



Minutes of the Curriculum & Quality Committee

(Via Video Conference)

2 March 2021

Present:	John Egan (Chair) Nav Chohan (Principal) Joanne Beaumont James Parker Catherine O'Connor Kerry Robinson Wendy Rowan Jonathan Curtis
In attendance:	Jeremy Stott (Clerk) Diana Bird (Vice Principal Curriculum) Jennifer Birtwistle (HR Manager) Susanna Butler (Minutes Secretary)
Observers:	Hibah Modak (Student Governor)
Apologies:	Phil Hunter
Meeting commenced:	18:00
Meeting closed:	19:30

[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 8.**]

01/21 Disclosure of financial and/or personal interest

There was a discussion around what kind of scenarios would constitute a conflict of interest but no disclosures were made.

02/21 To agree the agenda and order of business as circulated

The agenda and order of business were agreed.

03/21 To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 1 December 2020

The minutes were approved as a true record.

04/21 Matters arising

i) Minute 29/20 – Middle Manager Notice Periods

The HR Manager reported that she had spoken with colleagues at other colleges for comparison notice periods and found that most hold a 3 months' notice period for academic managers. Our Heads of Sector are currently on 2 months' notice, though we have found that staff leaving from more senior positions tend to give us plenty of notice which means we have not had to deal with gaps in service.

After consideration it was agreed sensible to increase notice periods for our Heads of Sector from 2 months to 3. Support Managers are on 1 month's notice, in line with other support staff, whereas other larger colleges are on three months, but we will not be looking to change their contracts.

05/21 To consider a Human Resources report

The HR Manager talked through her report highlighting some of the key points. Staff turnover has reduced as shown by the reduction in new starters. We have been cautious replacing some staff and, where feasible, have moved some staff around in the organisation for efficiency reasons since lockdown. For leavers, retirements have increased in the last year and we expect may do so again. Covid has had an impact with some nearing retirement re-evaluating their lives. Of note is that sickness absence has increased dramatically this year, and the picture would look even worse if all Covid absences were recorded as sickness, but a number of staff felt able to continue working from home after testing positive. We have found that none of our long term illnesses are work related for stress which is positive: most are stress related due to home circumstances. Management of long term sickness has been more difficult due to lockdown as we have not been able to arrange the normal visits and welfare meetings in the same way. There have also been delays with occupational health who have been exceptionally busy.

Under the gender pay gap, we have seen a slight change in that last year we had a minus figure which meant women got paid more than men, and this year we are in a plus. This is because we have had a few lower paid male members of staff replaced with females and 3 staff who have joined the Business Development team on well paid funded posts were male, which brings the average up slightly. This could change again as a male Head of Sector has recently been replaced with a female. Any change will be minimal so this is just to note we have gone from minus to plus.

Under the Action Plan, it sets out how we carry out fair recruitment using shortlisting procedures and safer recruitment techniques. We offer lots of flexible working which is particularly attractive to women. As part of new legislation, we now have to make clear in any adverts if a post is eligible for flexible working.

Members agreed for the Gender Pay Gap report to be signed by the Chair.

06/21 To consider the 2019/20 Annual Equality & Diversity report

The Principal presented the report and it was queried if there is a requirement for it to be made available anywhere else other than the College website. The Principal confirmed that it has to be published under governors' papers, but that it does not go anywhere else for scrutiny.

The Action Plan was highlighted which is the outcome of all the work we do showing what we intend to carry out this year. Actions include developing English for Everyone funded by Bradford Council which is going very well. However, the worry is that there will be no further funding from the summer so we are working with the Council to try and find alternative pots of money. Another action is to try and achieve the Colleges of Sanctuary Award (as being welcoming for refugees) through [City of Sanctuary UK](#) though this has been

postponed for the 19/20 academic year as the organisation has not been active during Covid.

An action is to increase the number of Asian staff; we have a representation, but are short compared to Bradford as an area and should ideally have another 10-20% to be true to our local population. It was queried how tied we are by legislation on equality on finding a more diverse range of staff. The Principal said there is no external pressure and that it is up to us and what we see as important, but it would be good to have the staff body reflective of the local population. A discussion followed on positive discrimination which is illegal and how we should not confuse that with positive action which is about taking positive steps, following best practice, reviewing processes etc to make sure nothing is stopping people of different backgrounds from applying for jobs. Of note is that around 60 members of staff have not declared their ethnicity so that could change the percentage of BME staff.

Members were asked for suggestions of anything that might be missing from the Action Plan and a member thought we should have reporting and monitoring on sexual orientation. The Principal said this is not something that is captured on the ILR application form, but that it is a good point to assess how to apply this to our staff data to help us better support people and have a better insight into staff from different backgrounds. **ACTION:** It was agreed to add this as an action to the E&D Action Plan.

