

CURRICULUM & STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING

CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 05 OCTOBER 2021 AT 4.30 PM VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

Present:

Jill Lanning (Chair), Corrienne Peasgood, Andrea Blanchflower, Emily Staley

Attendees:

Ed Rose (Assistant Principal HE and Adult) – agenda items 1 - 6.3 only, Helen Richardson-Hulme (Assistant Principal, Student Services) – agenda items 1-6.7, Julia Bates (Vice Principal, FE, Curriculum and Quality) – agenda items 1 – 6.5 only, Jodie Mitchell (Head of Professional Services), Sue Millions (Administrator), Andrew Barnes (CCN Chairman) – as an observer

It was noted and agreed that the original agenda is rearranged due to the ongoing Ofsted Inspection.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Nikki Gray and Jerry White (Deputy Principal).

2. Declarations of Interest

Governors and Committee members are requested to make known any relevant pecuniary interests relating to any items on the agenda and it was noted that all declarations will be recorded.

There were no new declarations of interest given at the meeting.

3. Unconfirmed Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 June 2021 (Paper 02)

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2021, were agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the first available opportunity.

4. Unconfirmed Confidential Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 June 2021 (Paper 03)

The confidential minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2021, were agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the first available opportunity.

5. Matters Arising from the Previous Minutes (Paper 04)

Action 1 (6 - 2020/21): *Jerry White to provide more detail on retention rates for both 16-18 students and adults in 2020/21 to the C&S committee at their next meeting taking place on 5 October 2021. Retention rates for 2020/21 are provided for review within the Quality Report. Please see agenda item 6.8. Action completed.*

Action 2 (6 - 2020/21): *Jerry White to discuss with others at County level the general increase in EAAs and the fact that some students are not seeking EAAs prior to coming to college. Conversations are underway with Norfolk County Council on how to work with schools to make the system more effective. It was noted that the Norfolk Learning Board has two areas of focus, these being transition and inclusion. Action completed.*

Action 3 (6 - 2020/21): *HE Curriculum Scrutiny Update to be discussed at the next C&S Meeting taking place on 5 October 2021.*

The current schedule is for Maths and English in October 2021 and HE and T Levels in December 2021. Please see agenda item 6.10. Action completed.

Action 4 (6 - 2020/21): *Julia Bates to provide a T Levels Report for the next C&S Committee Meeting taking place on 5 October 2021.* Please see agenda item 6.5. Action completed.

Action 5 (6 - 2020/21): *T Level Scrutiny Update to be discussed at the next C&S Meeting taking place on 5 October 2021.* Please see agenda item 6.4. Action completed.

Action 6 (6 - 2020/21): *The Chair to inform Noel Bartram and Nikki Gray that HE and T Level Scrutiny updates will be provided at the next C&S Committee Meeting taking place on 5 October 2021.* It has been agreed that HE and T Levels will be discussed in December 2021. Action completed.

6. SECTION A – papers for discussion and action

6.1 Office for Students – Compliance Approval

(Paper 05)

The Chair welcomed Ed Rose to the meeting.

The Office for Students – compliance approval, previously distributed, was discussed at the meeting and Ed Rose informed governors that the OfS regulates higher education provision for the college and in order to provide assurance to the governing body that the college remains compliant with their requirement, the report provides updates against each of the conditions of registration.

The following key points were discussed, noted, and explained:

- It was agreed that the conditions will be reported upon and updated through the HE Report at future C&S Committee Meetings.
- Governors asked if the college had responded to the OfS consultation on the B Conditions and Ed Rose informed them that their response was through the Mixed Economy Group. He noted that it was thought that universities will have more challenges than the college sector but it is difficult to predict the detail of how the new Conditions would be enforced.
- Andrea Blanchflower informed governors that she believes that the following conditions could be detrimental to the college sector – that lack of optionality in courses, i.e. within a degree programme, is seen as poor provision and that the requirement to meet economic need could be complex for colleges that work with more than one validating body. Ed Rose noted that this was a fair point and is aware that this is done in some areas but is not reflected in the MEG membership.
- It was agreed that the OfS approach tends to be rigid and linear, but it hoped that the new Conditions will elad to their approach being more qualitative.
- It was noted that the ongoing work by the Director of Governance and the Principal continues to reflect best practice against the FE Code of Governance and governors present asked if there was a HE Code of Governance and whether reference should be made to it. Following discussion, Ed Rose agreed to check if this is required by the OfS and whether other colleges refer to it. The Chair agreed that it would be appropriate to note that governors have knowledge of the document.

