

WALSALL COLLEGE
MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LEARNING & QUALITY COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 15 JUNE 2020 AT 0930 HRS
VENUE: VIA ZOOM

PRESENT:	Carol Flood Jo Hughes Jaswinder Dhillon	Chair
TOGETHER WITH:	David Turner Richard Brennan James Norris (Item 39.20) Jayne Holt (Item 42.20) Alan Woods Allan Pinnegar Fiona Macmillan Alison Buick	Assistant Principal Quality and HE Assistant Principal Curriculum Assistant Principal Commercial Development Assistant Principal Workforce Development and Learning Services Chair Designate - observer Chair of Corporation - observer Governor - observer Clerk to the Corporation
APOLOGIES:	Paul Averis.	

32.20 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. It was noted that this meeting was being held on Zoom due to the college buildings being open only for essential users in line with current Government guidance on social distancing, working from home and only meeting in small groups. Three Governors were also attending the meeting in the capacity of observer.

33.20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Paul Averis.

34.20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Jaswinder Dhillon noted her usual declaration as a governor of a local educational establishment. Alan Woods declared his employment as Chief Executive of an awarding body. There was, however, no contract between his organisation and the college.

35.20 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2020, having been circulated, were taken as read and approved.

36.20 MATTERS ARISING

Governors reviewed the Action Points Record for Learning and Quality Committee and noted the following:

Item 31.18

Contact had been made with the University of Worcester STEM Hub by the Head of English and Maths.

Item 12.20

LCCA would be covered later in the agenda.

Item 22.20

The list of Link Governors had been provided to the Assistant Principal Curriculum as requested.

Item 23.20

Ofsted feedback had been provided to Governors as requested.

Item 27.20

Jaswinder Dhillon was happy to comment on the Freedom of Speech policy when contacted.

Item 28.20

The college post Ofsted QIP was discussed. Further work on this was required in light of Covid-19.

37.20 DATA REPORT

The Assistant Principal Quality and HE noted that key aspects of data had been reported at Corporation in May 2020 and that this report gave an update from that time. The written report focused particularly on retention and levels of engagement of students with online learning.

There had been little impact on retention, which remained high. Students were being kept on the system currently even if their engagement level was low.

All students and apprentices were being offered remote learning opportunities. Engagement was relatively high, with 20-25% of students not actively participating. 30 laptops had been made available, as well as other devices such as dongles. Reasons for non-engagement were discussed. There appeared to be a range of reasons due to technological challenges and personal circumstances.

Governors asked about the availability of devices for those students that needed them. The Assistant Principals explained the ways in which they had been prioritised for distribution. The views of the Safeguarding team had been taken into account when making these decisions.

The phased return of students to college had started today and this was explained. Around 150 students had been invited in, with curriculum teams deciding who to invite based on their own criteria.

Governors noted engagement but felt that in the autumn term this would need to be analysed in some detail. Engagement was not an outcome, and the quality of engagement with teaching and learning could vary considerably. The Assistant Principal Quality and HE confirmed that the college's expectations for engagement now and in September were clear and being monitored.

Student interviews were continuing remotely. Questions were being asked about access to technology to enable online learning, as it was expected that there would be a mix of online and face to face learning into the autumn term and possibly beyond.

Governors **resolved** to **receive** the Data Report.

38.20 LEARNER RESPONSIVE REPORT

The Assistant Principal Curriculum commented on his written report, which covered the following:

- The shape of delivery for Young People from September 2020;
- Face-to-Face, Synchronous online and Asynchronous (flipped) delivery;
- Closedown of assessments for vocational qualifications and the challenge for the College to complete these;
- The College's offer to support the WMCA re-training programme for adults (post Covid-19);
- Possible impact of the social distancing restrictions on the delivery T Levels.

Social distancing and other restrictions needed for September would drive how learning was organised, and this was a huge challenge for the college and curriculum staff. Government guidance would be followed. It was noted that it was possible that this would change.

All Curriculum Managers were working with the Assistant Principal to determine which courses to offer and how. Examples were given. Face to face teaching and learning would be minimised, but some aspects would require students to be in college, for example in workshop activities. Smaller group sizes would be needed for this.

Larger group sizes would be possible for synchronous online delivery such as via Zoom. Staff would need to have and manage clear behaviour expectations to maximise engagement and learning. Expectations for asynchronous learning would also be made very clear, and failure to comply would result in students being disciplined in the same way as if they failed to attend a face to face session in college. Evidence of learning would also be needed, so staff were working on the types of assessment that would be appropriate to provide this.

Students without access to IT devices would be identified. If necessary, access to Learning Decks would be timetabled for these students.

