



# Minutes of the Curriculum & Quality Committee

(Via Video Conference)

**1 December 2020**

**Present:** John Egan (Chair)  
Phil Hunter (Vice Chair)  
Joanne Beaumont  
Nav Chohan  
James Parker  
Colin Forrest  
Catherine O'Connor  
Kerry Robinson  
Shoeb Desai

**In attendance:** Jeremy Stott (Clerk)  
Diana Bird (Vice Principal Curriculum)  
Jennifer Birtwistle (HR Manager)  
Susanna Butler (Minutes Secretary)

**Meeting commenced:** 18:00

**Meeting closed:** 19:15

[In advance of the meeting, members put forward a number of comments and questions which were responded to and are set out at the end of these minutes on **Page 7.**]

The Clerk informed the committee that Phil Hunter would be arriving late due to another meeting overlapping.

**25/20 Disclosure of financial and/or personal interest**

There was no disclosure of financial or personal interest.

**26/20 To agree the agenda and order of business as circulated**

The agenda and order of business were agreed.

**27/20 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2020**

The minutes were approved as a true record.

**28/20 Matters arising**

**a) 2-1/20a) Partnership with the Princes Trust for Young Entrepreneurs**

The Principal reported that we did not have many enrolments for the final course and that our partnership with the Princes' Trust has paused with lock down. We hope to be able to work with them again in the future.

**29/20 To consider a Human Resources report**

The HR Manager talked through her report and highlighted some recent changes to contract law which has meant we have had to issue new up to date

contracts to staff which is being carried out in batches. It also requires us to make clear in recruitment adverts if the role is eligible for flexible working and we have added a caveat to some of our adverts where flexible working is possible. Staff turnover has gone down slightly this year and is below average for the region. This year we have had 51 leavers, the increase due in part to a number of retirements, and the end of some fixed term contracts. The Principal added that since 16/17 we have increased our number of staff considerably which is reflected in our increased turnover.

It was queried if comparison figures are available against smaller colleges and would we expect to see any significant differences. The HR Manager explained that the figures are always categorised by region, but that she could do some research on this. Comparators are likely to be 6th form colleges which are closer in size to us.

In 19/20 there were 12 fewer jobs advertised than in the previous year, however, we received 97 more applications overall and have seen better recruitment outcomes. Recruitment was on hold at the start of lock down as we didn't know what impact Covid would have on funding etc, but it has now ramped up again.

We have a high percentage of staff over 50 which is growing each year and we have been looking at how we can document succession planning which we are embedding into policies. It was queried if we have any benchmarks on notice periods for Heads of Sector. The HR Manager believes we are comparable, but will check with colleagues at the next AoC regional meeting to see what other notice periods are in force and feedback at the next meeting.

The highest reasons for sickness absence over the last 4 years has been stress, anxiety and depression but our figures are below the national average. We place wellbeing high up on the HR agenda, especially now with the impact from Covid. We have had a number of people off with Covid symptoms, or self isolating, but some of them have continued to work from home. It was queried if we, as a FE sector, are collecting data for the government and the Principal confirmed that we have to fill in a form every day by 2 pm. In 19/20 we had 13 long term sickness absences (4 weeks or more), with just 2 being work related. We have a new Wellbeing Policy in progress and are organising regular wellbeing activities for staff.

### **30/20 To review the 'Theme for the year' – Blended Learning**

The Vice Principal Curriculum (VPC) presented the report setting out the 60 learning walks which have recently taken place with an analysis of the findings and recommended areas for development around Online Learning. As these have been carried out for the first time on-line, governors were not invited to observe, but now that the process has been embedded, they will be invited to future learning walks.

Observers saw that sessions were very well planned, with just a few issues around microphones and cameras, and that instructions were given clearly to students. Overall, the commentary is that our learners are making progress online.

It was queried how important it is for observations to commence at the start of a lesson. The VPC responded that, from a practical point of view, teachers are more happy with that and observers can see how everyone has settled

into the class. However, it is a valid point that we could go into the class at any point though going in at the start sets the context to see how the lesson progresses. It was also asked if there has been consideration in recording the whole lesson and watching it back. This prospect has been raised with teachers so they can look back at their lessons, but there is anxiety from some students about being watched and heard. We do tell staff they can record sessions but that they have to get permission from students.

