



Minutes of the Standards Committee held on Thursday 7th May 2020 at 4pm via Microsoft Teams

Members Present: Aldrich Gonsalves
Suhail Rana
Neil Thomas
David Whatton (Chair)

In attendance: Andy Comyn (Chief Operating Officer)
Gill Darwood (Senior Officer Corporate Governance)
Diana Martin (Vice Principal)
Dean Price (Standards & Performance Manager)
Carl Riding (Vice Principal Curriculum & Performance)

1 Confirmation of quorum and apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Katharine Clough and Alison Hodge. The SOCG confirmed the meeting was quorate.

2 Declarations of Interest

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3 Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair for 2020/21

3.1 It was agreed to defer the appointment of Chair and Vice Chair to the next meeting.

4 Minutes of previous meeting held on 28th January 2020

4.1 The minutes were confirmed as a true record for signature by the Chair.

5 Matters Arising

5.1 There were no matters arising other than those covered on the agenda.

6 Teaching and Learning Matters

6.1 Teaching and learning report – April 2020

6.1.1 D Price introduced the paper which provided a summary of teaching and learning activity on-line since the College closed to the majority of students. Whilst it was not possible to measure the hours students were spending working remotely, it was possible to measure the access to College systems (a summary of which was provided in the report). He explained that this confirmed that staff and student engagement with on-line learning in the early weeks of closure had been good. He provided an overview of the systems currently being used to facilitate online learning and engage with learners and noted that Blackboard was also showing increased usage by learners.

6.1.2 He also outlined the use by staff of Microsoft Teams where staff were engaging much more than prior to the lockdown, and communicating with each other through the chat facility. He reported that the College staff conference prior to Easter had taken place through Microsoft Teams which had been highly successful with over 530 staff engaging on the day.

6.1.3 The College planned to appoint more e-learning champions across the organisation to support staff in the use of technology. D Price noted the need to streamline platforms as much as possible.

- 6.1.4 The CE&P noted that the engagement with a blended learning approach would be impactful going forward and it was agreed that this was an aspect which could be further developed in the future when the College returned to face to face operations. D Martin noted that this was probably a more effective mode of delivery for adults rather than 16-18 learners who valued the social aspect of being in College.
- 6.1.5 The Chair asked if there were any qualifications for staff to gain whilst learning to use the new technology. D Price advised that there was online training available from Microsoft and the College was looking at incorporating that into CPD for staff.
- 6.1.6 S Rana noted from a teaching perspective that online learning had been working really well for both himself and his learners.
- 6.1.7 **It was resolved:** To note the teaching and learning report – April 2020
- 6.2 **The future 2020/21 – working document**
- 6.2.1 The CE&P presented the document which outlined a proposal for how the College proposed to deliver programmes over the coming months, based on its current understanding, whilst noting that there had been some further developments since the paper had been issued. A number of the most important items were considered to support finalisation of the plan.
- 6.2.2 In respect of the remainder of 2019/20, he explained that:
- All but completing learners would not return to College this academic year and would continue with on-line learning.
 - Limited access to the College would be granted from June (subject to change) to allow completion of technical programmes for those not able to receive a calculated grade, particularly those working at level 3. This would be under strict social distancing measures.
 - Adult learners would be able to enrol, study and complete a range of upskilling programmes completely online from May.
- 6.2.3 The CE&P noted that these proposals were all subject to the College having permission from DfE to open and would be subject to adherence to any conditions which might be applied.
- 6.2.4 The Chair asked what impact the proposals would have on furloughed staff and how this would be managed. The CE&P explained there was an intention to make a claim to the job retention scheme for May, following which the majority of staff were anticipated to return to work in June. He stressed that the College would ensure that staff would be provided with clear and consistent information on their individual circumstances.
- 6.2.5 In relation to online enrolment the CE&P advised that for adults this was open now for a number of programmes and enrolment would be made available from next week for a wide range of programmes which would run throughout the summer term. In addition online advice and guidance continued for any learners wanting to join the College either now or in the Autumn term.
- 6.2.6 In respect of the academic year 2020/21 the CE&P explained that:
- Online enrolment would be possible for all students by August.
 - Full time students would begin in College on 1st September and complete a 6 week transition programme before moving into main programme delivery, details of which were discussed.
 - Enhanced blended learning arrangements would be in place for all programmes, building on the good practice currently developed.

- September would see the College's most ambitious adult offer for many years including flexible, online, blended and physical programme delivery aimed at supporting adults of all ages negatively affected by Covid 19.
- A new dedicated adult prospectus, web presence and adult open days would be delivered to support this.
- Continuing apprentice students would continue with online delivery and support throughout the summer and return to day release classes from September.
- Flexible programme delivery would be put in place to allow apprentices to re-join throughout the year as their employer was able to support this, with flexibility for to ensure that learners who needed to take breaks in learning could be supported and assessors could provide remote support and assessment without the need for face to face engagement.
- Higher level programmes would begin from 2nd November, with an optional 'Step into HE' programme available for all potential HE students in the weeks before this.
- Dedicated arrangements would be in place to support high needs students, including enhanced support and transition arrangements.
- The above would be designed flexibly enough that a full time or blended learning delivery model could be implemented for the first half term, based on social distancing requirements in place at the time.

