

CORPORATION/COMMITTEE PAPER

Curriculum Strategy and Quality Improvement Committee

16 June 2021

<i>TITLE</i>	Minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 April 2021
---------------------	---

<i>PURPOSE</i>	To receive, agree and approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 April 2021
-----------------------	---

<i>RECOMMENDATION</i>	Governors are recommended to note the minutes and agree their accuracy
------------------------------	--

<i>No. of pages in main paper</i>	9
<i>Appendices/Annexes</i>	None
<i>Financial Implications</i>	None
<i>Risk Implications</i>	Failure to follow agreed and proper practices
<i>Author</i>	Louise Hazel

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF LEICESTER COLLEGE CORPORATION:

MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM STRATEGY AND QUALITY IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 21 APRIL 2021



Present:	John Allen (Chair) Zoe Allman Lisa Armitage Shaun Curtis	Verity Hancock Abigail Proctor Jai Sharda
In Attendance:	Louise Hazel Kully Sandhu Claire Willis Tina Thorpe Debi Donnarumma Rominder Sandhu Karen Walker Jody Kerrod	Director of Governance and Policy Vice Principal Adult and HE Director of Quality Improvement (items 5-12) Vice Principal Study Programmes and Apprenticeships Vice Principal Study Programmes and Apprenticeships Director of ESOL (item 4) Director of Re-Engagement (item 4) Quality Development Manager (item 6)

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 1.1 Zoe Allman declared an interest in item 6 as an employee of De Montfort University (DMU).

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 2.1 New governors were welcomed to the meeting.
- 2.2 Apologies for absence were received from Danielle Gillett and Louisa Poole. Kathy Foster was absent.

3 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

- 3.1 The minutes of the meeting on 27 January 2021 were **agreed** as an **accurate record and approved**.
- 3.2 As a matter arising, it was **asked** whether there was an update on Sport and when improvements in achievement might be expected. The recent set of progress points had just been completed. Sport and UPS was currently at 85.5% with 213 starts; 15 had withdrawn and 18 were at high risk. The new course in sport fitness had 25 starts; all were retained and the predicted achievement was 92%.

- 3.3 Governors **asked** for an update on the return to on-site delivery. The Principal reported that attendance was just below 90%; there was a spiky profile and there had been some withdrawals. Management teams were currently working out who was unlikely to re-engage and whether further withdrawals were needed. They were making supreme efforts to get as many students back as possible; an example was given of work with a student's employer to enable them to continue to study. Students were leaving to get jobs; it might be that Leicester was more affected because of the prolonged lockdowns. There was an increase in mental health referrals.

4 CURRICULUM AREA FOCUS

- 4.1 The Director of Re-Engagement gave a presentation on the work of the Curriculum Area. The following points were highlighted.
- 4.1.1 The role of the Area was to re-engage people in learning. The composition of the area and the main location sites were described.
 - 4.1.2 The bulk of provision was AEB adult delivery with 9,928 students in 2018/19. A third was delivered through distance learning and a third through the City Skills Centre. Launch Pad provided programmes to 16-18 year olds.
 - 4.1.3 Achievement rates were usually high overall at 96.9%, particularly at the City Skills Centre (99.3%) and for community provision (98.2%). However, the area had been affected by the pandemic in 2019/20 with community and distance learning achievement worst affected.
 - 4.1.4 Curriculum innovation included work with NSS over a new rail track maintenance engineering offer and potential projects with EON and Caterpillar. The area was also supporting the construction project for the Glen Parva prison with a sector-based work programme.
 - 4.1.5 Examples of a community newsletter introduced during lockdown and videos were shared.
 - 4.1.6 Priorities for 2020/21 were to: rebuild delivery at City Skills Centre and Distance Learning; broaden the offer and increase achievement rates in community learning; provide extra tuition for Launch Pad learners as part of the Government's catch-up programme; and improve progression and destinations including by working with employers.
- 4.2 **Governors asked a number of questions including:**
- 4.2.1 **What the hardest aspect of the past few months had been.** Some students had been reluctant to come back on site. The online process worked well with 16-18 year olds coping well but adults had found it harder. It had also been difficult to work with JCP in the early months of the pandemic; the College was not a priority and there had been no referrals during the first lockdown. This had now improved.
 - 4.2.2 **Of those not engaging, was it possible to know if there was a disproportionate number of BAME students?** A high proportion of the community learning cohort (80%) was BAME so it was likely that these groups had been adversely affected.
 - 4.2.3 **Given the diverse nature of the Curriculum Area and such a variety of delivery models, how did the Director bring the team together?** One of the benefits of lockdowns was the move to online and the ability

to meet virtually; this had included online training. The aim was to get everyone together on at least a termly basis.