J Beaumont added that there is a new district wide diversity inclusion committee coming forward and asked if this is something the College could link into as they are looking to gather different stakeholders.

ACTION: J Beaumont to find out the name of the new committee and feedback to the Principal and committee.

07/21 To review the 'Theme for the year' – Blended Learning

The Vice Principal Curriculum (VPC) went through her report picking out the key points. All sessions have been carried out online due to lockdown and students' experience has been very positive. The OTLA process has run as planned with all observations taking place online. It was found that less than 5% had students who were making limited progress which is a positive outcome. The three staff that that represents are working with our advanced practitioners. The Principal asked the student Governor about her own experience with online learning and she confirmed that it had worked well with 1:1 interactions with teachers and some governors. Although it has worked well for many, she said there are also some who have found it more difficult. She feels they have all come a long way and are now used to this new way of learning and teachers have made a point to stay in contact with everyone. It was queried if students communicate with each other outside of the official blending learning time and confirmed yes, through social media groups and by staying on line sometimes after the tutor has left. Some groups have become more active than they were with not seeing each other face to face which has been good.

A governor questioned whether some students might be keeping their cameras switched off and whether this was having a detrimental effect on learning. The VPC outlined that we have told them how to use the technology but need to be aware of some of the barriers and how we might get better participation. There are issues with some students not staying for the whole lesson. We

recognise that some find it uncomfortable being on camera - this, plus any technical issues, can affect participation, so teachers randomly ask students to turn cameras on to check participation. Since the report was written we now know what will be happening around assessments and staff are having to issue grades and collect lots of information. Therefore participation in lessons will be even more important for students so this needs to be emphasised with them.

The theme is blended learning, not online learning, and the aim is to look at how we can carry over the positives from this last year and what place online learning should have within that for different programmes. Once back on campus from 15 March we are looking at a blended approach. We will be monitoring locally and nationally over the next weeks to decide who to bring back and what is safe.

It was asked if a report on the future of blended learning could be brought to the next meeting and confirmed that we will have a better picture of how things look by then. It was noted that a blended approach could have a significant impact on the use of resources on site which may provide opportunities for us that we did not think feasible in the past.

08/21 To consider the Learner Induction Survey Report

The VPC reported that for both full time and part time students there are high levels of satisfaction across college with no significant variations by different groups. Students have been positive about teaching and assessment generally. We still have a couple of areas with part time apprentices to look at and it may be we need to consider if we are asking the right questions at the right time. A member had raised the question on whether we check with students if they know about key messages such as how to make complaints. We currently ask course tutors to report on whether the full induction has been carried out, but it would be better if we also ask students themselves, so we will be looking at this as it is difficult for tutors to assess what each student has taken on board.

09/21 To consider

i) An in-year retention report & enrolment report, including Apprenticeships, comparison male v female & analysis of destination figures

The Principal presented his report highlighting the significant issues. There is a big reduction (31%) in overall adult numbers given lockdown; a reduction in 16-18 year olds, particularly at Level 2; and a reduction in GCSE numbers with entrants arriving with higher grades than in previous years (caused by Covid related grade inflation). Retention figures are very positive overall.

Apprenticeships are a bit patchy in places but the overall achievement rate is likely to be good. There are some issues with getting apprenticeship students through the standards' "end point assessments" as we cannot always book external assessors promptly so it is more about the final assessment than delivery. The key message is that it looks good for retention and we hope achievements rates will reflect that also.

A member raised the recent publicity on employers and the apprenticeship levy and how it has reduced, not increased, numbers. The Principal responded that much of the levy is being spent on adults which has in fact increased the

number of apprentices, but the drop we have seen is due mainly to the economy and Covid, as well as the removal of Level 2 apprenticeships. Our biggest programme was L2 Business Administration and it has been completely removed. This means a number of potential students will never enter those apprenticeships as they used to. The government stance is that they are only about creating quality jobs but that does not serve a lot of our students. We expect numbers will increase however once the economy picks up.

ii) A progress report on the Risk Register related to the Curriculum

The Principal went through the key risks related to C&Q. On breach of employment legislation we have had no recourse to lawyers' fees which demonstrates our good HR practice. On serious misuse of IT, we are preparing for new Cyber Essential accreditation. Our biggest area at the moment is health and safety. We have been running Covid testing centres on site since early February and w/c 8 March mass testing will begin with each student receiving 3 tests on site so it will initially be very busy. On the Impact of 14-19 policy, the biggest issue is on how successful our T Levels will be.

10/21 To consider a Strategic Curriculum Planning Report

The Principal prepared his report to show some of the main themes and how we are developing the curriculum for the next few years. Highlighted was the big education and skills agenda for Bradford. In terms of the adult budget, London gets more money per head than Bradford - even though the district lags behind the rest of the country in working age population qualification levels. The one positive though is that Bradford has relatively high numbers going into Level 4 and above in education.

