MINUTES OF THE LEARNING AND QUALITY COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2022

PRESENT:

Mark Allanson	Chair
Lillian Croston	Member
Dr Fazal Dad	Principal and Chief Executive
Ram Gupta *	Member
Catherine Hill OBE	Member
Andrea Machell	Member
Mark Moren	Academic Staff Governor

IN ATTENDANCE:

Caroline Bracewell	Assistant Principal: Higher Education
Nicola Clayton	Director: Business Development and External Engagement
Andrew Gadsdon	Head of Quality of Education
Emma Goodlet	Assistant Principal: Student Support and Experience
Damian Stewart	Assistant Principal: Further Education
Rachel Tarplee	Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality
Sarah Horeesorun	Director of Governance

* denotes attended via Microsoft Teams

It was noted that the meeting commenced at 17.00pm and was quorate.

The Chair welcomed Andrea Machell to her first Learning and Quality Committee meeting, and also welcomed Sarah Horeesorun in her role as Director of Governance. Ram Gupta joined the meeting via MS Teams and the Chair and members congratulated Ram on being awarded a prestigious honour in recognition of his achievements and contribution to local communities at the recent Hive Business Awards.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies.

2. DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chair advised those in attendance that should members of the Learning and Quality Committee become aware of any potential conflicts of interest, they should be disclosed at the earliest opportunity during the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF THE LEARNING AND QUALITY COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 16 JUNE 2022

The minutes of the Learning and Quality Committee meeting held on Thursday 16 June 2022 were accepted as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**

The Committee noted the updates against previous actions points.

The Principal and Chief Executive reminded the Committee of the requirement to have a College Skills Accountability Statement agreed by the Board by May 2023. The Statement will harness all of the activities done by the College to engage employers and stakeholders in meeting the needs of the local labour market. The Statement will be impactful with tangible curriculum links.

The DfE will make guidance and a template for the Skills Accountability Statement available at the end of November 2022.

5. **T-LEVELS UPDATE**

The Vice Principal: Curriculum and Quality presented the Report to the Committee setting out the background to the Governments plan and explaining the T-level curriculum roll out at Blackburn College.

The College has a four year roll out plan to deliver fourteen of the T-level subject pathways. Some subject areas are well underway, with more work planned for future roll outs. Significant resources and investment will be required to support the T-levels and Curriculum Teams are working with the Education Training Foundation and other providers to learn from pilot studies and in readiness for delivery.

The roll out plans and T-level subjects will be monitored continually and may be altered by defunding of qualifications, deferrals, additions of pathways or new content being added.

The Committee were assured that the foundations were in place to commence delivery of T-levels in Digital, Education and Childcare and Health from September 2023. Referring to the roll out plan table supplied, members noted that Construction had been deferred until September 2024 and that there was a challenge in the sector.

Accepting that T-levels are employment driven and support the national Skills agenda, the Committee explored the challenges around HE Apprenticeships and convincing local employers to support work placements. The Principal and Chief Executive explained that the incremental roll out of T-levels would permit College to become confident in their delivery and assure employers that College is competent to do so. By demonstrating the quality and value of T-levels here at Blackburn College this would give local employers confidence to consider work placements and increase HE Apprenticeships.

Redacted content.
T-levels are new and therefore students are unfamiliar with them and scared to try something new, however, there was an increasing appetite to try T-levels and the College T-level offer is being promoted through school liaison visits, College Open days and there will be flagship T-level launch.

The Chair thanked the Vice-Principal: Curriculum and Quality for the Report and useful update on T-levels.

6. **APPRENTICESHIP ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK**

The Director of Business and Employer Engagement presented the Report and provided an update on the Apprenticeship Accountability Framework. The Framework had been introduced by the DfE to provide a timelier approach to accountability for apprenticeship training providers based on a wide range of quality indicators.

The ESFA data dashboard was now available and the College was working through this, but it was very much in 'test-mode'. College had already identified areas for improvement and, like other providers, would be providing feedback on potential fixes ahead of the dashboard roll out in January 2023.

Referring to the Quality and Supplementary Indicators and Thresholds table supplied in the Report's Appendix, there were questions from members around where the indicators originated from and what relationship they had to, for example, the KPIs. The relationship between withdrawal and retention was unclear, as was the source of the data. The Director of Business and Employer Engagement explained that this was extremely complex and that she was mindful that the dash-board was in 'test-mode' and therefore the data unreliable at present, but reassured members that College would be feeding back to the ESFA.

