**The Corporation of Newham Sixth Form College**

**Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting held on 11 March 2021**

**Members**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Julia Shelton (Chair) | Independent Member  | Present  |
| Mandeep Gill  | Principal & Chief Executive  | Present  |
| Habib Said Midh-Hir | Student Member | Absent |
| Yvonne Odai | Student Member | Absent  |
| Edet Okon | Staff Member | Absent |
| Martin Rosner  | Independent Member  | Present  |
| Mandeep Sahotay | Independent Member | Present  |
| Paddy Salter  | Independent Member  | Present  |
| Miklos Sarosi | Parent Member | Present |
| Elizabeth Scott | Independent Member  | Present  |

**Non-Members in attendance**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Magdalena Johnson | Vice Principal Student Achievement & Progress | Present  |
| Robin JonesMartin Reed | Clerk to the Corporation Assistant Principal Student Services & Human Resources | Present Present |
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**1** **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Corporation NOTED that no apologies for absence had been received although three Members were not present.

**2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

The Members confirmed that there were no declarations of interest to be recorded on this occasion at this stage of the meeting based on the published Agenda.

**3 REVIEW OF AGENDA**

The Committee agreed to reorder the published Agenda to enable the Assistant Principal Student Services & Human Resources to leave the meeting and join the staff undertaking Covid flow testing.

**4** **SAFEGUARDING**

The Committee received the report of the Assistant Principal Student Services & Human Resources which provided an update on Safeguarding which a particular focus on:

* Supporting students
* Work with external agencies
* Student mental health and wellbeing
* Prevent

It was also explained that the team had a role to play in the provision of the Covid-19 flow test arrangements when it was identified that students were pleased to be back in College.

Throughout the period of the lockdown Tutors continued to check on the wellbeing of students.

A Member asked about the increase in safeguarding referrals which at 120 already was more than the end of year position for 2019/20. A factor may be that the College was devoting more resources to safeguarding and wellbeing and this included a new post with a focus on mental health and youth safety but that could not account alone for the increase.

The College was now working with the London Borough of Newham and the Health Authority which involved the College having access to a Mental Health Practitioner as part of a national initiative.

Another positive factor was that staff had received support and awareness raising of mental health through recent CPD sessions.

It was apparent that the College had improved relationships with the Borough in this respect with some safeguarding referrals coming through the Local Authority. Weekly safeguarding meetings were now taking place which provided an opportunity to share appropriate information with others outside of the College.

The Committee agreed following discussion:

1. To welcome the update on safeguarding and related matters
2. To note in particular the increase in safeguarding referrals relative to previous years and the arrangements in place for the College to keep in contact with students of concern throughout the period of lockdown
3. To look forward to receiving further updates on safeguarding and related matters at future meetings of the Committee.

**5 STUDENT REPORT**

The Committee received the Student Report which it was noted was a mixture of items from the Students’ Union and Student Council.

The importance of enabling the student voice to be heard was of real importance to the College and supported by Members. As one example it was noted that the College was currently reviewing the catering contract and, as the main customers of the outlets, students were involved on the panels to review the tenders and contribute to making the decision on the firm to be appointed.

It was acknowledged that going forward the student experience would benefit from blended learning - a combination of traditional lectures and e-learning. The views of students on the approach was key to the planning of delivery.

The Committee agreed following discussion:

1. To note and welcome the Student Report
2. That there would be value in arranging for one or possibly more Members joining sessions with the Students’ Union and the Student Council as observers whilst appreciating that much of the discussion was likely to be for the College management to address
3. To give further consideration to the nature of the Student Report so that appropriate items were presented to the Committee whilst identifying matters which may benefit from inclusion on the Agenda for a meeting of the Corporation.

*Note: Martin Reed left the meeting at this point given College commitments*

**6 MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 3 DECEMBER 2020**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee held on 3 December 2020 were agreed to be a correct record.

**7 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 3 DECEMBER 2020**

The Committee agreed that there were no issues to be addressed from the Minutes of the meeting of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee held on 3 December 2020.

**8 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR THE MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

The Committee received and discussed the KPI report.

