



**MINUTES OF THE LEARNING AND QUALITY COMMITTEE HELD ON  
THURSDAY 26 JUNE 2025**

**PRESENT:**

Catherine Hill OBE	Chair
Mark Allanson	Member
Dr Fazal Dad	Principal and Chief Executive
Ram Gupta*	Member
Darren Ratcliffe*	Member

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Nathan Rogan*	Associate member
Rachel Tarplee	Vice-Principal: Curriculum & Quality
Nicola Clayton	Executive Director: Business Development and Employer Engagement
Liam Doherty	Director of Quality Innovation
Matthew Robinson	Executive Director of Student Support and Experience
Sarah Horeesorun	Director of Governance

\*denotes joined via MS Teams

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

The Chair welcomed everyone to this the last Learning and Quality Committee meeting of the Academic year.

**1. PRESENTATION: FUTURE FOCUSED – READY TO LEARN**

The Executive Director: Student Support and Experience delivered a presentation on the new Launchpad Centre. A Report accompanied this Item and provided the detail.

The presentation highlighted:

- NEET is 16–19-year-olds not in education, employment or training
- 1m NEET nationally, around 350 in BwD (75% Blackburn, 25% Darwen)
- Responding to Government drive to Get Britain Working and Skills agenda
- College taking the lead in addressing NEET locally, those at risk of becoming NEET, and those furthest from the job market.
- New initiative; Town centre premises, working in partnership with Newground Together
- Will meet needs of the community, promote social mobility, transform lives, and enable the College to expand student numbers and secure additional funding.
- Starting 1 September 2025, will offer 122 full-time places for young people aged 16–19, split into 11 groups, covering Entry Level through to Level 3.
- 12-week programme operated on a roll-on, roll-off basis, focused on engagement and induction; all learners move onto a programme that includes a main vocational qualification, Maths and English (either GCSE or Functional Skills depending on prior attainment), preparation for work, and taster activities in a vocational area.
- Significant learning support and pastoral care to help re-engage the young people
- Aim is to support learners to return to college, enter further training, or move into employment the following year.
- Centre Manager recruited and staff will be employed using a flexible model and scaled up as student numbers are secured.
- Central location also presents an excellent opportunity to promote and raise awareness of the wider College offer to the community

The Executive Director said that renovations were underway to remodel the interior of the premises and shared a floor plan of the layout. Newground Together who will share the space, would contribute to the running costs, and a reduced cost, with break clause, had been secured on the lease.

The performance of the Launchpad Centre would be reported in Quality Summits and to the Audit, Policy and Resources, Learning and Quality Committees and to the Board.

The Chair of the Corporation Board commended this initiative and its aims to improve skills, behaviours, confidence and provide careers advice and enquired what, if anything, was in place for those young people with, for example, carer responsibilities that may not be able to attend regularly or be called away at short notice. The Executive Director explained that staffing was key, and staff would be recruited with integrity who would work with students to support them with, or to overcome, barriers to education. The centre would have a nurturing environment, and the staff support team included pastoral support, Safeguarding, Mental Health support, in addition to the Teaching Team and coaching mentors.

Another member enquired about the approach to transition into mainstream college and the Executive Director explained that this would be done gradually to build familiarity and confidence.

Members were very complimentary of this initiative and thought it to be groundbreaking and very worthwhile. The Committee thanked the Executive Director: Student Support and Experience.

## **2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Apologies were received from Committee members, Clare Shaw and Chelston Philip.

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 6 FEBRUARY 2025**

The minutes of the Learning and Quality Committee meeting held on Thursday 6 February 2025 were accepted as a true and accurate record.

## **4. MATTERS ARISING**

The Committee noted progress made on the actions from the previous meeting.

## **5. PRIMARY AND SECONDARY QTS PROPOSAL**

The Director of Quality Innovation introduced this proposal.

The Committee were broadly supportive of the proposal but not in a position to recommend approval of this proposal at this time and asked that the Report be brought back to the Committee at the November meeting when the due diligence had been completed and to be provided with more information on the delivery model, a detailed business model, more detail on recruitment, additional information on the partnership.

## **6. PROGRESS ON KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR 2024/25**

The Vice-Principal: Curriculum and Quality talked members through the Report and Appendix. The Committee thanked the Vice-Principal for updating the targets, for the update, and **AGREED** to recommend the revised KPIs to the Board for approval.

## **7. FE STUDENT – IN YEAR PERFORMANCE 2024/25 INC. RETENTION, STUDENT PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENT**

- (i) FE Academic & Vocational**
- (ii) Foundation/Maths and English/High-Needs**
- (iii) Apprenticeships and WBL**

(i) FE Academic & Vocational

The Vice-Principal: Curriculum and Quality reported that current retention for the FE for 2024/25 was 97% (7912/8153 enrolments). At the same point last year (2023/24) retention was 96%. This was 1 percentage point higher than the same period of last year.

The Vice-Principal reported that the Curriculum Quality Summits were going well, and the Chair encouraged members to attend a Quality Summit to see for themselves the forensic approach to examine the detail of each course, the performance and students, but also to witness the passion and enthusiasm of the Teaching Staff.

The Chair thanked the Vice-Principal for this helpful explanation.

(ii) Foundation/Maths and English/High Needs

The Executive Director: Student Support and Experience provided a verbal summary of this Report.

The Chair thanked the Executive Director for his thorough Report and a member mentioned that he had completed a Learning Walk in English.

(iii) Apprenticeships

The Executive Director: Business Development and External Engagement updated the Committee on Apprenticeship performance.

The Executive Director highlighted that one of the Apprentices was a finalist in the SkillsElectric competition and would go to London for the final.

The College's Annual Apprenticeship awards had been a wonderful celebration with Apprentices, family, employers, VIPs and Governors attending to support the occasion.