The Chair thanked the Director of Business and Employer Engagement and stated that the Committee would be keeping a watching brief on the dashboard.

7. COLLEGE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs):

(i) 2021/22 Finalised position

The Committee considered the finalised position for the Learning and Quality based KPIs (1-23), together with the actuals from previous years and the targets for 2021/22. Members noted that six were on target, six achieved in part, and six under target.

ii) Proposed targets for 2022/23

The proposed KPIs had previously been considered by both the Policy and Resources Committee and the Board. The Annex to the Report listed the reduced number of Learning and Quality KPIs (from 23 to 18). The Vice-Principal: Curriculum and Quality explained that the KPIs included the new B3 metrics and that the NSS HE student satisfaction question had been replaced by the TLA satisfaction question.

In reviewing the proposed targets for the KPIs 2022/23, a member wondered whether the proposed targets were ambitious enough, for example, the Education and Training overall Achievement Rate 19+. The target was 90%, but the College had achieved 89% for the last two years. The Principal and Chief Executive accepted that this was a reasonable challenge and confirmed that the College would revisit the targets for Education and Training overall Achievement Rate 16-18 and Education and Training overall Achievement Rate 19+ to ensure that they were both realistic and stretching.

Action: Vice-Principal: Curriculum and Quality

8. KEY CHANGES TO THE CURRICULUM – ANNUAL REPORTS:

(i) Annual Report Higher Education (HE)

The Assistant Principal: Higher Education presented the Report that provided an overview of the business planning with partner universities. This included, in Part A, the requirements to report on validations, re-validations, amendments to programmes and programme closures for 2022-23. Part B of the Report provided an overview of expected validations and re-validations for the next five years.
Redacted content.
The Principal and Chief Executive informed members that the College is undertaking a holistic HE Curriculum Planning Review to challenge itself by asking how realistic are the curriculum

plans and assumptions and to actively use evidence to inform the curriculum and shape the HE offer.

The Committee accepted the Report and added that they would welcome a forward thinking, evidence based HE Curriculum Strategy.

(ii)   Annual Report Further Education (FE) including Work Based Learning (WBL)

The Assistant Principal: Further Education presented the Report outlining the in-year curriculum changes for the academic year 2022/23 for FE and including WBL. There had been minimal changes to consolidate the curriculum offer. Two noteworthy highlights were the Hybrid electrical Hub, which is already having a huge impact and would continue to do so in terms of progression and routes into employment. Plus, the College was actively engaged with the Skills Network to promote and engage students in programs on sustainability, health and fitness, personal development and employability, and life skills in general in readiness for the workplace.

The Director of Business and Employer Engagement added that the College had enhanced its work with employers which in-turn had influenced skills-based delivery and provided more skills focus in the classroom.

The Committee noted the content of the report.

9. **FURTHER EDUCATION (FE) STUDENT – END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE 2021/22 INC. RETENTION, ACHIEVEMENT AND STUDENT PROGRESS**

(i)   FE Academic and Vocational

The Report provided the Committee with top level performance data from the last four academic years to provide comparison. Members noted the improved retention and pass rate and overall positive picture. Members commended the report in providing the comparative data clearly and it was easy to see the distance travelled, value added and significant improvements in terms of outcomes in study programmes. Areas of concern were Digital, Creative Arts and Construction and these were receiving Urgent Care. ESOL continued to be a significant area of growth.

The Chair of the Corporation Board asked what teachers were doing to prepare students for exams to increase their confidence and approach to exam taking. The Assistant Principal: Further Education informed the Committee that students were provided with exam preparation strategies and that there was a new manager in this area, who was actively promoting and encouraging exam readiness. There was also a new exam Board.

The Committee thanked the Assistant Principal: Further Education for the useful report.

(ii)   Apprenticeship Performance Update

The Committee acknowledged that the pandemic had had an impact on employment and therefore achievement. The Appendix attached to the Report provided a breakdown of achievement for 2021/22.
Redacted content.

Members noted that achievement for 2022/23. There was some discussion of identifying and reporting of End Point Assessment and a member asked for more information on current Retention Data.

Action: Director for Business and Employer Engagement

The Chair thanked the Director of Business and Employer Engagement for the Report.

Ram Gupta left the meeting at 6.30pm.

10. HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) STUDENT – END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE 2021/22 INC. RETENTION, ACHIEVEMENT AND STUDENT PROGRESS

The Report provided the Committee with the finalised position of the HE results for 2021/22, highlighting the key issues and performance mapped against benchmarks and key metrics, including the old and new B3 metrics.

Redacted content.

There followed some discussion about progression and performance and the different terminology used for FE and HE. The Chair explained that the B3 metrics were OfS regulatory requirements and thresholds that HE institutions should aim to achieve.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Principal: Higher Education for the Report.

11. HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) QUALITY IMPOVEMENT PLAN 2022/23

The Head of Quality of Education presented the Report and informed the Committee that progress had been made on the HE Quality Improvement Plan. The Team were currently looking at numerical thresholds and would Report to the Committee at its meeting on 1 December 2022.

12. FURTHER EDUCATION (FE) AND WORK BASED LEARNING (WBL): SAR AND QIP 2022/23 - UPDATE

The Report provided an update on the progress on the College FE and WBL SAR and QIP. The documents would be presented in full to the Learning and Quality Committee meeting 1 December 2022.

13. URGENT CARE COURSES AND PROCESS

(i)   Further Education (FE)
The Committee considered the Report which provided an overview of the FE courses in the Urgent Care process for 2022/23. The Head of Quality explained that having completed a review of end of year data, twenty FE courses were deemed to require Urgent Care. A list of those courses would be shared with the Committee at its next meeting.

Action: Head of Quality Education

The Principal and Chief Executive clarified that new courses are also included in 'Urgent Care' to ensure that they receive the support to succeed. A member requested some additional information on the criteria for Urgent Care in FE.

Action: Head of Quality Education

(ii)   Higher Education (HE)

The Committee noted the content of the Report and Appendix One setting out the Urgent Care process for HE. Members were informed that all of the HE and HNC courses were in the Urgent Care process.

14. FE AND HE COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

The Committee reviewed the Report remarking that the low number of complaints was a compliment in itself and a testimony to the College for acting fast to resolve any issues.

15. CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY STRATEGY 2022-2-24 AND GATSBY BENCHMARK PROGRESS UPDATE

The Assistant Principal: Student Support and Experience presented the Report providing an overview of progress made against the key performance indicators within the Careers and Employability Strategy 2022-24.

Highlighting the key successes, the Committee was informed that the College had successfully achieved its Gatsby Benchmarks certificate. This will be formally presented to the College on 25 November 2022 at the Exchange opening event.

The Committee were impressed to learn of the Explore, Evolve and Establish Awards to be awarded at the end of the year and noted all of the progress that had been made to make Carers advice and support easily accessible to students through surveys, a Careers lounge in The Exchange and dedicated Careers link advisors in each of the three schools.

The Principal and Chief Executive added that Ofsted would be launching a survey of Careers guidance provision in January 2023.

16. SAFEGUARDING ASSURANCE REPORT 2021/22

This Report had been shared at the Board Seminar on 14 October 2022 and members were reminded that the Student Assistance Programme was in place and being used. There was a new structure in the enhanced Safeguarding Team and this realignment of roles and responsibilities had helped effectively support and manage the increased number of referrals.

The Committee noted the content of the Report and the accompanying Designated Safeguarding Lead update.

17. ACADEMIC BOARD ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee reviewed the Annual Report from the Academic Board for 2021/22 and were content that the Academic Board was discharging its duties effectively

The Committee accepted the Report and **AGREED** to recommend it to the Board for approval.

18. CHAIR APPROVED MINUTES OF ACADEMIC BOARD – (i) 24 MAY 2022 AND (ii) 7 OCTOBER 2022

The minutes of the Academic Board meetings held on 24 May 2022 and 7 October 2022 were accepted as a true and accurate record and were signed by the Chair.

19. STUDENT'S UNION ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22 INCLUDING DRAFT ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The Committee noted the content of the Report supplied for information and the Chair asked that staff present pass on his congratulations for competing and coming fourth in the national Student Enterprise competition. The Committee echoed this sentiment and said well done.

20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of Any Other Business.

21. REVIEW OF MEETING

The Chair thanked all members for their contribution to the meeting, the questions and detailed discussions that had taken place.

22. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Learning and Quality Committee would take place on Thursday 1 December 2022 at 5.00pm in the Exchange Boardroom / via Microsoft Teams.

19:00pm: The meeting ended.

Signed: …………………………………..

Date: …………………………………..