

REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD
QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 9 March 2020 at 10.30am
Committee Room, Reaseheath Hall

Present Marcus Clinton (principal) MC
 Jane Cowell (independent) JC
 Mike Gorton (independent) MG
 Peter Green (independent) PG
 Anne McKay (staff) AM
 David Pearson (independent) DP
 Alastair Taylor (independent) (chair) AT
 Charlie Woodcock (independent) CW (*items 1-5 inclusive*)

Attending Matthew Gower (assistant principal) MGower
 Sarah Houghton (assistant principal) SH
 Paul Spearritt (assistant principal) PS
 Wendy Watson (quality manager) WW
 Sharon Yates (assistant principal) SY
 Julie Sizer (Training Manager, DART Limited) JS
 Jackie Schillinger (clerk) JSch

Item	Content
1.	Welcome and apologies for absence
1.1	The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. He expressed thanks on behalf of the committee to SH, attending her last meeting, for all her commitment and contribution to the college and wished her all the very best in her new position.
1.2	There were no apologies received for absence. The student governor Patrick Carter had not sent his apologies and was expected, but had not arrived. MG had sent word that he was running a little late.
1.3	The meeting was declared quorate.
2.	Declarations of interest
2.1	The declaration of interests form was circulated. There were no interests declared as giving rise to a conflict of interest in relation to the agenda items for the meeting.

<p>3.</p> <p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p>	<p>Minutes and matters arising</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair. Members noted that the minutes were very useful in their granularity to represent a full account of the discussions that took place and they thanked the clerk for the continued quality of minute taking.</p> <p>Members turned to the rolling action log and considered actions taken as well as matters arising from the last meeting. PG asked whether further reflection had been given to the benefit or otherwise of continuing with the FE Choices survey. MGower confirmed that the team have considered this and they do not see the benefit at the moment of continuing. WW added that the only remaining query is whether the apprenticeship part of the survey is worth doing. JC gave her view in support of discontinuing the FE survey, as long as there is some way of benchmarking the data and MGower confirmed this can and will be done. PS noted that it may be useful for Landex to provide a benchmarking survey. The meeting gave its support to not doing the FE Choices survey this year for FE provision and to report this to the board in the Chair’s report from the committee.</p>
<p>4.</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p>	<p>Student Experience Focus</p> <p>Digital resources: PS provided a presentation on delivery staff feedback on use of digital resources and the impact on the student experience. It highlighted the good work going on, but with the main barrier to successful consistent implementation across college being the current infrastructure. Members received the presentation with thanks and discussion and questions followed. Members noted that the strategic plan includes as a key objective the achievement of such infrastructure to fully support the development of the digital strategy and that it was clear that this needed to be a priority in the delivery of the strategic plan. CW noted that one solution could be the partnership between the college and the university on the digital architects bid, which will support staff to develop the creative part of the digital delivery as well as the technical skills of staff. JC queried if the college would expect staff to create their own content and DP wondered what the cost and timeline would be for this type of delivery. MGower confirmed that he is looking at the timetable at the moment and is looking to introduce an element of digital into the study programme. DP requested a business case for new developments that includes the digital element. MC confirmed that the digital strategy is inherent across all elements of the strategic plan and is key to the estates and infrastructure part of the plan. He assured members that this will be presented in draft for consultation in due course. AT wondered what the level of LEP involvement is in supporting the digital agenda. MC noted that it is supporting the digital skills partnership referred to by CW and that it is involved in the next wave of Institutes of Technology with a meeting on this taking place tomorrow. AT summarised the discussion as providing helpful assurance and noted that the link governor to teaching and learning will ensure digital resources is discussed at this meeting.</p> <p>Apprenticeship learner voice feedback: SY provided an oral update to the meeting. She noted that overall learner satisfaction with apprenticeships in Reaseheath Training has decreased, predominately in construction and horticulture, due to the instability in staffing experienced this year. She assured members that this had already been picked up and improvement actions are in place. She explained that there is now more consistency of staffing in horticulture and this is impacting positively already. On the other hand, she noted that staffing in construction is still a challenge but a lot of work has gone into mitigating the impact on learner satisfaction levels in construction. She added that the team is also ringing around and doing telephone interviews with employers. She noted that they are finding that employers understand the situation on staffing and are generally satisfied that the provision is adequately delivered but they would like to see the quality of service improve above that level. SH</p>