### **FE AND WBL QIP – PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Director of Quality Innovation summarised the key areas of focus from the Report and attachment.

The Committee noted the content of the Quality Improvement Plan.

## **8. HE STUDENT – IN YEAR PERFORMANCE 2024/25 INC. RETENTION, ATTENDANCE, CONTINUATION, PROGRESSION AND COMPLETION**

The Vice-Principal: Curriculum and Quality shared that she was pleased with the progress made.

The Vice-Principal reported that the Accountability Summits had been really helpful in driving the improvements and that staff were happy and wanted the summits to continue.

The Chair of the Corporation Board and Chair of this Committee congratulated the Vice-Principal and College on progress made and hoped that this could be maintained and indeed, improved.

## **9. OfS B3 ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

The Director of Quality Innovation reported.

The Chair congratulated the College on the good work.

## **10. COURSES REQUIRING SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT (CRSD) 2024/25**

This Report provided an update on Courses Requiring Support and Development for FE, WBL and HE in 2024/25.

The Director of Quality Innovation mentioned that he may change the name of the process and highlighted those courses currently in the process and likely to remain so for 2025.

The Committee noted the content of the Report.

## **11. COLLEGE STRATEGY 2025-28**

The Principal and Chief Executive introduced this Item and said that the College Strategy would be going to the Corporation Board for consideration and approval next week. The Policy and Resources Committee had commented on this draft in its recent meeting, and this was the opportunity for the Learning and Quality Committee to comment.

The Chair of the Corporation Board liked the plan, thought that it was good and was pleased to see that the College was already engaging with it in, for example, the Accountability Agreement agreed earlier in the day at the standalone Board meeting. Referring to the final page and there was a preference for measures rather than targets and, a suggestion that it would be great to demonstrate the impact of the College and its exceptional work if we were able to show, for example :

% in local job priority areas or xxx more people into I.T./Digital

% upskilled

% in a good job

The Principal said that maybe this would be a measurable output to report annually to the Board, and that he would feed these helpful comments back to the Vice-Principal: Finance and Corporate Services who was leading on the Strategic Plan.

## **12. LEARNING AND QUALITY COMMITTEE MEETING DATES 2025-26 AND 2026-27, PERFORMANCE AGAINST TERMS OF REFERENCE, TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR 2025/26 AND CALENDAR OF BUSINESS 2025/26**

The Director of Governance explained that each Committee undertook these activities annually to agree the meeting dates for the next year and those proposed for the year after, to review the Committee's performance against its Terms of Reference, and make any changes to the Terms of Reference for the next Academic Year, and lastly, to agree the list of agenda items to be taken at its meetings (or calendar of business)

The Committee **AGREED** the list of dates for 2025/26 and 2026/27 in Appendix 1.

The Committee reviewed its performance against its Terms of Reference for 2024/25 and was satisfied that it had exercised its duties and met its responsibilities.

The suggested changes to the Terms of Reference for 2025/26 were highlighted in red text on Appendix 3. The changes and Terms of Reference for 2025/26 were **AGREED** by the Committee.

The Committee **AGREED** the Calendar of Business for 2025/26.

The Committee **AGREED** to recommend this Report to the Corporation Board for approval.

*The Chair of the Corporation Board left the meeting at 18:41pm*

## **13. CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY ANNUAL REVIEW**

This report provided the Committee with an overview of the progress made against the Careers and Employability Strategy (2025–2027) for the academic year 2024/2025, alongside key highlights from the Careers Impact Report 2024/2025.

The Committee noted the progress update of the 2025-2027 Careers Strategy and Gatsby Benchmarks and thanked the Executive Director: Student Support and Experience for the Report.

*Darren Ratcliffe left the meeting at 18.48*

#### **15. STUDENT VOICE COMMITTEE FEEDBACK FROM MEETING 7 MAY 2025**

The Executive Director: Student Support and Experience provided feedback from the Student Voice Committee meeting held on 7 May 2025, sharing that:

Students had the opportunity to talk about Tutorials, Exam preparation, Work Experience, Student Surveys and raising the profile of the College amongst local Schools.

In terms of actions and outcomes, the Student Voice would like to see the following on these themes:

**Employment** – invite more employers into College to explain to students on the various courses exactly what the expectations are in the workplace.

**Community** – adapt to the changes and demands of the community and reflect this in the college.

**Transport** – encourage more students to travel further, and have a wider reach, by having a college bus.

**Sustainability** - see more eco-friendly practices adopted by the college, encourage more recycling and increase ESD in courses.

**Careers** – grow connections with large companies/brands/employers and invite them into College to share skills, build relationships with the students with the prospect of getting a job, or increasing the chances of getting a job with that company as already familiar with each other and ways of working.

The Principal and Chief Executive added that in his Meet the Principal meeting with students, the students had suggested having some training and support on money management.

The Committee thanked the Executive Director for the update.

#### **16. UPDATE ON NSS SURVEY**

The NSS Survey would be available on 9 July 2025.

#### **17. ACADEMIC BOARD**

The Chair approved minutes of the Academic Board meeting 20 May 2025 were supplied for information.

#### **18. SAFEGUARDING UPDATE**

This Report was supplied for information and additional information was provided in the Governors 'One Drive' folder.

#### **19. SINGLE EQUALITY PLAN AND ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION PLAN UPDATE**

This Report was supplied for information.

#### **20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no items of any other business.

**21. REVIEW OF MEETING**

The Chair thanked members for their contributions.

**22. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Learning and Quality Committee would take place on Thursday 6 November 2025 at 5.00pm in the Exchange Boardroom / via Microsoft Teams.

*Liam Doherty and Matthew Robinson left the meeting ahead of PARTII.*

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