Members appreciated that, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the KPI report did not include up-to-date national benchmarks and, as a result, it was difficult to understand the College position such as in terms of value added. The last true comparison was for 2018/19 but this had limitations when looking at 2019/20 and 2020/21 given, for example, teacher assessed grades and online delivery affecting engagement and attendance.

The College continued to look at opportunities to improve on the arrangements which have involved insisting that students keep cameras on when participating in an online session, reviewing the nature of online activities and further and ongoing training of staff.

It was acknowledged that those students on practical courses needed additional support to cover the full curriculum which was problematic when delivered completely online and this included the provision of specific sessions now that students had returned to College.

The Committee agreed:

1. To note the update on the KPIs relevant to the role and responsibilities of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee
2. To place on record the view that, notwithstanding the challenges arising from the Covid-19 pandemic, it was reassuring that the College was identifying and progressing imaginative solutions to support the student experience
3. To note that at the meeting on 31 March 2021 the Corporation would receive a presentation on KPIs so that all Members had an awareness of what was covered and how the data could be used to track performance, set targets and consider future policies.

**9 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN – 2020/21**

The Committee received the update to the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for 2020/21.

As agreed following review by both the Committee and the Corporation the Key Areas for Improvement were set out with seven priorities to be addressed:

* Students make insufficient progress from their starting points on a significant number of vocational programmes
* GCSE maths 9-4 grades are below the College target and require improvement
* Progression on A level linear programmes from year 1 to year 2 requires improvement
* Attendance on the majority of study programmes need to increase
* Further reduce staffing costs
* Improve staff survey results
* Further improve online teaching and learning

Members recognised that as a result of Covid-19 the delivery model was significantly different to what was originally planned. As explained previously not all of the actions will lead to the preferred level of improvements in the year due to the adverse impact of the pandemic.

Notwithstanding the challenges as a result of Covid-19 there were some developments which warranted the use of green based on the RAG traffic lights system including:

* Further training of staff took placed in February 2021 to help teaching staff provide stretch and challenge opportunities for students
* GCSE maths results for NewVIc were one of the top in the country
* The use of the new digital platform, GCSE Pods, had a significant impact on the in-year progress of GCSE maths students
* Curriculum planning was being progressed including the reintroduction of appropriate AS levels
* The support staff contract had been reviewed to bring staff more in line with national rates
* The recent ESFA submission indicated that there were 103 students above the funding allocation – not yet known for sure if this will lead to more funding for NewVIc in 2020/21
* All teaching staff had now been given Chromebooks
* Digital training continued

The Committee agreed following discussion:

1. To note the up-to-date Quality Improvement Plan
2. To look forward to receiving at future meetings updates on progress against the planned actions to bring about improvements in all of the areas identified including in terms of the outcomes from the staff survey

*Note: Martin Rosner left the meeting at this point given an urgent call on his time*

**10 COURSES OF CONCERN**

The Committee received the report of the Vice Principal Student Achievement & Progress on those courses which were of concern given achievement rates and the target for Value Added.

In summary it was noted that there were 6 A Level courses (Biology, Chemistry, Geography, Law, Psychology and the Extended Diploma in Business) plus GCSE Maths currently regarded as causing concern.

A Member asked if pre course guidance was appropriate so that students did not embark on the wrong courses. Robust arrangements were in place in the College although it was explained that an added factor for those students starting in September 2020 was the GCSE grade inflation seen as a result of ad hoc arrangements put in place across the country due to the pandemic. The College carried out a review and identified 122 students who were supported to change their initial courses.

The Committee agreed:

1. to note the update on courses causing concern and that one approach to support students to achieve successfully was the introduction of Applied Biology and Applied Psychology as being more appropriate for some students than A Levels
2. to look forward to receiving further position statements at future meetings of the Committee

**11 COURSE OFFER – PROPOSED CHANGES FOR 2021/22 AND 2022/23**

The Committee received the report of the Vice Principal Student Achievement & Progress which listed the proposed changes to the course offer in 2021/22 and 2022/23.

It was appreciated that the determination of the course offer was an ongoing process and took into account a range of factors including a review of what was available at neighbouring colleges, data from open days, expressions of interest from potential students and Labour Market Intelligence (LMI).

A significant development for NewVIc in 2021/22 and 2022/23 concerned the introduction of T Levels with 2 being offered in the coming year and 2 more in the year after.

