

## CURRICULUM & STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETING

### CONFIRMED MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 20 JUNE 2023 AT 4:30PM VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS

#### **Present:**

Jill Lanning (Chair), Jerry White (Principal), Andrew Barnes (Governor), Andrea Blanchflower, Nikki Gray, Lewis Pepperell (SU President), Evie Berg (Student Governor until 5:55pm)

#### **Attendees:**

Ed Rose (Assistant Principal HE and Adult until 5.28pm), Jo Kershaw (Vice Principal), Sebastian Gasse (Vice Principal), Helen Richardson-Hulme (Assistant Principal, Student Services), Lana Jackman (Interim Clerk for Governance and Legal), Barbara Ashby (Governance and Legal Administrator)

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#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Chris Snudden, and Laura Stewart for this meeting.

#### **2. Declarations of Interests**

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.

*No additional declarations were noted.*

#### **3. Unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2023**

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2023, were agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.

#### **4. Unconfirmed confidential minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2023**

The unconfirmed confidential minutes of the meeting held on 9 May 2023, were agreed as a true record of the meeting and will be signed by the Chair at the next available opportunity.

#### **5. Matters Arising**

C&S 3 Action 1: EB to discuss the food offer at Easton with HRH, the Residential Manager or Catering Manager at Easton. Still in progress. *It was also noted that LP receives regular feedback from students regarding food quality for non-residential students that will form part of the overall food offer.* **ACTION ON-GOING**

C&S 3 Action 5: SG and EB to speak with Alex Wallace regarding student mental health support and potential peer to peer programmes. *The College will trial a 'Youth Mental Health Champion' training programme that will be built in to our 'waiting well' program, a workshop style support group we are starting in October.* **ACTION COMPLETE**

C&S 3 Action 11: ABI to send JL an update on the A-Level Scrutiny meetings. ABI informed the Committee the information will be sent to CJ in due course. *Uploaded to OnBoard* **ACTION COMPLETE.**

#### **C&S 5 Action 1**

The discussion was confidential and is recorded within the confidential minutes

C&S 5 Action 2 LJ/CJ to add HE Review to the Strategy Day Agenda on 11 July 2023. *Added to draft agenda. ACTION COMPLETE*

C&S 5 Action 3 JW to provide an update of the Accountability Statement and bring back to Board on 23 May 2023 further discussion. *Item 16 on Board Agenda. ACTION COMPLETE*

C&S 5 Action 4 JW to provide an update of the Core Training report to Board on 23 May 2023. *Item 16 on Board Agenda. ACTION COMPLETE*

C&S 5 Action 5 JK and CJ to provide access of the 'Intent' presentations to Governors as requested. *Uploaded to OnBoard. ACTION COMPLETE*

C&S 5 Action 6 Governor Scrutiny areas for land based and animal care and sports and public services. *To be added to the agenda for 20 June 2023. ACTION COMPLETE*

C&S 5 Action 7 Option to have a Link Governor for Careers Guidance to be added to the agenda of the C&S meeting in November 2023. *To be considered further during the summer. ACTION ON-GOING*

C&S 5 Action 8 JW / JL to consider what type of Link Governors the College may require and bring an update to the next C&S meeting on 20 June 2023. *To be considered during the Summer. ACTION ON-GOING*

*A Query was raised regarding C&S 5 Action 1*  
The discussion was confidential and is recorded within the confidential minutes

## 6. Strategic Priorities

JW provided a verbal update on Strategic Priority 13 which focuses on green travel and sustainability stating that:

- there is a link with the College curriculum and making some good progress so far.
- the SDF which CCN were part of with other colleges had a green skills' focus and this has been used to obtain staff feedback on what sustainability means.
- new equipment has been purchased such as a heat pump.

At the January Strategic Development Day staff took time to work through some ideas for sustainability which resulted in pledges being made, which will be presented at the July Development Day with a view to sharing with other staff.