A governor, having read the recent Ofsted Annual Report, stated that he thinks they would be very impressed with what has just been set out and the progress being made.

**31/20 To consider final progress on 2019/20 Plans:**

- a) Quality Improvement Plan
- b) Development Plan
- c) Staff Development Plan

The VPC presented each of the plans which have had some final updates since June. The commentary on achievement data is picked up through the SAR. The changes have been minimal since the last update.

**32/20 To consider the draft College Self Assessment Report, including relevant evidence sources which are available as electronic links to reports and data in the SAR**

The VPC reported that, in the context of Covid, we have tried to be very measured in the report. For 16-19 provision, 87% achievement is very good and above the national average. Adult provision is slightly below average, but we still feel comfortable to grade as Good as the causes are linked to Covid.

Apprenticeships show a mixed story. Issues are partly due to Covid with some apprentices losing their jobs and also around the awarding bodies not being ready with the end point assessments but there are some issues with delivery. This area is therefore graded as Requires Improvement for now.

Under strengths and areas for improvement, it was queried if there is a main cause for Requires Improvement for Business and Computing. The VPC confirmed that it is linked mainly to accountancy courses. The Principal added that if Business & Computing was just for full time students, then we would probably be graded Outstanding as that provision is remarkable. Overall, we are looking at grading Good across the board which, given the year we have had, is a strong place to be. There have been huge challenges with Covid and staff and students have coped wonderfully.

A governor commented on the College's modesty in promoting its achievements and felt the SAR was silent on the College's ability to shift and adapt and whether a Covid paragraph should feature more strongly on intent to make clear how responsive the college has been with its ability to adapt and still retain its goals. Also on communications, in the current crisis, it has been so important to help hold the College together keeping and enhancing the strong culture. It is a key strength that leadership and management has shown during the pandemic. It was acknowledged that we have great staff, but that we should also acknowledge and celebrate more the experienced SMT

with its stability.

A discussion followed and the VPC said they were good points and that she would be happy to look at the text to see where it could be strengthened.

In a final query around the Talk English project, it was confirmed that this project has been replaced by a Council project called English for Everyone which runs for one year and we hope new funds will be found in future.

[Phil Hunter arrived at 6.35 pm.]

### **33/20 To consider the 2020/21 Plans:**

The VPC went through each of the plans.

#### **a) Quality Improvement Plan**

There are three key areas on the plan including achievement on a small number of full time courses and on part time and apprenticeship accountancy courses and learner performance in exams which has been a recurrent theme in the last few years. Students continue to find exams difficult so it is a focus this year to build exams resilience. It was queried if we are going to have formal GCSE exams next year and confirmed that we have been told to expect them. If exams do take place, it will be a very good sign as it will mean the country is getting back on its feet.

#### **b) Development Plan**

We have used the same categories as last time such as maximising student achievement and achieving a surplus and we have added a focus on developing the online learning offer. No. 6 on promoting good mental health and wellbeing is a pressing topic nationally at the moment. On the lifetime skills guarantee, it was queried if Level 3 will be included. The VPC confirmed we are poised and ready for when the targeted qualifications are announced. The Principal added that we are also trying to work in partnership with other FE providers so we do not compete for the same courses.

#### **c) Staff Development Plan**

The VPC highlighted the section around governors and members agreed they liked the idea of embedding governors into certain elements of the college's work. If governors would like to see a flavour of the quality of provision in College, they could attend Quality Improvement staff training days. If anyone is interested, please contact the Clerk and invitations will be arranged (on-line).

### **34/20 To consider a progress report on the Risk Register related to the Curriculum**

The Principal presented the extract of risks which are of interest to C&Q with anything new highlighted in red. Comments were invited. On H&S procedures, it was confirmed that Covid is uppermost in our minds but that we have done fairly well. There is some pressure though to have more face to face teaching so we will start to bring in more students after Christmas, but this may present a risk.

Of note is that we received an email from Ofsted saying they are coming to visit us again in January - to look at the T Level delivery programme only.

**35/20 To receive the 2019/20 Annual Report on Complaints**

The Principal highlighted the report which shows the number of community complaints has eased off since lock down. The low number of student complaints is a testament to how well we have supported students in the current circumstances.