The question was asked if the annual accountability return is required to be signed off by 1 December 2021 and the Principal informed them that she believes that the return data submission requirement has been removed and that the return just needs to be completed annually, but not now returned.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the Committee will recommend the OfS compliance report to the full Board.

The full content of the report was noted.

Action 1: Ed Rose agreed to check if the HE Code of Governance is required by the OfS, whether reference should be made to it and whether other colleges refer to it (ER).

Action 2: C&S Committee to recommend the OfS Compliance Report to the full Board for their approval at the meeting taking place on 19 October 2021 (CP/ CJ).

6.2 HE Report

(Paper 06)

The HE Report, previously distributed, was discussed at the meeting. The following key points for discussion and explanation were noted and the headlines from the report were as follows:

National Student Survey – it was noted that the data was released in the summer and was summarised within the previously distributed report and discussed. The data shows positive performance in the majority of measures with strong increases in teaching, assessment and feedback, academic support and student voice. The organisation and management has improved but remains below the national average with comments indicating that staff movement and communication relates to this area. The question was asked by governors on what more can be done re staff leaving midway through a course and what can be done in the future. The Principal reminded governors that the internal audit on HE Learner Recruitment, Retention and Satisfaction is taking place next week and will review the framework in place to recruit and retain HE staff and students and how student satisfaction is optimised. The Chair suggested that there might be a need to further explore what factor influenced students in relation to organisation and management. It was agreed that the visibility of the course director is a key factor.

The Chair asked for the committee's thanks to be passed to staff for the much improved NSS scores and it was agreed that governors feel more relaxed and reassured than in previous years. The Principal agreed, but it was reiterated that the data can still be better and staff are not complacent.

Governors noted that they gave positive feedback in the summer which is not highlighted within the report and Ed Rose informed them that he edited the report and focused on what needs improving rather than any positive comments.

Recruitment 2021/22 – Ed Rose informed governors that the enrolment period is ending, and the data will inform plans for course offers in 2022/23 and not 2021/22 as stated in the report. The full content of the recruitment discussions was noted.

The full content of the report was noted.

Ed Rose left the meeting at 5.10 pm.

6.3 NTTC Report

(Paper 07)

The NTTC Report, was previously distributed and discussed at the meeting with the following key points for discussion and explanation highlighted:

The Chair thanked Ed Rose for his full and comprehensive report and following discussion, it was agreed to give the report more time in the new year or at the next Strategy Day. The Principal informed the Board the NTTC was originally a TEN initiative and it was therefore

agreed that key strategic discussions will take place at the next CCN Strategy Day and the C&S Committee would then pick up any implications ongoing.

Action 3: NTTC to be included on the agenda for the next Strategy Day taking place in January (CP / CJ).

6.4 TLA Report

(Paper 08)

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Update, was previously distributed and discussed at the meeting with the following key points for discussion and explanation highlighted:

Passport to Enrolment System (P2E) – Julia Bates confirmed that the system provided a much better enrolment experience for students again this year and has made the whole enrolment process much easier. Seeing all students in one digital place is much more user friendly and productive than the previously used paper-based system.

Induction – induction has started well with Ways of Working being high on the agenda.

Catch-Up Work – it was noted that catch-up work continues from last term and several additional ways to make interventions and support students to recover lost learning are currently being set up.

Behaviour and Attitude – the lack of positive professional attitudes have been identified in the Agriculture area. It was noted that intervention has been quick and appropriate with students being challenged with regard to unacceptable behaviour. Staff are working together to manage the disruption at ground level.

Leaders and Managers – together, team leaders and managers have been considering the personal development framework to be sure matters re post pandemic recovery of lost learning and the impact on social and personal development are routinely discussed throughout the year.

Course Leadership – course leadership continues to play a pivotal role in the college and has stabilised in Norwich and Paston. A good range of CPD sessions continue and are being undertaken across Easton staff, many of whom have not all been course leaders. It was noted that course leadership is now included in the contracts of Easton teaching staff.