A Governor asked about the planned use of formative assessment. It was confirmed that this was planned to increase. Staff were having various training sessions with the Assistant Principal, and this was explained.

A Governor noted the need to be very clear about future delivery models and how this would work in practice. Liaison with awarding bodies would be important as there were a number of options available and that needed to be explored.

A priority focus at present was securing business for 2020/21. Interviews with prospective students were continuing by phone. 440 had been completed in the previous week. Re-enrolment of year 2 students had started. Some additional courses funded by WMCA were being developed in areas such as Electrical and Care.

Preparations for T Levels in September 2020 were continuing. Applications were high. An online event held last week had been attended by the Minister for Skills, Gillian Keegan MP.

Questions and comments were invited.

The Chair asked whether staff were expected to be in college more than usual over the summer period this year. The Assistant Principal Curriculum responded that flexible approaches to this were being taken, as staff had varied circumstances to manage.

Governors asked about planned work placements for T Levels. The college was continuing to work with employers to plan these. However it was thought that it may be necessary to push some to later in the academic year. Social distancing requirements would affect this.

Governors **resolved** to **receive** the Learner Responsive Report.

39.20 EMPLOYER RESPONSIVE REPORT.

The Assistant Principal Commercial commented on his report, which covered:

- (a) Current retention update and target for Apprenticeships for academic year 2019/20;
- (b) Update on College Sub-contractor activity;
- (c) Provide an update on the impact of COVID-19 on Apprenticeship provision and actions taken to deliver provision into 2020/21;
- (d) An overview to the 2019 final Employer Satisfaction Survey;
- (e) An update on Health and Safety actions during the pandemic;
- (f) An update on Employment Gateway activity in light of COVID-19.

The expected outturn position for apprenticeships was 82.3% against a target of 74%. Staff were confident of meeting this. There were 510 apprentices still to complete in the year, which was a similar number to previous years. Some apprentices had agreed breaks in learning, but some of these, particularly with NHS employers, were starting to be re-instated.

The shift of activity to online learning was working well for staff and apprentices. Some of this could continue post Covid-19 if it was a preferred way of working. This could increase the geographical reach of the college. Staff training had been extensive and well received. Assessors had adapted well to new ways of working.

The results of the employer satisfaction survey had been very pleasing. 90% of employers would recommend Walsall College, an increase on the previous year.

It was noted that health and safety risk assessments were not currently up to date, due to inability to access some work places at present due to Covid-19. This was not a significant concern. Employers would complete their own Covid-19 risk assessments and inductions. College staff were not required to visit employer premises if they did not feel comfortable to do so.

Subcontracted provision continued to reduce. Remaining activity was in line with WMCA priorities. Approval for this continued to be via Finance and Resources Committee. Governors were reminded of the inherent risks in this type of provision, as well as the due diligence and quality checks regularly carried out by the college on the provision.

Governors asked about the impact of the move from frameworks to standards after July 2020. The Assistant Principal confirmed that the college had all arrangements for the switch in hand. There were a couple of curriculum areas where standards may not be available straight away, but alternatives could be offered.

All Employment Gateway activity had moved to online learning. Delivery on the Connecting Communities projects in Cannock and Walsall was continuing.

Governors **resolved** to **receive** the Employer Responsive Report.

40.20 **QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT**

The Assistant Principal Quality and HE commented on his report. Particular attention was drawn to the following:

- The student survey had been launched on 8 June 2020. This would gather feedback on online learning and would be used to shape the strategy going forwards. Teaching and learning in September would certainly continue with some elements online so it was important to plan this from now;
- A staff conference had been held by the Principal in the previous week and this had been well received;
- A meeting with Unions had been held in the previous week. This had discussed learning walks, which had been paused in April but which had re-started virtually before May half term. Feedback on this revised process had been very positive.

The Chair commented on a recent AOC webinar at which Governor participation in virtual learning walks at other colleges had been discussed. Other Governors had found this very beneficial. The Assistant Principal would look at this for Walsall Governors. A briefing would be needed for those taking part.

Assistant
Principal
Quality and HE

The Assistant Principal Quality and HE resumed his presentation, noting the following:

- The volume of guidance issued by Ofqual and awarding bodies. It had been very challenging for staff to keep up with this;
- That the exercise to grade and rank GCSE students had been completed;
- The Ofsted review of student experiences in lockdown that had taken place in the previous week. Walsall had accepted an invitation to participate in this. It had been a useful experience with positive feedback.

Questions and comments were invited.

Governors asked whether there would be detailed feedback from the Ofsted visit. The Assistant Principal responded that feedback was verbal only. There would be no specific Walsall report, as there were many colleges contributing to the review. The overall results would be published by the end of June but there would be no elements specifically attributed to Walsall or any other college.

