

797 PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS

797.1 Attendance & Apologies for Absence

Membership: Nick Buckland
Gareth Dace
Paula Davis
Tony Medhurst
Mary Pooley (Chair)
Anatoliy Strembitskyy

In Attendance: Sabrina Ahmed-Qureshi, Director of Quality & Learning Innovation
Jayne Chaplin, Clerk to the Corporation
Katrina Dougherty, Vice Principal Enterprise & Innovation
Angela McLean, Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality

Apologies: Hannah Nicholls

797.2 Declarations of Interest & Confidential Items

There were no Declarations of Interest or confidential items.

797.3 Briefing: Internal Quality Review (IQR) Process

After providing an overview of changes to the College Internal Quality Review process, review and questioning included:

- a. In the context of the replacement of graded lesson observations with supported experiments in the development of teaching practice, the rationale for the proposed introduction of graded judgments in IQR reports. After explaining its focus on the quality of education and a reflection of the approach of Ofsted rather than a resumption of graded observations, members were advised of the objective of ensuring a consistent cross College standard, to be informed and achieved through the sharing of practice and focused action where required, including in moving practice from good to outstanding
- b. The practicalities and any potential impact on teaching staff, particularly in instances of teaching activities in more than one area. It was explained how the process was intended to be observation of everyday teaching practice rather than additional to usual activity, proposing for any specific concerns to be discussed directly with the Director of Quality & Learning Innovation

After observing the revised structure and process to be positive overall, the proactive approach to the further development of practice and preparation for future inspections was commended.

The Director of Quality & Learning Innovation was thanked for an interesting and informative presentation.

797.4 Minutes of the Last Meeting & Matters Arising

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2024 were agreed as a correct record and the application of the Chair's signature was authorised.

It was agreed that there were no matters arising or outstanding actions on which to report.

798 2024/25: In Year Performance Monitoring – Spring Term Progress Reports

798.1 Quality Monitoring & Improvement

After observing discussions elsewhere on the agenda (Minute 797.3 refers) progress was reviewed with the objectives in the Quality Improvement Plan and activities for developing and further improving the quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment. There was particular discussion of:

- a. The data highlighting increased awareness of and engagement with parents and carers. Responding to questioning, members were advised of the positive impact attributed to improving access to the parent portal and enhanced communications through parallel strategies, including text messaging and email
- b. Staff development activities:
 - Reflecting further on the recently introduced process for new staff at the College for less than one year and the 25% working towards meeting the expected standards. Observing and questioning the concentration in one particular curriculum area, noting it to be attributed to the volume of new appointees following growth in that area, members then were advised that whilst possessing extensive industry knowledge and experience, support was being provided to ensure delivery in line with the College TLA and performance management expectations and standards
 - Questioning expectations regarding any potential impact on requirements for qualifications arising from the Education Bill. After explaining how the practicalities around vocational elements had inhibited previous efforts, it was noted how the potential existed for this to be revisited with the position perhaps becoming clearer once the Skills White Paper was published, then observing the current recruitment challenges and the need to avoid exacerbating the position further

After responding to other points of detail and following review, progress to date was noted.

798.2 Enrolment Update

The current position with all enrolments was summarised. There was particular discussion of:

- a. 16-18 FE numbers noting confirmation of in-year growth funding was still awaited, then observing that whilst numbers could fluctuate, the current position for 2025/26 Applications looked positive. In the context of the conversion from applications to enrolment, there was questioning of the relations with schools noting with improved engagement and interactions over recent years, such data was becoming available and was being developed
- b. The below planned profile of Apprenticeships numbers, acknowledging the position to be reflective of the position nationally and the impact of the external factors, recognising the caution arising from the government budget and increasing national insurance contributions then querying the extent of any effect as a result of the recent announcement about Maths and English. Reporting dialogues with employers to be ongoing, members were advised of plans to provide further information at a future meeting
- c. Higher Education provision, noting how College numbers aligned with the reported national trend for HE recruitment in FE colleges. Then reflecting on:
 - Numbers and viability of programmes, confirming in addition to the financial implications, a range of factors were taken into consideration

- The marketing of provision, particularly the benefits of enrolling via the College, members were advised that whilst learner surveys had not identified this as a significantly influential factor in decision making, as learner profiles evolved and changed, this could continue to be highlighted

After responding to and further clarifying points of detail, the current position was noted.

798.3 Strategic Objectives & Business Planning

Progress was summarised with objectives for 2024/25 for improving performance and quality of provision and business development, curriculum planning for the forthcoming year and destinations data for 2023/24.

After progress and developments were noted, discussion focused on:

- a. Compared with the aspirational 95% attendance target across all curriculum areas and when including maths and English, the overall attendance rate of 84.8%, noted to be in-line with the equivalent point in 2023/24 but below target. Reflecting further on attendance rates:
 - The improved attendance in Construction and Business was noted and commended, recognising the significance of such an achievement and it to be reflective of the measures put in place and the work of all concerned
 - In the context of (elected) home educated students, there was questioning of the extent of any such College experience, noting whilst needing to take into account considerations around subject matter, practicalities and funding, the College tried to remain flexible, highlighting positive experiences where learners had accessed TAP provision before transition to other programmes. Members then were advised of increasing numbers being declared at Open Evenings with appropriate follow up action and support being put in place
 - Then observing the position nationally, particularly the challenges in the school sector, highlighting increasing permanent exclusions, and implications for further education, including increased demand for 14-16 programmes, recognising how any response required careful consideration and planning and the value of any data around ultimate destinations of such learners to inform future IAG and funding opportunities
- b. At 85%, positive destinations for 23/24 showing an 8% decline on 2022/23 questioning further the support for those not looking for work and the opportunities available with local employers. It was confirmed that whilst analysis was being undertaken to better ascertain possible reasons for the decline, ongoing support was provided to learners with contact maintained that offered further advice and opportunities for returning to learning with such support also provided to schools

Following discussion, the year-to-date position was noted.

799 OTHER BUSINESS & NEXT MEETING

799.1 Any Other business

None advised.

799.2 Dates of Next Meetings

Wednesday 11 June 2025