It was noted that Steve Frampton, a former Principal at Portsmouth Sixth Form College, and former President of the AoC will provide a report with links regarding good practice around sustainability. It was requested that the report be circulated to the governors when received.

Sustainability has become a focal point due to the increase in energy prices. It was recognised that the priority must be to reduce the use of energy with a plan underway to replace the College lighting with LED bulbs and demonstrate CCN's commitment to the green agenda.

**ACTION 1: JW to provide a copy of the report by Steve Frampton once received and share with Governors.**

## 7. **Accountability Statement**

The Principal provided a verbal update stating that:

The draft was submitted at the end of May 2023 deadline. It was noted that the final Accountability Statement will be submitted to the DfE by the end of July.

## 8. **Quality and Curriculum Report**

The report was circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read. The following key points were highlighted:

The committee discussed in detail the reasons for the decline in student attendance and asked how this compared with national figures and whether the low attendance affected funding provision. It was explained that the benchmark data related to the MiDES report where the College was ranked against national data in reports which were updated 3 to 4 times per year. There had been no updates since the one shared at the last meeting. The committee were informed that the MiDES report provided the only available data with a benchmark for FE attendance but as there was no agreed process for recording the numbers it was difficult to provide a comparison. It was further reported that the reduction in attendance has impacted both schools and colleges across the sector. The DfE was aware. The committee was assured that attendance would be continually monitored. It was confirmed that attendance did not impact funding.

It was mentioned that the student retention data results were positive.

The Committee **noted** the update.

The committee questioned the decline in numbers for exam attendance. It was explained that the approach to deliver English and Maths was under review with a view to raising the profile of this part of the Programme of Study. It was further explained some students did not take their second and third papers if the first papers that they sat did not go well. It is still possible to achieve a Grade 4 across all three papers.

It was reported that there is a higher level of student anxiety in relation to taking GCSEs this year, including in vocational qualifications. It was acknowledged that students had had little or no experience of sitting exams and that this had added to the general anxiety levels of students.

The Committee **noted** the position.

## 9. **Student Survey 2023**

The report had been circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read.

The key points were highlighted as follows:

- This was the first student survey since 2018.
- The survey was one used nationally by over 7 colleges, allowing for benchmarking.
- 16-19 age group were targeted.
- It was acknowledged that the response rates needed to increase as the outcome shown was derived from a small cohort in some cases. Additional work will be undertaken to improve the response rates next year.
- It was confirmed that the HE and Apprenticeship surveys were in process.
- It was mentioned that the format and circulation of surveys needed to be adapted, especially for inclusive learners and for students with other languages.

- An overview of the PDF tables with comparisons with other colleges to provide a benchmark to gauge student outcome, satisfaction and quartiles, in the report was presented.

The committee discussed the data that the report contained and thought that the results of the survey were disappointing, with many results being below the national benchmark. SG confirmed that the results were being interrogated in depth and being addressed as a priority. He also confirmed that the data will be included in the Self-Assessment Report process for each area, in order to identify the actions needed for an improved outcome next year.

Governors discussed some of the possible reasons for the results including the accessibility of the language for some groups and the clarity of the questions e.g. what did students understand by the term 'enrichment'.

## 10. TLA Report

The report was previously circulated and taken as read. The following were noted:

- Staff Development Day which is a mandatory session for all staff to attend and will be centred around sustainability pledges made earlier in the year
- Teaching and Learning Strategy sessions being devised with one from a teacher perspective and one from business support staff perspective
- New 1 hour CPD slots are being reinstated next year with the focus on planning and course delivery initially then fortnightly sessions from different areas
- Changes in line management responsibilities with a new Head of Engineering in post
- new methodologies are being worked on in relation to the Grid such as new learning walk themes incorporating attendance and focused reviews through 'deep dives'

A query was raised around A Level staff taking up CPD opportunities as the staff had expressed a view that the CPD programme was not always appropriate. JK acknowledged the differences, such as the course leader role, and believed that these are accommodated. It was noted that there are fifty different workshops available on Staff Development Day so there will be something suitable for all colleagues.