The addition of more courses particularly at A Level where currently NewVIc had the slimmest offer amongst neighbouring sixth form colleges did not mean that the minimum class sizes would be reduced. It was still essential that resources were used efficiently and, as always, student numbers would be monitored closely when deciding if groups would continue in the Autumn Term.

An additional factor was that students were achieving a higher GCSE points score than in the past which was changing the course profile.

The College was also looking at opportunities to consolidate the course offer and a new example was the intention to reduce the current Level 2 IT pathway from 3 to 1 but increase the Level 3 offer.

In response to a question from a Member about the approach to making changes to the course offer it was explained that the SLT and Curriculum Managers had access to comprehensive data which was triangulated to identifying what was in the best interests of NewVIc.

The Committee agreed following a wide ranging discussion:

1. To note the planned changes to the course offer for 2021/22 and 2002/23 which will meet the needs of the community served by NewVIc
2. To note the approach of the SLT to identifying additions and deletions to the course offer and this involves a systemic review of all available data
3. That the Link Members should discuss with the responsible Curriculum Managers how the changes to their areas had been identified
4. To look forward to receiving further updates on changes to the course offer so that Members had a clear understanding and could be reflected in future reviews of policy falling within the remit of the Corporation and the Standing Committees.

**12 COVID-19 – IMPACT ON THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE INCLUDING EXAMINATIONS**

The Committee recognised that the past 12 months had seen a major disruption to the planned student experience as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the College had moved to on-line delivery.

The actions taken and the challenges experienced had been addressed in various reports to the Corporation and the meeting of the Committee on 3 December 2020.

A major focus for the College was now making preparations for the grading of students in the summer term which would be the responsibility of the College as there would be no national examinations. It was thought that there would be appeals against the decisions by the College and arrangements would be put in place for these to be considered and processed as smoothly as possible for all concerned.

The Committee agreed:

1. to note the update on the impact of Covid-19 on the student experience at NewVIc
2. to note in particular that arrangements were being put in place to give a grade to all students and to consider any appeals that were received as a result
3. to look forward to receiving further updates on the impact of Covid-19 as and when there were any developments.

**13 THE USE OF E-LEARNING TO BRING ABOUT ONGOING IMPROVEMENTS TO BENEFIT THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

The Committee received an update from the Vice Principal Student Achievement & Progress on the use of e-learning to support and benefit the student experience.

As explained previously to the Corporation the immediate impact of the lockdown as result of the Covid-19 pandemic was to move all provision on-line since when staff have continued to develop their skills and confidence to support students.

The Committee agreed to note the update on the use of e-learning which the College would continue to develop.

**14 QUALITY MARKS**

The Committee received the report of the Vice Principal Student Achievement & Progress on the College quality cycle which it was explained was firmly centred on the needs of learners.

In addition to the internal arrangements the College benefited from external reviews with moderation still taking place despite the pandemic.

The Committee agreed:

1. to note the College’s approach to improving quality which included seeking learner feedback
2. to place on record the reassurance of Members that the College had appropriate arrangements to seek ongoing improvements in quality and the student experience.

**15 TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE CURRICULUM, QUALITY & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

The Committee AGREED to recommend to the Corporation on 31 March 2021 the following addition to the Terms of Reference of the Curriculum, Quality & Engagement Committee (to be numbered as item 10):

To commission and receive reports related to the student experience from stakeholders, including the Students’ Union and College Executive, to provide context for and enhance the College Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plan

**16 STUDENT MEMBERS**

The Chair of the Committee advised that she planned to make contact with the Student Members, via the Assistant Principal Student Services & Human Resources, to offer support so that they may engage in the work of the Committee and Corporation.

**17 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS – 2020/21**

The Corporation NOTED the date of the final planned meeting to take place in 2020/21:

* Thursday 17 June 2021 at 9 am

The date and start time would be reviewed in discussion with Members to seek to ensure that all could attend given that not all Members were present on this occasions.

It was recognised that other meetings will be arranged if and when thought to be appropriate to address issues.

**18 CONFIDENTIAL ITEM**

The Principal & Chief Executive provided the Committee with information which he had just received about which the Corporation would be briefed as soon as practicable. Until then Members were asked to treat the information as being confidential and not shared with any others.

Chair: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_