4.3 The Director of ESOL gave a presentation on the work of the Curriculum Area. The following points were highlighted.

- 4.3.1 The area's offer across different sites was explained. It included four programme areas and covered five strands: 19+ with 5,000 enrolments; 16-18, 300 full-time students; 14-16; full-cost; and support.
- 4.3.2 There were over 300 courses covering accredited and non-accredited courses. Courses could be designed and delivered at short notice in response to demand. A new suite of COVID-19 based courses including infection control, volunteering had recently been introduced.
- 4.3.3 Work with employers to provide full-cost programmes funded through the Midlands Engine Innovative English Language Pilots was described; this had been well received. IELTS provision offered at weekends was the largest component of the full cost offer.
- 4.3.4 The area had a large number of part-time staff, many of whom had been with the College for several years and valued the terms and conditions.
- 4.3.5 Achievement was at 89% for all qualifications. 16-18 was 4% lower than the previous year; this was included as an action in the QIP. For adults there was an upward trajectory and slight gap from national rates.
- 4.3.6 Priorities for the year included: helping students deal with the effects of the pandemic; increasing achievement rates for 16-18 by 4% to 90%; offering Essential Digital Skills Qualifications to all Entry 3 and Level 1 adults; and remaining prepared to implement the National ESOL Strategy, when introduced.

4.4 **Governors asked a number of questions including:**

- 4.4.1 **What the impact of the pandemic had been on the area.** There had been a high impact, evidenced by student enrolment which was half what it should be. Not all students were IT literate or had access to devices during the first lockdown. Because of the modular enrolment, there was no possibility of face to face contact during term 2 to prepare them to then engage digitally; this had affected enrolment.
- 4.4.2 **Given that the number of 16-18s was small, an increase of 4% might be challenging; how long would this increase take?** Normally, students would have had access to exam workshops; the new functional skills specifications had also been a factor last year. Given that these were exceptional issues, the Director was confident that the improvement could be achieved in the next two years.
- 4.4.3 **Whether the City Council offered any ESOL provision.** It did but the College was the largest provider locally. Smaller organisations had tried to offer provision but these had not lasted long.
- 4.4.4 **What was the likely impact on achievement rates for this year?** The area was working hard to preserve achievement rates; approval from C&G to use TAGs had been requested and this would make a big difference. There was some concern that Functional Skills would be assessed through exams not TAGs. This might be the first exam many students would have sat which could adversely affect achievement.
- 4.4.5 **Where students progressed to.** For 16-18 year olds, over 60% at

Entry 3 progressed to courses in vocational areas. For adults there was less progression to vocational areas but there was progression laterally and within the ESOL area.

- 4.5 **Governors thanked the Directors of Re-Engagement and ESOL for their helpful presentations.**

5 COMPARATIVE DATA: MIDES DATA

- 5.1 The Director of Quality Improvement presented a paper showing comparison of the College's pass rates 2019/20 against RCU MiDES data. The following points were highlighted.

- 5.1.1 The paper looked at pass rates rather than achievement which would always be higher than achievement.
- 5.1.2 Attention was drawn to the appendix which showed the complexity of the College with curriculum areas having provision across several sector subject areas. Other colleges might be structured very differently.
- 5.1.3 Based on the data, the College's 16-18 year-old students achieved less well than other GFEs particularly at levels 1 and 2. This was currently being picked up in QA meetings. During the previous year, because of the pandemic, the College would have retained a lot of students after Easter to give them the best chance of achieving but many might not have gone on to achieve.
- 5.1.4 Adult pass rates were higher than other GFE Colleges.
- 5.1.5 16-19 students achieved less well in level 1 English and level 2 maths Functional Skills compared to other GFE Colleges. They achieved better than other GFEs in level 2 English and level 1 maths Functional Skills.
- 5.1.6 The types of qualifications offered by the College in each SSA tier might vary significantly compared to other colleges. For example, in SSA 14: Preparation for Life and Work, of the students who completed, 75.9% studied on a Functional Skills qualification whereas other colleges might have offered short life skills qualifications.
- 5.1.7 All of the issues highlighted by the data were included in the QIP and Curriculum Area QIPs; progress was being reviewed in QA meetings.

- 5.2 **Governors asked a number of questions including:**

- 5.2.1 **Adults were less of a concern but 16-18 was still an issue, particularly for Preparation for Life and Work and Leisure, Travel and Tourism.** Agreed, although there was one anomaly in the data. The main factor for leisure was the fitness qualifications which had previously been discussed and which had been badly affected by the lockdown.
- 5.2.2 **Functional skills were a concern at 37% compared to 52%.** Agreed but this was in the QIP and it was known where the issues were. It was also noted that some colleges were still offering legacy functional skills qualifications so it was not a like for like comparison. Where colleges were offering the new specifications, they were also seeing a lower achievement rates.