*ER re-joined meeting at 5:52pm*

*EB left meeting at 5:55pm*

## 11. Governor Curriculum Scrutiny

### 11.1. Adults

The report was circulated prior to the meeting and the following were noted: JL met with the team last week and stated that there were positive discussions around this provision although there were some issues about access to resources. Furthermore, a draft strategy for the provision is being developed and JL noted that this would link back to the HE strategy. Governors welcomed this development.

### 11.2. Aspire

A verbal update was provided as follows:

It was reported that this was a wide ranging area that included ESOL provision which has increased significantly. However, it was a challenging area to deliver provision to because the students have many barriers to learning that need to be overcome in order for them to progress. It was noted that the Director of Performance will be working with the Head of Area to develop and improve this area.

### **11.3. Land based and Animal Care**

JK agreed for ABI to meet with the Land based and Animal Care team to have insight into the programme delivery. This will be arranged in due course.

**ACTION 2: JK to arrange for Governor ABI to meet with the land based team at Easton.**

### **11.4. Sports and Public Services**

No date has been planned yet and it was noted that if a different approach for link governors going forward is adopted then this may not be appropriate.

## **12. HE Report**

The Chair noted that this paper had only been uploaded earlier that day so governors had not been able to read it in advance of the meeting. She further noted that a number of papers had been late and commented that this did not give members time to give the consideration to the reports that they deserved given the hard work put into them. All agreed that this needs to improve in the next year.

ER highlighted the key points of the report:

- Numbers are still low but no courses have been withdrawn for September
- Animal and zoology have shared modules so provide larger numbers
- Early years and childhood is similar with students moving from one programme to another
- Compliance with CMA regulation is an issue when changing or withdrawing courses, particularly if CCN is the only provider for any course. A small cohort may be seen as a positive for students who want to come to CCN rather than a large university

ABI commented that having a small cohort is not always a good experience for students and raised the issue around viability of running courses with low numbers which ER confirmed he is aware of. However, it was noted that this depends on the size of the small cohort and ER said that there has been positive feedback from students studying in smaller numbers. Some students specifically chose to come to CCN because they feel more comfortable.

A summary of the OfS Conditions and how CCN meets these was included in the report indicating that:

- The College continues to update all processes and procedures to meet OfS requirements
- College is compliant with the Conditions of registration and will keep governors informed of changes
- Good practice in developing approaches is still emerging in some areas such as 'value for money'

It was recognised that governors need further clarity around requirements of OfS compliance matters and ER suggested a separate meeting could be arranged to go through the OfS Conditions and CCN compliance in more detail. Governors agreed this was a good idea but added this should also include the new governors on the C&S Committee so should be deferred until they had started.

NG queried whether there was a need to see papers at every C&S Committee and suggested having a separate C&S Committee around scrutiny of the OfS conditions. JL stated that it would be difficult to set aside a C&S meeting for this item due to the volume of matters that require discussion throughout the year. ABI suggested that the cover sheets could be used more effectively to present any OFS conditions that needed highlighting or signpost issues that relate to any OfS conditions.

JL suggested that once new governors are in their respective committees, a meeting could then be arranged with ER, Simon and Sam to provide the scrutiny and transparency in respect of the OfS conditions which would also offer an insight in to the HE tracking process.

**ACTION 3: ER to arrange a meeting with all C&S committee governors including new ones in post to provide clarity and insight into the OfS conditions.**

NG suggested whether compliance could be considered as a good topic for a link governor which it was noted could be possible to include with a larger Board. JL said that this will be borne in mind in the review of the link governor role over the Summer.

It was agreed that if NG and ABI had any additional questions regarding the report they would email them to the Chair by Monday 25 June 2023.

*ABn joined meeting 5:40pm  
ER left meeting at 5:42pm*

### 13. IAG Update

The report had previously been circulated and taken as read. The following were noted:

At this point in the academic year the main activity was around internal progression routes and providing support for those students, particularly those with complex enquires and considering the next steps. The team will then provide support with the enrolment process during the Summer. In the interim the main task was in supporting curriculum colleagues dealing with the transition process.