- 6.2.7 It was noted that all full time provision would take account of the fact that school leavers would have been out of education for six months, many returning College learners would also have been out of learning for six months, and would also cater for those who had applied for apprenticeships but the planned apprenticeship was no longer available. The aim was to put them fully onto timetable by the end of week 6, ensuring that they were prepared for their programme of study as well as for the use of blended learning should there be a requirement for a further period of distance learning.
- 6.2.8 All programme development would be subject to normal quality assurance processes for any distance learning materials.
- 6.2.9 The CE&P explained that a number of 'Task & Finish' groups had been created and staff were working on their detailed plans. One of these groups was tasked with planning and implementing the necessary adjustments at all sites to cater for social distancing measures.
- 6.2.10 The proposal was to communicate these plans to wider stakeholders next week following government announcements on Sunday.
- 6.2.11 In response to a question from the Chair, the CE&P explained that plans were in place for results days in respect of A level and GCSEs to celebrate results and support those who didn't have the results they were hoping for, where the usual support arrangements would be replicated as an online system where results would be received electronically and access available to advice and guidance and online enrolment.
- 6.2.12 The Chair asked if start times would be staggered for staff and students to enable safe travel and the CE&P agreed that this would be controlled so that small groups would come in at any one time. There was also flexibility in September to do that as well for a period of time.
- 6.2.13 The CE&P noted that a number of regional and national research projects had been commissioned on the likely future uptake of apprenticeships.
- 6.2.14 The CE&P noted that there was still uncertainty in relation to national guidelines but it was the College's aim to proactively plan its intentions in relation to the remainder of the academic year and the next academic year.

6.2.15 **It was resolved** To note the report and endorse the approach to teaching and learning arrangements.

7 **Safeguarding and Student Conduct Matters**

7.1 **Safeguarding and Student Conduct Report**

7.1.1 D Martin presented the report which provided a summary of safeguarding arrangements in the College as well as updates in developments across the College, particularly as a result of Covid-19. A brief summary was provided and D Martin highlighted the key points of the report:

7.1.2 Safeguarding concerns:

- 274 safeguarding concerns logged
- 47 learners were Children in Care (CiC)
- 21 learners were Children in Need (CiN)
- 11 learners were on a Child Protection Plan (CPP)
- 3 learners identified as “at risk” of exploitation
- 2 learners identified as involved in county lines activities

7.1.3 360 learners were being supported by counsellors. A breakdown of these learners by gender and key client group was provided in the report.

7.1.4 There had been 96 suspensions this academic year to date, with 63 being dealt with at Stage 3 disciplinary meetings, resulting in 20 exclusions. 4 of these learners had returned to their course on learning contracts following appeal panel hearings.

7.1.5 The report also detailed the measures which had been put in place to safeguard and support learners during the Covid-19 closure.

7.1.6 The safeguarding team were in regular contact with social workers, parents/carers and keyworkers. “Vulnerable” students, those in the care system or those who had social workers, had been offered the opportunity to attend College, although there was currently no uptake from this cohort. PEP meetings were taking place via video/telephone conferencing.

7.1.7 Due to wellbeing/safety concern for one student an Emergency Strategy meeting took place via telephone conferencing. Effective contact had been maintained with the local authority Children’s Services.

7.1.8 It was noted that the higher number of suspensions compared to the previous year were partly attributable to two incidents which involved a number of learners who had been suspended during the ensuing investigation.

7.1.9 The rearrangement of the staffing structure in relation to learner conduct had been smooth and received good feedback. The committee supported this arrangement to continue and noted that the committee would be updated on matters through the normal reporting processes.

7.1.10 Counselling was being accessed by an increasing number of learners including a number from the CAT Centre. Contact with all staff and students engaged with counselling prior to closure had been continued and many were engaging via email due to lack of a confidential space in their homes to talk.

7.1.11 It was noted that safeguarding arrangements, including the Prevent duty, were highly effective.

7.1.12 **It was resolved** To note the report.

8 **Governance matters**

8.1 **Committee's Business Plan 2020/21**

8.1.1 The SOCG advised that the business plan for the Committee provided an indication of business and reports which would be submitted to the meetings of the Committee scheduled for 2020/21. She noted that this was not a rigid document but was intended as a guide and would remain flexible to accommodate emerging priorities and unforeseen eventualities, particularly in view of current circumstances in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, which may result in additional considerations for the committee in relation to the arrangements for the delivery of teaching, learning and assessment going into the 2020/21 academic year.

8.1.2 She drew members' attention to the addition of an annual report on compliments and complaints, which had previously formed part of the teaching and learning report but was proposed would be more appropriate as a stand alone report.

8.1.3 **It was resolved** To recommend the business plan to the Corporation for approval.

9 **Date of Next Meeting**

9.1 16 November 2020 at 4.30pm

10 **Any Other Business**

10.1 The CE&P advised that the operational development plans were now operational and in progress and were structured by sector and cross college themes. Most actions were being progressed but staff were currently concentrating on the task and finish groups. The update report would be considered at the next meeting, however the Chair noted that there would need to be some flexibility to look at the plans and review the progress on actions in view of current circumstances.

The meeting closed at 5.07pm.



D Whatton

16th November 2020