The full content of the TLA Report was noted.

6.5 T-Level Update

Following discussions at the last C&S Committee Meeting, it was agreed that at today's meeting, the first year of T-Levels will be reviewed and the following was highlighted to governors:

Julia Bates informed the team that she will provide governors with the full T-Level update as soon as possible.

It was agreed that the introduction of T-Levels has been a good experience, enjoyed by both staff and students. During 2020/21, an independent training provider ceased to exist, so students transitioned into the CCN digital T-Level. Construction T-Level had a good year and then the course leader and two teachers left, and the college is now struggling to recruit new staff.

Julia Bates informed governors that she is in discussions with the DfE and the National Centre Reference Group re the national recruitment problem.

It was noted that a previous shortage of specialist agriculture lecturers at Easton the gap had been addressed by bringing in external speakers who were supported by experienced teachers and this approach may help with the Construction T-Level but remains a challenge.

Recruitment this year was discussed and it was confirmed that recruitment to Child Care remains positive but the Digital Technician pathway and Nursing are noting low recruitment and it was agreed that this is because the content of the course is narrow and specific which reduces students' options. Julia Bates informed governors that she would like to understand this more and will reflect upon with other members of the sector.

It was agreed that the report for the first year is extremely positive with the only issue being staffing.

Julia Bates left the meeting at 5.40 pm.

6.6 IAG Update (Papers 09-10)

The IAG Update Report, previously distributed, was discussed at the meeting. The following key points for discussion and explanation were highlighted:

Helen Richardson-Hulme informed governors that she has uploaded the Careers Statutory Guidance from July 2021 for information and explained that the guidance sets out government expectations through 'must and should' statements and is a very useful and helpful document.

The full content of the IAG Update was noted.

6.7 Residential Report (Paper 11-13)

The Residential Report was previously distributed, along with the Residential Ofsted Report from 16 June 201 and the Post Ofsted Action Plan, for information and discussion and the following was highlighted:

It was noted that student induction went well with a positive start to the new term. Students have met all their residential team members throughout the first few weeks and letters have also been sent to parents outlining expectations and to reinforce the guidance provided originally. It was noted that the admissions panel process had also supported the clarity of expectations with students and parents.

It was agreed that the college will be looking to improve the physical environment of the residential accommodation in the coming two or three years.

The full content of the report was noted.

Helen Richardson-Hulme left the meeting at 5.55 pm.

6.8 Quality Report (Paper 14)

The Quality Report, previously distributed, was discussed at the meeting. The following key points were discussed and explained:

Summer A Level and GCSE results – please see confidential minutes.

Apprenticeships – the end of year position will be finalised shortly and will be reported upon at the next Curriculum and Standards Meeting.

Retention Analysis – it was noted that the retention analysis was informative, and a similar pattern are being seen across the country. Detailed retention analysis for the later part of the 2020/21 academic year does suggest that withdrawals continued in the later months at rates higher than was normal. The impact of the pandemic is key to understanding these different patterns. The college have noted and are reviewing further, an issue of lower number of returning students that were expected to enrol on their planned studies. Whilst this is still quite a low number, it is higher than in previous years and the main concern is that the “pull” of a very vibrant jobs market has drawn people away from education and into work.

The Principal informed governors that the very useful MiDES data graphs cannot be uploaded onto OnBoard but can be uploaded to SharePoint if governors use their CCN email addresses to be able to view.

Level 3 Qualification Reform - The Principal noted the potential challenge that Government reforms of L3 and L2 and below qualifications could bring to the College’s ability to provide a curriculum that responds to local and individual needs. Continued work through the 2022/23 planning cycle will fully consider the implications and possible solutions. Following discussion, it was agreed that the Committee would raise awareness of the challenges to the college to the Board at their next meeting. These being:

- Many qualifications that might be defunded provide alternative routes into work and higher study for students at level 3, where T Levels with their high level of examined academic content and work placement requirements may not be a suitable replacement qualification.
- A number of qualifications are being defunded due to small levels of enrolment nationally, but they may not have a natural T Level replacement and are strategically important for our region (such as our Aviation Engineering L3 qualification).