The Chair asked if the report could be circulated to Governors on receipt. This was agreed.

Assistant
Principal
Quality and HE

Governors **resolved** to **receive** the Quality Assurance Report.

41.20 HE REPORT

The Assistant Principal Quality and HE gave a brief presentation of his report. Staff were working through end of year assessments.

OFS had confirmed the capped student number for Walsall, which had implications in reducing the number of students that could be supported at LCCA in future. There had been further work to review the provision at LCCA, with October's enrolment for HNCs having being confirmed as the final intake supported by Walsall.

There was a lengthy discussion about LCCA and the future plans. Governors expressed concern about the complexity of the situation and the risks attached to it. It was confirmed that Exec staff were monitoring the position very carefully and that legal advice had been taken on wording of the termination letter to be issued.

Governors had expected a report back to Corporation on the HE strategy. The Assistant Principal Curriculum confirmed that this was under review but needed more work, to take into account the post Covid-19 impact on HE provision as well as the LCCA developments and OFS requirements. It was noted that a recent draft internal audit report on HE Provision had been circulated to the committee members. Governors felt that this included some useful recommendations. The Chair of Corporation suggested an HE position statement for July Corporation, and this was agreed.

Governors **resolved** to **receive** the HE Report.

42.20 WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION REPORT

The Assistant Principal Workforce Development and Learning Services presented her report.

There was much work ongoing to upskill the workforce in digital skills and remote working. The Digital Educator programme was being rolled out for teachers through webinars and tech talks. Staff had very mixed experience and skills in this area, but moving most provision online had needed staff to be able to embrace this. It was expected that all staff would achieve the Bronze educator level, with most being able to access the Silver level by the end of July 2020. Digital champions had been appointed to support this.

Staff were also being required to complete trauma informed training and ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences) training.

Questions and comments were invited.

Governors expressed appreciation of how hard staff were working at present, and asked whether they would be adequately prepared for September. The Assistant Principal was confident in the tools and training being rolled out. Technology was as important as the teaching and learning pedagogy.

**Assistant
Principal
Quality and HE**

The Digital Educator programme was discussed. It was not externally accredited but the Silver level was mapped to Microsoft innovator and the Gold level was Microsoft certified. The college had reviewed the ETF offer but decided Microsoft Educator was a better fit for the needs. Staff needed tools that were creative and collaborative.

The Chair asked about support being provided to classroom support staff and staff in service areas. The Assistant Principal explained classroom support staff development that had taken place, eg on SEND training. Several support areas had requested CPD and this was being encouraged where possible. The college focus at present was on preparation for teaching and learning in September.

The Staff Governor commented further on staff training. There had been a lot of requests for personal development training, so in her Tutorial Coordinator role she was working closely with the Workforce Development Manager on this. Staff had engaged well with training and feedback was positive to date. The college had continued with development days, having moved all to online platforms. Over 200 staff had attended a digital day. A Maths and English day was planned in July.

Governors **resolved** to **receive** the Workforce Development and Innovation Report.

43.20 SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE LEARNING AND QUALITY COMMITTEE

The paper was introduced by the Clerk and comments were invited. It was noted that the report format this year was unchanged and included specific comments on the ways in which the Committee had fulfilled each of its terms of reference in the year to date. An addition was the RAG rating of each element, in line with Governors request for this last year.

There was a discussion about Equality and Diversity, and the extent to which this sat within the committee remit. This was part of a wider review of Equality and Diversity that the Principal was considering.

The Chair Designate commented on his planned meeting with senior staff to discuss the future of the committee. He had several areas that he wished to cover, including the name of the committee, terms of reference, meeting frequency, assessment methods, blended and flipped learning, the expected FE White Paper and apprenticeships. It was suggested and agreed that the views of other committee members be sought after the meeting with management and before the next scheduled committee meeting in September.

Governors **resolved** to **receive** the Self-Assessment Report.

44.20 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 30 September 2020 at 1630 hrs.

The Chair commented that this was her last meeting of the committee and thanked all for their support. It had been a pleasure to lead this committee over several years. The Assistant Principal Quality and HE responded to thank the Chair on behalf of the management team. She had ensured that the committee provided the right level of challenge and support.

The meeting ended at 1205 hrs.

How Governors challenged management		Impact of meeting on College	
37.20	That the level of student engagement during Covid-19 and its impact needed to be analysed in the autumn term.	41.20	That an HE position statement would be provided to Corporation in July 2020.
41.20	That a paper on HE Strategy to Corporation had been expected.		