Bradford Council's most recent Employment Update states the claimant rate as 3% above the national average. In addition, just under 8% of employees are furloughed in Bradford. When furlough runs out, more numbers will be added to the figures. 14% unemployment was forecast, but it may not be quite so bad. In any case we will need to prepare to support larger numbers of unemployed into work.

Analysis is often focused on expanding sectors, but rarely includes the total requirement for jobs. Many over 50 will be retiring in the next 10 years so the greater demand is from those retiring rather than expanding sectors. The net result is that job opportunities exist across the full range of occupational sectors.

T levels are the biggest change and we might need to change all our Level 2s to transition programmes.

We are currently carrying out admission interviews and events online.

Expanding apprenticeships is about getting enough job opportunities in place. We are doing very well with this in the Care sector, but in other areas it is very difficult to find enough employers. Of note is that we have started our first Level 5 Health Management course with two cohorts.

A discussion took place on the readiness of young people in school to progress because of gaps in their learning and noted that those coming to us from schools may have bigger gaps in learning as they only started online learning

after Christmas whereas the College started immediately from lockdown.

For the adult learning budget we are planning how to spend our £1.7 mil grant bearing in mind distance learning has increased substantially this year. The Local Enterprise partnership is now in charge of our support for adults and are being more prescriptive about what we deliver, so we could lose some of our flexibility.

16-18 numbers are crucial - they decreased last year as more stayed on at school so we will need some more advertising between now and summer. We also need to offer support for the unemployed.

ACTION: It was requested if a link can be provided to the [Bradford Economic Recovery Plan](#) and shared with the committee.

11/21 Any other business

i) To consider and recommend to the Corporation:

a) a review of the Safeguarding Policy & Procedure

Members agreed to recommend to the Corporation the Safeguarding Policy & Procedure

b) the Admissions Policy & Procedure

Members agreed to recommend to the Corporation the Admissions Policy & Procedure

c) the Quality Policy and Cycle

Members agreed to recommend to the Corporation the Quality Policy and Cycle

d) Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Parental & Shared Leave Policy

Members agreed to recommend to the Corporation the Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Parental & Shared Leave Policy

ii) Date of proposed meetings to December 2021

- 22 June 2021
- 30 November 2021

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

- **Minute 07/21** - an update on the Theme for the Year - Blended Learning
- **Minute 05/21** on the gender pay gap report
- **Minute 11/21 i)** on recommendation to the Corporation the:

- a) Safeguarding Policy & Procedure
- b) Admissions Policy & Procedure
- c) Quality Policy and Cycle
- d) Maternity, Paternity, Adoption, Parental & Shared Leave Policy

Agenda No.	Item	Presented By	Questions/Comments	Response
5	HR Report	J Birtwistle	<p>Thank you this is a very detailed report - very reassuring that this level of quality is available for governors. Can I ask more about the category "resignation" which seems to account for a third or more of the leaver reasons. I am not sure what is captured within this, have there been any examples whereby interventions have been made to capture and retain talent for Shipley College where it has been deemed beneficial to both sides to do so?</p> <p>K Robinson</p>	<p>Resignation is simply any reason other than dismissal or retirement - someone getting a new job or simply moving away. All leavers have an exit interview for us to explore any underlying issues why people may be leaving. There are rarely any 'last gasp' interventions. In the last year we had one tutor who had been offered a higher salary elsewhere. On reviewing their experience we felt we had in fact offered a poor salary in the first place. Our increased offer secured that member of staff. However we had a clear reason for being able to make the offer - such increases would not be a default response, regardless of their ability.</p>
7 & 8	Blended Learning and Learner Induction Survey Report	VPC	<p>Both are excellent updates and I particularly value how the evidence of drilling down to the issues and actions required following the Learner Survey. I wondered (if this does not already happen), if there is an opportunity for learners to have responsibility for completing an online validation following induction in addition to surveys. For example: "How do you find out about opportunities to progress your English and Maths skills" "If you wish to appeal against a decision concerning your course what steps would you take" etc.</p>	<p>At the moment we ask tutors to confirm they have covered all aspects of the induction and Heads of sector monitor this. In my previous organisation we asked students to confirm key learning points from their induction. I will raise this with the Head of TLAQ. Very helpful suggestion - thank you.</p>

			K Robinson	
10	Strategic Curriculum Planning	NC	An extremely important update from Nav, regarding Strategic Curriculum Planning. I wish I had a crystal ball! But what I will say that the ability of Shipley College to keep its ear to the ground and be able to turn things around and deliver quickly will be critical during this time. That much I do know. K Robinson	Let's hope we can continue to be reactive!