It was also agreed that discussions on these reforms would take place as part of the next Strategy Day.

Sub-Contracted Provision - The College has, for the first time in many years, needed to formally declare sub-contracted provision to the ESFSA in line with the revised ESFA guidelines. Following discussion, it was agreed that there is a need for greater governor oversight of this provision and that the Principal and Chair would consider how best to do this, perhaps as an annual review of the quality of sub-contracting.

The full content of the report was noted.

Action 4: All governors to be made aware of the government’s Level 3 Qualification Reform at their next meeting taking place on 19 October 2021 (CP / CJ).

Action 5: Level 3 Qualification reform to be discussed as part of the next Strategy Day (CP / CP).

Action 6: The Principal and Chair to discuss the reporting of the sub-contracted provision to governors (CP / JL).

The meeting notes from the FE Improvement Board Meeting, which took place on 14 September 2021, were previously circulated for information.

The committee noted that the positive progress that had been made in a number of areas and had expressed their concerns about the inadequate results for GCSE English and Maths when considering the Quality Report. It was noted that the need to strengthen course leadership remains a key issue across Easton but is being addressed through on-going CPD and TLA reviews.

6.10 Governor Curriculum Scrutiny (Paper 16)

The Chair informed governors that the schedule for 2022 will be carried forward, discussed, and confirmed at the next C&S Committee Meeting.

The Grid Areas for discussion and the meeting dates were previously distributed for information and it was agreed that the Chair would contact all governors to ask if they would like to attend any of the meetings on the dates proposed.

It was confirmed that Andrea Blanchflower would attend one of the Academic Progress meetings.

Action 7: The Governor Curriculum Scrutiny Schedule for 2022 to be confirmed at the next C&S Meeting taking place on 23 November 2021 (JL / CJ).

Action 8: The Chair to email governors to inform them of the dates of the grid meetings and to contact her if they would like to attend and inform the Principal so that attendees can be added to the Team Meetings invitations (JL / CP).

6.11 Curriculum Strategy – for approval (Paper 17)

The Principal informed governors that the paper, previously distributed, introduces the proposed review of the curriculum strategy and asked governors to review the paper and provide challenge or areas for improvement and the following was noted and highlighted:

Governors asked if any changes made to the document since the last discussion, could be highlighted to aid review and this was agreed.

The Chair noted that the C&S Committee will review the “how the curriculum is implemented” but the committee needs to consider how the ‘intent’, curriculum offer, and the impact, particularly progression, is reviewed..

It was agreed that the Curriculum Strategy would be taken to the full Board for sign off.

Action 9: Curriculum Strategy to be presented to the full Board for sign off at their next meeting taking place on 19 October 2021 (CJ).

6.12 Student Voice Report (Paper 18)

The Principal informed the Committee that today is Emily Staley’s last meeting as she is leaving to take up a Well-Being role at Lakenham Primary School. The Chair and governors sent their congratulations to Emily and thanked her for a job well done in difficult circumstances.

The Student Voice Report previously distributed to the committee was discussed and the full content of the Student Voice Report was noted, with thanks to Emily Staley. Emily Staley informed the committee that she will not be attending the Board Meeting, taking place on 19 October 2021, but will ensure that her report is updated with all the latest information and data.

It was agreed that it has been a good and positive start to the new term.

7. SECTION B – papers for discussion only if required by Governors

7.1 Annual Complaints Report for 2020/21 (Paper 19)

The annual summary for 2020/21 was previously circulated and provides governors with a summary on annual trends for the last academic year and the full content noted for information.

8. SECTION C – papers for information only

There were no papers tabled in this section of the meeting.

9. Other Urgent Business

The Chair informed the Committee that this is the last meeting Sue Millions will be attending as she is retiring at the end of October. The Chair thanked Sue for her ability to make sense of the committee's ramblings – often obscure, technical, and frequently wandering off the point!

10. Confidentiality

It was agreed at the meeting that part of agenda item 6.8 would remain confidential.

11. Date of Next Meeting

C&S Committee: 23 November 2021 at 4.30 pm, via Microsoft Teams.

All business having been concluded; the meeting closed at 7.05 pm.

Signed Date
(Chairman)