- 5.2.3 **It was reassuring that some areas were above benchmarks; this suggested that the College knew what it was doing. It might also be that other colleges which had also not withdrawn students after Easter last year would also have seen an impact on achievement.**

5.3 **Governors noted the report.**

6 DESTINATIONS AND PROGRESSION

6.1 The Quality Development Manager presented a report on HE destinations. The following points were highlighted.

6.1.1 499 students had accepted a place at an HEI; this compared to 495 the previous year. The largest proportion, 48% (257 students), had accepted place at DMU.

6.1.2 The majority, 493 students (99%), accepted an offer in England, five students (1%) accepted an offer in Wales and one student accepted an offer in Scotland.

6.1.3 The largest proportion, 374 students (75%), accepted an offer within the East Midlands, followed by 41 students (8%) within the West Midlands. 387 (78%) of Leicester College students progressed to universities within the Midlands region.

6.2 **Governors asked a number of questions including:**

6.2.1 **Whether the number of students progressing internally (13) was disappointing.** The data would be checked as there might be non-prescribed HE which was not included in the UCAS data. The College's offer was niche and while it would want more students to progress internally, some might have been with the College for several years and be ready for a change. The partnership with DMU also meant that the College encouraged that as a progression route.

6.2.2 **Whether graduates were kept in the region.** A good number stayed locally but there was always the pull of larger cities and it remained a challenge.

6.3 **Governors noted the report.**

6.4 The Quality Development Manager presented a report on internal progression. The following points were highlighted.

6.4.1 Overall, 53% of students returned in 2020/21 compared to 54% in 2019/20. 55% of 16-18 students returned in 2020/21, compared to 57% in 2019/20. 40% of adults returned in 2020/21, the same as in 2019/20.

6.4.2 BECT, CHHS, and CAPA had the highest levels of internal progression; REEN, ENGI and ESOL had the lowest levels of internal progression.

6.4.3 Students on level 1 courses had the highest levels of internal progression to higher level courses; those on level 3 courses had the lowest levels of internal progression to higher level courses.

6.4.4 Over the last two years, students on an EHCP and students in receipt of free school meals showed increased internal progression compared to other students.

6.5 Governors asked a number of questions including:

- 6.5.1 **What the bigger picture was with internal progression; was it a marketing or a curriculum issue?** It could be both; in some areas there was still the potential to make students aware of all of the progression opportunities. For ESOL students, many progressed through the entry levels possibly over three years. Further investigation of the level 3 data was needed. Progression in engineering had been hit by the delays to practical assessment with 300 students continuing into and completing in the current year. Construction and Engineering students also often moved into apprenticeships or jobs.
- 6.5.2 **For level 3 students, it might not always be appropriate to stay with the College or move into jobs?** Agreed. The destinations survey had just completed and a full report which showed all destinations and progression would be brought to the next meeting.
- 6.5.3 **Whether there was any evidence of students at lower levels moving onto courses unrelated to their previous course; this could indicate issues with IAG.** There were small numbers of students when the data had last been looked at. More tended to repeat level 2 in areas such as construction where students wanted to become multi-skilled. The numbers crossing curriculum areas were very small.

6.6 Governors noted the report.

Abigail Proctor left the meeting.

7 GOOD PRACTICE IN PREPARING FOR THE EIF - QUESTIONS FOR GOVERNORS TO ASK

- 7.1 The Director of Quality Improvement presented a paper which provided some questions and answers for governors to ask in preparing for the EIF. The following points were highlighted.
 - 7.1.1 Answers had been provided for each of the questions; some were felt to be operational rather than strategic.
- 7.2 **Governors commented that the questions seemed too detailed and operational for inspectors to ask; they were more likely to ask high level and strategic questions. Nevertheless, the answers given were helpful.**
- 7.3 **Governors noted the report and requested that the presentation previously given by Marina Gaze was circulated.**

8 UPDATE ON T LEVELS

- 8.1 The Vice Principal gave an update on progress being made towards the introduction of T Levels and T Level Transition Programmes. The following points were highlighted.
 - 8.1.1 There had been a whole College change to prepare for the introduction of T levels. Work had included a SharePoint T Level site providing access to all relevant T Level information; training programmes for staff

involved in managing and delivering T Levels; QA processes and registrations with Awarding Organisations; curriculum planning and income projections; development of route-specific T Level Transition Programmes; and new admissions and enrolment processes.

