

# NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

## QUALITY AND INNOVATION COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Quality and Innovation Committee took place on Wednesday, 24 August 2016 in Room B102, NHC, Hitchin.

### PRESENT

Vernon McClure (Chair)  
Lynne Ceeney  
Kit Davies (Deputy Principal)  
Matt Hamnett (CEO and Principal)

Rob Irving (Vice-chair)  
Gary Phillips (Executive Director, Quality  
and Innovation)

### IN ATTENDANCE

Jennie Condé (Interim Head of Quality)  
Stella McManus (Director of Curriculum  
Operations)

Lucy Hann (Managing Director, Hart  
Learning and Development)  
Robert Dale (Company Secretary and  
Clerk)

### INTRODUCTORY

Since the previous meeting, two members of the Board and this Committee had stepped down (Paul Harrison – student governor, and Karl Scott – staff governor). Elections for a new Students Union President were about to take place and it was hoped that the new student governor would be able to join the Committee in time for the next meeting. Action to replace the staff governor was also in hand.

### ITEM 1a: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

James Sowray for whom Lucy Hann was standing in.

### ITEM 1b: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

### ITEM 1c: MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Agreed and signed as an accurate record of proceedings.

### ITEM 1d: MATTERS ARISING

Actions had been completed or were outstanding as below:

- *Creating an induction handbook for Governors.* In hand; no completion date confirmed yet. **Action carried forward.**
- *All-staff communication to highlight survey outcomes and the impact of multiple responses.* **Action completed.**
- *Governor learning walks.* **Action completed.** These had focussed on Maths and English in the summer term. The Walks form would be recirculated again in the autumn term.

- *Engaging parents and the community in promoting and supporting Maths and English. Action completed.* Much work had been undertaken in preparation for the new term, including a parents section on the website, new letters/postcards home about student absence from lessons, curriculum specific information leaflets for parents, enhanced Parents Forum sessions including facility tours and meetings with tutors and greater expectations of parental engagement.

## ITEM 5: HART LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The paper covered progress on three strands of work for Hart L&D: Traineeships, Professional and HE qualifications and 'Leisure' programmes. All were planned to grow during the year, with a new Work/Play branding to promote the substantially revamped 'leisure' offer. The major risks were outlined. For example, as more detail about the apprenticeship levy became available, the chance that the programme might 'eat into' existing markets for professional qualifications increased.

Governors commented that leisure courses were well-provided in Letchworth already, but that Hitchin was less well-served.

**Question:** *Was there a strong enough infrastructure to support a big contract?* There were particular strengths for management and HR programmes, and a network of tutors – which would need to be expanded – but there was confidence in the quality assurance model. A key control would be the SMT panel (Matt, Yvonne and Gary) who would review proposed contracts on financial, quality and value grounds.

A periodic report on the number of contracts reviewed, accepted and rejected should be given to the Committee. Members thanked James Sowray for an excellent paper.

### Action:

- Create reporting framework for Committee.

## ITEM 2: RESPONSE TO OFSTED RECOMMENDATIONS

The report had been published on 10 August; the outcome was as expected – Requires Improvement overall, with Good scores for Leadership and Management and Apprenticeships. No areas for development additional to those already identified by the College were identified and the actions planned to tackle them were the right ones. The paper set out these actions in more detail.

The involvement of governors in the Quality Improvement process had been commended by the Inspection team.

Ofsted provided a support visit, which the College was taking up. The former lead inspector would attend on 1 December to look at actions taken and their impact; the visit was not advisory in nature. A meeting with governors would focus on how governors monitored progress and achievement.

**Question:** *How would the College demonstrate improvement?* First, through expecting more from Managers, following the ONE standard; development days in August 2016 had included a wide range of management training and had been well-received. Second, through the Bridge tutorial programme, targeted on developing individual students. Other regular student development activity included facilitated discussions around current affairs themes. Third, through dedicated best practice and team

development time (ONE Wednesday), and team Action Learning projects, due to be completed this term. Fourth, through more expectations of parental engagement.

**Question:** *How have staff responded to the Inspection report?* Staff have all seen the report, and the recent staff day had enabled the leadership to explore its issues and implications. Responses ranged from disappointment to a positive sense that the College could change for the better. It was increasingly recognised that to succeed, the whole College needed to be good – not just one's immediate team. Culturally, there was progress towards more harmonious working.

**Question:** *How much further did the College need to go to tackle underperformance?* There was still work to do to improve consistency, and to ensure that teams cared about good performance. Setting clear expectations at the start of the year had begun and messaging would continue; compliance with expectations was not optional.

**Question:** *How could governors best support this process?* Asking questions about student objectives and progress reviews during Learning Walks was a very most powerful tool. Student attendance and behaviour could be more easily monitored with the new MI system; this should make addressing student issues quickly simpler. Reminding students of the link between attendance and the NHC Guarantee was key.

**Question:** *How visible are issues to managers?* Regular team meetings with standard reporting and agendas should mean problems become visible more quickly. The MI system made it easier to spot patterns (eg of non-attendance). Attendance targets were set for all teams; last year's target was 90%. There was a correlation between the quality of teaching and attendance.

**Question:** *What sanctions could be deployed for non-attendance?* The immediate action would be to communicate with the parents, and the relationship with the Guarantee was clear. The disciplinary process had been streamlined.

**Question:** *What value could/should be placed on the Ofsted Learner View?* The nature of the questions and the lack of statistical validity meant that responses had limited value compared with NHC's own research. Nonetheless, more effort would be put into promoting the website as it was linked to Ofsted.

**Question:** *Had the Ofsted report comment about the effectiveness of IAG provision for apprentices been queried?* Yes, this point – which amounted to encouraging the apprentice to leave their current employer – had been challenged very strongly.

Governors were satisfied with a comprehensive report on actions to address the recommendations arising from the Ofsted report. They wished to be involved in support and challenge in advance of the Ofsted support visit on 1 December and in particular to participate in the quality improvement sessions. Governor Learning Walks should be arranged around October – Gary Phillips would provide guidance on the kind of questions about targets and progress reviews that could be included.

#### **Actions:**

- Communications to students and staff about the 3Ps and disciplinary implications of non-compliance should be circulated in the first half of September.
- Communicate the impact of student non-attendance on the NHC Guarantee (need to attend 97% of classes for Guarantee to apply).



## ACTION LOG

Item	What	Who/When
Intro	Make arrangements for Staff Governor appointment	Robert Dale 30/09/16
1d	Create an induction handbook for Governors.	Gary Phillips 30/09/16
5	Create reporting framework about contracts for Committee.	James Sowray 30/09/16
2	Communications to students and staff about the 3Ps and disciplinary implications of non-compliance should be circulated in the first half of September.	Gary Phillips 16/09/16
2	Communicate the impact of student non-attendance on the NHC Guarantee (need to attend 97% of classes for Guarantee to apply).	Stella McManus 21/10/16
2	Promote Ofsted learner view survey internally and externally (i.e. through Learn, social media, etc).	Stella McManus 21/10/16
2	Governor Learning Walk support material to be provided and arrangements made for a selection of dates.	Gary Phillips 16/09/16
3	Prepare analysis of exam performance for Board meeting on 5 September.	Kit Davies 02/09/16
4	Amend the agenda plan to include a Maths and English report on each agenda.	Robert Dale 02/09/16