The Annual Report was received.

**36/20 To consider the outcome from the 2019/20 C&Q Committee Performance Review Questionnaire**

The Clerk presented the results of the review which show that more members completed the questionnaire this year and still maintained a score of 4.73 from the previous year. Just a few areas have dropped slightly, but most have maintained or improved which is an excellent outcome for the year.

**37/20 To consider any changes to the Terms of Reference**

The Clerk confirmed that no changes have been made and asked the committee to recommend they be maintained for another 12 months which was agreed. To note is that the 1 vacancy will now increase to 3 with the departure of Colin Forrest and Shoeb Desai so we will look to fill those at the next Corporation meeting this month.

**38/20 Any other business**

**i) To consider and recommend to the Corporation:**

As previously agreed, all policies are to be accepted unless comments have been made in advance

**a) Additional Learning Support Policy**

**It was agreed to recommend to the Corporation the Learning Support Policy**

**b) Assessment & Verification Policy**

**It was agreed to recommend to the Corporation the Assessment & Verification Policy**

**c) On-Line Learning Policy/Procedure**

**It was agreed to recommend to the Corporation the On-line Learning Policy & Procedure**

**d) Grievance Procedure**

**It was agreed to recommend to the Corporation the Grievance Procedure**

**e) Compliments and Complaints**

**It was agreed to recommend to the Corporation the Compliments and Complaints Policy**

**ii) Date of proposed meetings to December 2021**

- 02 March 2021
- 22 June 2021
- 30 November 2021

**iii) To consider which recommendations/proposals are reported to the Corporation in more detail**

- **Minute 29/20** on the HR Report
- **Minute 30/20** on the review of the theme for the year
- **Minute 37/20** on the agreed Terms of Reference and the 3 vacancies on the committee
- **Minute 38/20 i)** on recommendation to the Corporation the:
  - a) Additional Learning Support Policy
  - b) Assessment & Verification Policy
  - c) On-Line Learning Policy/Procedure
  - d) Grievance Procedure
  - e) Compliments and Complaints

As this was the final C&Q meeting for Colin Forrest and Shoeb Desai, the Chair finished by thanking them both for all their time and input over the last few years.

Agenda No.	Item	Presented By	Questions/Comments	Response
3	To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2020	Chair	23/20/(i), there is reference to the incorporation of Black Lives into the Equality curriculum. I have availed myself of some of the articles available regarding this topic, including white privilege and allies. As a governor I would welcome any additional reading material available from Shipley College. It's too easy to think I know about Equality, when it's clear there are new dimensions of thought and action to be developed and implemented.	<b>This is the information we have made available to staff which is on the Staff Portal</b>
6	To review the 'Theme for the year' – Blended Learning	VPC	<p>Learning Walks, extremely well thought through and the point about clearer instructions to lesson participants throughout the lessons is well made.</p> <p>The changes to sight, sound and environment will no doubt have contributed to a change in some behaviours, not necessarily negative, students with a reflective learning style are likely to need more time to absorb what is being said.</p>	<b>Observation of remote learning sessions has now commenced and the emerging picture is consistent with the learning walks. Staff and learners have generally adapted very well to online learning. A positive side of the Covid-19 pandemic has been the advancement of digital skills across the College community and the developmental focus of observations will ensure that this continues.</b>
10	To consider a progress report on the Risk Register related to the Curriculum	Principal	<p>Throughout the year I have been thankful for all the hard work, quick turnarounds and quality of work achieved by tutors on behalf of students, resulting in the excellent results which we hear about.</p> <p>I understand that it is strongly suggested that there will now be a pay freeze. Will this impact the staff at Shipley College?</p> <p>Covid remains with us for quite a while longer it would seem, and I can understand the green rating allocated, even though the district has been placed in the highest Tier. Whilst we want to enjoy a festive break in the best way we are able, is there any additional guidance for students and staff about staying safe over the holiday period?</p>	<p><b>A proposal on pay will be going to F&amp;R this month</b></p> <p><b>Although nothing is specifically prepared for safety guidance over xmas, we are collectively reviewing support for staff and students this month.</b></p>