- 8.1.2 Extensive marketing had taken place including a Q and A session with the Minister, Gillian Keegan, live presentations and webinars, and careers events for advisors
- 8.1.3 Routes on offer from September 2021 would be Healthcare Science; Health; Science; Education and Childcare; On-site Construction; and Building Services Engineering. More routes would be offered through Wave 3 including engineering manufacturing. The offer would span 11 of the 14 routes.
- 8.1.4 Application numbers were highlighted. The Transition Programme (TP) was designed for young people who had the potential to progress to a T Level but did not meet the entry criteria and needed additional time to develop their skills, knowledge and behaviours. Not all TPs had been advertised but the plan was to move students not meeting the entry criteria for the T Level to the TP at enrolment.
- 8.1.5 The College had done extensive work to apply for capital support; the wave 3 submission had been pulled at the last minute because of the AEB tolerance decision and the fact that it was not affordable. The Wave 2 project which had been approved would now have to be scaled back and funding returned because the College could no longer make the 50% match required.

8.2 **Governors asked a number of questions including:**

- 8.2.1 **Whether applications included transition and T level numbers?**
The numbers planned for the transition programme were likely to be higher as those who did not meet the entry criteria would move into the transition programme.
- 8.2.2 **Was the team happy with the application numbers?** There was no cause for concern around construction and health; applications for science and childcare were slower. The College was currently looking at how to improve processes for making offers online.
- 8.2.3 **Whether buildings had been identified at APC for the facilities.**
APC C and D block had originally been identified as well as some of the vacant land for the wave 3 (construction and engineering) facility. Both were in jeopardy now because of the clawback. Provision could be accommodated in existing buildings but over time, there might be an impact on growth particularly in construction which was at capacity.

8.3 **Governors noted the report.**

9 **APPRENTICESHIPS UPDATE**

- 9.1 The Vice Principal gave an update on apprenticeships and the impact of Covid-19 on funding, recruitment, and assessment. The following points were highlighted.
 - 9.1.1 Apprenticeship standards were introduced in 2014 and the College had transitioned over across each sector as and when they became

available. Frameworks ceased to be available for new starts from 31 July 2020; the last frameworks would run out in 2022/23

- 9.1.2 Retention across all apprenticeships had improved year on year. Frameworks (timely and overall) had improved by 17% between 2018/19 to 2020/21 and standards had improved by 38% over the same period.
- 9.1.3 Timely achievement would be impacted in 2020/21 because of the pandemic and delayed assessment. The best case was likely to be 83%.
- 9.1.4 Many apprentices were now out of funding because they had reached their end date but had not been able to complete EPAs. There would be impacts on 2019/20 and 2020/21 achievement rates.
- 9.1.5 Recruitment had been affected by the pandemic. Once Covid restrictions were lifted, the area would focus resources on recruiting new starts particularly across the high-income areas to help mitigate the income loss.
- 9.1.6 Between April 2020 and March 2021, fifty-three (38.6%) apprentices withdrew from their apprenticeship programme due to Covid. Redundancy, business closure and change of job was cited by 77% of apprentices who withdrew
- 9.1.7 The positive outcome for many apprentices including achievement of high grades was highlighted.

9.2 **Governors asked a number of questions including:**

- 9.2.1 **Whether Ofsted would be understanding of the issues affecting apprentices.** If the data were available at student level to evidence the issues, it was anticipated they would be.
- 9.2.2 **Where students were on long courses and they left to go to positive destinations, it would also be helpful to provide evidence.** Acknowledged.
- 9.2.3 **Issues with EPA delays were likely to be seen across the sector; was there any scope for alternative entry points?** Apprentices were enrolled all year round. The decline in numbers would impact income for several years although the team was working hard to recruit more apprentices.

9.3 **Governors noted the report.**

10 **KPI MONITORING**

10.1 The Director of Quality Improvement gave an update on KPIs. The following points were highlighted.

- 10.1.1 Attendance was showing as 87.1%. If unmarked registers were marked, attendance would be at 87.9%. Attendance was lower in ESOL although some courses had only recently returned to on site.
- 10.1.2 Retention was high at 97.1%; this was an improvement on this time last year and was a very good picture.
- 10.1.3 Progress Point (PP) 3 had taken place. For the 3,271 students studying on graded qualifications, 175 were above target, 614 were on target and 220 below target, with 49 due to fail. Overall, the College

was sitting -1.5 below target grade. This would be looked at in more detail in QA meetings.

10.2 **Governors noted the update on KPIs.**

11 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

- 16 June 2021

12 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 12.1 It was noted that this would be Tina's last governor meeting. She was thanked for her contribution to the College over many years, as a Director and then Vice Principal and for her work on apprenticeships and T levels. She was wished a happy retirement.