

## **804 PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

### **804.1 Attendance, Apologies for Absence & Chairing**

**Membership:** Nick Buckland  
Gareth Dace *(from Item 805)*  
Paula Davis  
Leah Markee  
John McNamara  
Tony Medhurst  
Mary Pooley (Chair)  
Anatoliy Strembitskyy  
Mia Young

**In Attendance:** Sabrina Ahmed-Qureshi, Director of Quality & Learning Innovation  
Jayne Chaplin, Clerk to the Corporation  
Katrina Dougherty, Vice Principal Enterprise & Innovation  
Katie Kennedy, HE Development Manager *(Item 804.3 only)*  
Angela McLean, Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality  
Sue Mountain, Director of Curriculum *(Item 804.3 only)*

All were welcomed to the meeting and introductions were undertaken.

### **804.2 Declarations of Interest & Confidential Items**

There were no Declarations of Interest or confidential items.

### **804.3 Briefing: Higher Education (HE) Update**

An overview was provided highlighting Office for Students (OfS):

- a. Requirements for the Condition of Registration concerning equality of opportunity and the implications for College HE provision, explaining:
  - The reporting mechanisms in place, student support services, investigation procedures and training for staff and students along with arrangements for safeguarding to foster a secure and respectful learning environment and data protection compliance
  - The requirement for transparency and avoidance of non-disclosure agreements to ensure student voices were heard and respected in cases of misconduct
  - The duty to take reasonably practicable steps to secure protect freedom of speech within the law and the College Policy and arrangements to ensure a balance of student safety with open expression to maintain a respectful environment.
- b. Future quality arrangements and the consultation underway regarding its Teaching Excellence Framework advising members of proposals for a more integrated, modified overall system to provide a clear view of the quality delivered by different providers with assessment and ratings for student experience and outcomes

Questioning and discussion focused on:

- c. The Requirements for the Condition of Registration concerning equality of opportunity:
- In the context of the duty of care towards employees, arrangements in place, and development provided, noting how policies had been reviewed recently but would be given further consideration
  - Observing the ready availability of the relevant documentation and recognising its compliance with requirements but suggesting for future versions to be more user friendly. It was confirmed student feedback would be sought when next reviewed
  - Noting the extent of and exploring any potential further alignment with existing College process confirming this to be the case where possible but reflecting OfS specific assessment criteria/ standards as necessary

Reflecting further on the governance implications, members observed the College arrangements in place to ensure compliance with the OfS Condition, and the Board's ongoing support of compliance and oversight of all appropriate arrangements through regular review and reporting and the promotion and encouragement of a culture of openness, safety, and accountability.

The HE Development Manager and Director of Curriculum were thanked for an interesting and informative presentation.

*The HE Development Manager and Director of Curriculum the left the meeting.*

#### **804.4 Minutes of the Last Meeting & Matters Arising**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2025 were agreed as a correct record and the application of the Chair's signature was authorised.

With outstanding actions noted now to be included in reports elsewhere on the Agenda (Minute 805.2 refers), it was confirmed that there were no further matters arising or outstanding actions on which to report.

*Gareth Dace joined the meeting*

#### **805 2024/25: Year-End Outcomes & Quality Improvement**

##### **805.2 Strategic Objectives & Business Planning**

The current position for College learner outcomes for 2024/25 was summarised, particularly:

- a. Highlighting how national GCSE high grades tended to be low and in the context of the national position and the College's significantly increased numbers of maths and English retake learners after further growth in recruitment, reporting that in contrast with the rates for maths, English pass rates were slightly below the national rate (-0.2pp) and whilst the outcome of some re-marks was awaited, the position would not improve significantly. Recognising the increased volumes and commending the management of the retakes, performance was considered in more detail, noting:
- i. Retention rates overall showed a significant increase, above the Pro-Achieve national rate for 2023/24 with the exception of English 19+ adult, which was noted to be attributed to one evening class that had experienced staffing challenges
  - ii. English and maths pass rates for 16-18 learners to be above the national rate in contrast with 19+ learners where improvement was required with rates showed a declining picture on 2023/24 with English -9.8pp to national rate and maths 1.3pp above national rate

iii. High Grades showed a declining picture for English and maths but rates remained significantly above national rates. Then reflecting on College target, members were advised:

- That despite not meeting the 22% GCSE English achievement target, there had been a 0.6pp improvement on 2023/24 with actual outcomes -3.1% to target
- Whilst actual outcomes were -1.1% to the GCSE maths achievement target of 24% and a -1.8pp decline on 2023/24, outcomes remained at a good level of performance with the decline was considered to be reflective of staff changes in year

b. The current overall rate of 84.8% for Classroom based vocational outcomes showing a slight decline, reflecting a decrease in the 19+ learner rate. Discussing performance further:

- Members observed however the 1.2% increase in overall outcomes for 16-18 learners, exceeding the national rate by 1.8%, recognising it to be positive in the context of the growth in numbers and the changing profile of learners and their pedagogical support
- Members were advised that T Level data was not specifically reflected in the overall data, but achievement had been good and it would be identified in individual curriculum self -assessment reports
- Questioning the decline in Adult outcomes, noting it to be reflective of the strategic decision to reduce sub-contracted provision, explaining the impact on rates of the move from short courses such provision usually provided, explaining discussions regarding the recording of data to better explain and mitigate the negative impact

c. Welcoming confirmation of further improvement in Basic skills Maths and English Outcomes and Apprenticeships outcomes

d. Reflecting on the results reported for Higher Education outcomes, welcoming confirmation of the increases in level 5 students on HND programmes achieving a merit or distinction, and in level 6 top-up students achieving a first call honours degree compared 2023/24

After recognising the continued focus on ensuring further improvement in outcomes overall, the position was observed to continue to support the College self-assessment of Good with the final position to reported at the next meeting as part of the self-assessment process.

Following discussion, the current position was noted.

### **805.2 Quality Monitoring & Improvement**

After providing an overview of quality monitoring, improvements and developments, discussion included:

a. The Quality Improvement Plan, presented in summary in line with the Committee's request, noting the actions considered to be closed and those areas carried forward into 2025/26

b. The measures and activities for further developing the quality of Teaching, Learning & Assessment:

- i. Reflecting on the current initiatives supporting general classroom standards and teaching practice, particularly noting the emerging principles from drops-in sessions and the staff support, development and action for improvement informed by and themes emerging from learning walks
- ii Exploring further newly introduced initiatives:

- Questioning how the HOW2s platform would further develop teaching practice, noting how access to evidence-based teaching strategies and resources, incorporating AI-driven recommendations, immediately applicable in classroom settings was intended to foster collaborative learning and enhance practice
- For preparing students for the workplace and life beyond education through the development of skills via the College designed Skills for Success, noting it had replaced the Skills Builder programme responding to student feedback about its shortcomings, which as a package of separate skills, had been considered more limited in nature and insufficiently engaging or user-friendly.

The work required and time invested in the initiative to ensure its introduction for the start of the new academic year was recognised and the proactivity of staff was commended, then questioning the distinction between the previous programme and the ways in which it would achieve its intended purpose. Whilst designed to reflect College ethos and values, members were advised that rather than remaining distinct from all aspects of the curriculum, existing and new employability, and life skills, informed by the Self-Assessment process and feedback from employers, had been integrated and embedded to develop skills and experience through exercises, projects, and collaborative working. Discussing how its impact would be evidenced, it was confirmed how the programme would allow the ready tracking, monitoring, and evidencing of progress with successes to be recognised and, in parallel, investment in work experience co-ordinators had been maintained despite funding ending.

- c. The 24/25 Complaints report. After observing the overall increase in numbers on the previous year, there was particular questioning of:
  - i. Those around the behaviour/ manner of staff, highlighting to members the correlation between numbers recorded in term one and staff reinforcing BRAVO and College expectations at the start of the academic year
  - ii. The numbers upheld advising members of the challenges in accurately providing such data with a number of complaints covering multiple areas, explaining that work was underway to ascertain a way to better capture such information for future reporting

Following discussion, the activity and developments were noted.

## **806 Academic Year 2025/26**

### **806.1 Enrolment Update**

The current position for enrolments for the year to date was provided, noting in the context of the targets for the year:

- a. As the majority of College provision, 16-19 recruitment had realised further growth on the position recorded for 24/25 currently at 96% of the College target and 97% of the overall recruitment target
- b. Higher Education numbers to date were on target and adult full-time recruitment was below target with both being monitored and reviewed
- c. With recruitment aligned to the planned profile for the year, Apprenticeships were at 88% to target for September and 30% of the year-end target

- d. Despite recruitment at 88% to the Curriculum Plan target and at 99% to financial target, as the vast majority of T Level learners had been retained, numbers were below the allocated number. Questioning of the overall position for T Levels and the extent of any improvement, numbers were acknowledged not be as desired despite the introduction and success of some flagship programmes, highlighting the need to focus on and emphasise the benefits to and opportunities for learners of such programmes and further develop progression routes. Whilst also recognising the impact of local competition, it was suggested that the College could exploit its advantage by maximising opportunities through its established links and engagement with employers.

Then responding to questioning of any particular areas of concern, member were advised of the resourcing implications and pressures associated with the volume of examination retakes, and staff shortages in some areas, confirming both were being managed

After confirming that whilst slowing, recruitment continued and some withdrawals were being processed, the update was noted.

## **807 OTHER BUSINESS & NEXT MEETING**

### **807.1 Any Other business**

None advised.

### **807.2 Dates of Next Meetings**

**Wednesday 3 December 2025, 5.30pm**

**Wednesday 4 March 2026, 5.30pm**

**Wednesday 10 June 2026, 5.30pm**