues to work to support growth in this area. The College is also driving a push forward on L4 and L5 leading to top up degrees at the University. Collaboration will partially rely on the outcome of the ONS reclassification review.

- How likely is a reclassification of colleges to public sector?

  There is a reasonably high possibility. The review was initially due to be completed for the end of September but is now delayed until the end of November. If the reclassification occurs then the College will need to reassess its HE provision.

- Building services account for a large proportion of enrolments, has the College considered how the provision will continue?

  A key concern has been the sustainability of the right level of staffing with the required skillset to deliver provision. The College is doing what it can and the staffing in this area has improved. This area has been in intensive support, which the College has been transparent about, and is doing as much as it can to rethink building services and its staffing structure.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the information provided in the Applications, Enrolment and Progress report.

ACTION:

Apprenticeship IT accessibility to be investigated and actioned via the curriculum areas.

2.2 Intensive Support Action Plan Update 2021/22

The Deputy Principal presented the report, highlighting the following key points:

- There had been some underperformance in areas and where possible other areas had offered their assistance to make improvements.

- There had been fundamental changes in English and maths, the outcome of the changes would not be seen until the end of the academic year.

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- The College was content that each area had achieved what had been outlined in the action plan.

Governor Questions:

- Is there an issue with health and social care recruitment?

  The College has had difficulties in attracting staff with the skills level needed for this area.

- Why is plumbing L3 only at 50% achievement rate?

  This is due to apprentices 'rolling over' into this academic year that have now achieved.

It was noted that the improvement for English and maths would be seen on a gradual basis and had been aligned with vocational areas.

The Principal met with the Vision Executive and new Chief Executive of Bolton Council who confirmed that English and maths was a key area of focus.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the Intensive Support Action Plan update.

ACTION:

- SAR panel dates to be circulated to governors.
- Ensure that the level of detail in the building services action plan is accurate.

2.3   College SAR 2021/22 & QiP 2022/23

The Assistant Principal (Curriculum, Employer & Student Services) presented the report and noted the following:

- The Self-Assessment Review (SAR), Quality Improvement Plan (QiP) and Strategic Planning of Curriculum (SPoC) would be merged into one process ie. Quality and Curriculum Planning.
- The SAR and SPoC provided an opportunity for governors to contribute and provide input into the process.

Governor Question:

Could the College provide a diagram/flowchart of the cycle of SAR, QiP and SPoC activity?

This would be created and circulated to Committee Members.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the College SAR 2021/22 and QiP 2022/23 report.

ACTION:

- Ensure that governor input was noted within the report.

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- A diagram of SAR, QiP and SPoC activity to be circulated to the Committee.

2.4 Achievement Rates 2021/22 & Performance Targets 2022/23

The Assistant Principal (Curriculum Development Information and Technical Services) presented the report, highlighting the following points:

- Overall class-based achievement was 85.6% against a target of 89%.

- Adult achievement rate was 88.1% against a target of 89% and remained static with Apprenticeships exceeding the internal target by 5%.

- There had been a decrease in English and maths learners that had achieved a higher grade. The decision was made to register learners for English and maths exams regardless of attendance. The College would review the impact this may have on achievement rates.

- The grade boundaries had changed with additional marks required to achieve a grade 4 compared to pre-pandemic. The College awaited the MIDES report for further analysis of achievement and performance data.

- The reduced performance target for apprenticeships was based on the reduced national pass rate of 57.7% and ongoing challenges.

- A recommendation was made for the following achievement targets of 89% for 16-18-year-old learners and adult provision, 65% for apprenticeships and 95% for non-accredited community learning.

The Assistant Principal (Curriculum Development Information and Technical Services) clarified the following definitions:

- Retention rate: the number of learners still on the course at the end compared to the number of learner starters.

- Pass rate: the number of learners that achieve the qualification from the number retained.

- Achievement rate: the number of learners who achieve from the number of learner starters.

Governor Question:

- Do we have any analysis on the impact on achievement rates and those learners that have higher attendance?

  Not at the moment but there is an amendment to the SAR that includes attendance within the report. Attendance, pass rate and achievements are included within a single document.

- Will there be an impact on staffing with the Council community contract being brought within the College provision?

  Staff do not see the community provision as a split between the Council and the College, it is just one community delivery. There will be a positive impact as there will only be

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one Ofsted visit and fewer audits, which the delivery team will be updated on. Learners can also now change from one programme to another without the need to be withdrawn.

RESOLVED:

Following a thorough and detailed discussion on the proposed targets and consideration of contextual factors, the Committee noted the achievement rates targets for 2022/23 and agreed that they would be recommended to the Board for approval.

ACTION:

Clerk / Board

2.5 Teaching, Learning & Assessment System Report

The Assistant Principal (Curriculum, Employer & Student Services) presented the report, highlighting the following key points:

- A new observation process was being piloted. It was a research-based peer observation process that focused on individual teacher development and provided a comprehensive structure for sharing good practice.

- The process focused on the benefits and positives of good teaching and was about self-appraisal and reflection.

Governor Questions:

What was the feedback from teachers on the new observation process?

The new system was launched at the teaching and learning conference at the start of the academic year and the feedback has been extremely positive, it was considered a more supportive process with staff feeling more motivated.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the Teaching, Learning and Assessment System report.

2.6 Skills Position Statement

The Assistant Principal (Curriculum, Employer & Student Services) presented the report, highlighting the following key points:

- Ofsted had announced that they would carry out enhanced reviews with an additional focus on skills and how each area fulfilled the skills agenda; this would be employer and stakeholder led.

- Each curriculum area had prepared position statements for each course and level.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the Skills Position Statement.

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2.7 End of Year Survey

The Assistant Principal (Curriculum, Employer & Student Services) presented the report, highlighting the following key points:

- The respondent rate, which included apprentices, had increased to 70%.

- The College had undertaken a significant amount of work in relation to Wi-Fi on campus with the expectation that the survey results related to Wi-Fi would improve.

- There had been a reduction in student enrichment activity that had taken place due to COVID-19 restrictions. Now that the restrictions were no longer in place this would return to strength.

- There had been a number of issues related to work placements with employers that did not want learners to come into the College due to the COVID-19 restrictions, this should now ease with the removal of those restrictions.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the End of Year Survey report.

2.8 Link Governor Scheme

The Clerk informed the Committee that a governor was allocated to all link areas. There had been an additional area identified of Careers and Skills following the DfE statutory guidance on how well college provision met local needs.

Ms Sharon Martin was appointed the link governor for Careers and Skills, given the projects that the College had with the NHS.

The feedback from link meetings that had taken place was very positive. To further enhance the experience, it was proposed that governors participate in following a learner's journey within their respective link area to gain a greater learner perspective.

. The College would continue to provide Board Members with both formal and informal opportunities to become more involved at the College, including invitations to SAR panels and the Learner Voice forum.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the Link Governor Scheme update.

3. SECTION C - UNIVERSITY GROUP MATTERS - FOR CONSIDERATION UNLESS INDICATED OTHERWISE

None.

4. SECTION D - ANY OTHER BUSINESS

4.1 Meeting Evaluation

The Committee confirmed that the meeting was very informative with officers robustly challenged.

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The reports presented were detailed and contained the required level of information. Sometimes the reports covered the same information, with a request to review the duplication of information in future reporting.

The detailed and thorough discussions that had taken place would be reinforced at the next Board meeting.

5. **SECTION E - FUTURE MEETINGS**

Tuesday 18 January 2023 at 2.00pm

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting closed at 4.42pm