Significant work has been carried out to improve the application process from international students around fee assessment status. It was noted that these are students with settled status in the UK, mainly from European countries. This was separate from students coming to the College through the student visa route.

JW shared with governors that the extra work around the international students with settled status that had been created post Brexit and emphasised that no extra funding was provided to assist with the number of applications received by the College. This had a big impact on staff with the extra volume of work required and affected both the Advice and Guidance team and the Registry team. In addition, ESOL students were being supported with payments, which impacted staff in the finance teams.

Chair congratulated HRH and team on their hard work.

HRH informed the committee that the hardship fund had been used in full for this academic year. However, bursary fund applications were still open, although not many were usually received at this time. Preparations were working well in readiness for the new Autumn term.

JL asked whether the changes to the UCAS application process are significant as mentioned in relation to the NEACO work. HRH was not sure but will check and provide governors with an update if the changes are having an impact.

**ACTION 4: HRH to update if the changes to 2024 UCAS application cycle are significant.**

### 14. Residential Report

The report had previously been circulated and taken as read. The following were noted that:



- a variety of different events had been provided for students such as a Coronation meal and a water fight.
- 4 Czech students have arrived and staying in Bradley residence over the Summer.
- Student Voice feedback had suggested for evening enrichment:
  - Go carting
  - Paintballing
  - Bowling
  - Different food options

Following a query raised by a governor regarding the improvements to the residences as this had been raised in the Audit report, it was confirmed that forty rooms had been refurbished for 16-18 age group and the Common Room had been refreshed.

With a potential Ofsted inspection next year, HRH confirmed that there will be a focus on the minimum standards in relation to the RAG rating overview provided previously in preparation.

## 15. Student Union Update

The report had previously been circulated and taken as read. The following were noted:

- Plans are underway for the Welcome Week for next year and utilizing the funds to produce a cross college event.
- Exploring options to include more local businesses with a view to receive free samples and offers of discounts, particularly around food at the event.

### Student Parliament

The Committee noted the following key points:

- The position of Student Representative is being removed and instead using the approach that every student is a student representative.
- Having a Parliament Representative position which would be two representatives per curriculum area and who would attend Parliament and act as a senior student representative.
- Holding a mini election within the curriculum area is being explored to prepare students for when they leave college.
- Open forums will be held for students to feedback any issues they have.
- The Student Union will be present at enrolment to raise awareness of the SU role, advertising upcoming activities and promoting the Executive Officer role.

## 16. Draft Audit Plan for 2023/24

The report had previously been circulated and taken as read. The committee had a brief discussion regarding the chosen areas for the plan and noted that some changes had been made at the Audit and Risk Committee meeting which would be included when this went to the Board meeting.

## 17. Governance Matters

### 17.1 Annual Review of Committee Terms of Reference

The report had been circulated prior to the meeting and taken as read. The following were highlighted:

- It was noted that the A&R meeting had agreed to the development of a framework for the review of risks to enable clearer presentation at each committee.
- This will align risks with the relevant committee and be added to their Terms of Reference so that risks are formally monitored by each committee.

- It was recognised that the changes to the Terms of Reference to reflect the detailed discussion at A&R will need to happen after this project has concluded.
- Consideration will also need to be given to how each committee assesses how well it performs its role more effectively against the Terms of Reference.

**18. Other Urgent Business**

It was reported that the recent Student Governor campaign was unsuccessful. It was explained that the committee had two options. These were as follows:

- An extension to the campaign to run again in September.
- Appointment to follow a due process similar to appointment of a full Governor, with the support of the Student Union.
- It was agreed to support the Student Union President to re-run the campaign during enrolment and induction in September.

**19. Date of Next Meeting**

The next Curriculum and Standards Committee meeting will take place on Tuesday 26 September 2023.

All formal business having been concluded; the meeting closed at 7:00pm

Signed ..... Date .....  
(Chair of Meeting)