4.3	<p>commented that whilst the apprenticeship team is tapping into staffing resource within the curriculum teams it is harder to do so with the new standards because they demand a very high level of specialism. In response to a question from PG, SY confirmed that these same actions were taking place in DART in relation to employer and learner satisfaction and managing expectations. AM noted the importance of the digital strategy to support delivery in these areas. In summary, AT thanked SY for her update and noted that there are risks to learner and employer satisfaction in relation to some areas of apprenticeship provision but welcomed the assurance that there is a good deal of follow up work going on with learners and employers to mitigate this risk, to show that actions are being taken and to manage expectations. SY suggested that it maybe useful for Diana Hurp, the apprenticeship quality assurer to attend a committee meeting in future to see the bigger picture and so she will consider if this is appropriate depending on the agenda next time.</p> <p>Student Charter – review of standards of service, including complaints monitoring: WW presented her compliments and complaints report in the context of the commitments set out in the student charter. JC asked that the committee’s thanks be passed back to those staff that had received compliments and, in terms of the complaints, where these are substantial she requested a little more information to provide assurance that the loop has been closed and learning from the complaints has happened. PG added it may be a good idea to consider a follow up where appropriate just to ensure that the person is satisfied with the complaints process and outcome, without opening up the complaint again. WW gave assurance that the closing of the loop and learning for the future takes place and that the complaints are discussed fully at FE Academic Board, but that she could add a paragraph to the summary to provide further assurance for committee members. DP commented that he took assurance that the college takes complaints very seriously shown by the fact that a number of the complaints had been found as justified and remedial actions put in place to put things right. He noted through that the number of complaints seemed low. WW noted that there had been some complaints come through recently that had not been captured by this report but would show in the next report. Discussion followed around what is classified as a complaint and MC clarified that it is where the person takes the opportunity to make a formal complaint, following the initial raising of the issue informally and where this has not been able to resolve the issue. PG welcomed the report and the student charter content that he felt was appropriate. He requested and received assurance that the student charter is covered in the induction for all students. The meeting received the report for information and assurance.</p>
5.	<p>Teaching and Learning and Curriculum Update</p> <p>5.1 Teaching and Learning and CPD update: AM presented her report and requested any questions. AT thanked AM for her comprehensive report and noted the steady progress and the move to a RAG rating of green from amber last time. PG noted that there are still a large number of new teaching staff and requested assurances that the learning walk coverage is sufficient to pick up any problem areas. AM provided assurance on the level of learning walk activity and said that she felt the activity is high and that issues are picked up and followed up quickly. MC and DP commented on the good assurance gained from the report including the themes and clear actions set out and thanked AM for her well structured report. PG requested and received clarification on the scope of the learning walks and observations. AM confirmed that the observations pick up Reaseheath Training but that the higher education provision within the HE Faculty is dealt with separately, with a link to the teaching and learning team. AT noted the actions clearly set out and supported by the committee. The report was received for information and assurance.</p> <p>5.2 Land and Environment Academy update: SH provided an oral update on the progress in developing the Academy of Land and Environment (ALE). She confirmed that the reporting structure is now a single entity and Countryside and Agriculture are now together in office space, with Horticulture still in its own space but working closely together. She added that there are good structures in place with staffing</p>

	<p>settled down and new staff really supporting the culture change. She noted the excellent collaborative working now, especially in practicals. In terms of quality, she gave assurance that all three departments are above target for attendance and retention and are currently undertaking synoptic assessments. She highlighted an area of concern is in relation to agriculture land based level 1, which is due to some staffing issues and long term sickness, but this has been picked up by the quality team in order to make improvements. She also provided an update on the development of the offer. She summarised the overall progress as very good and alerted members to the main areas of risk that need managing going forwards as the maintenance of the specialist staffing and the complexity of the qualifications and awarding bodies in this area of provision. Members welcomed the positive assurance received and noted that the improvements needed in the countryside department are being monitored via the college quality improvement process and showing good signs, with further information provided to the meeting in the countryside quality improvement plan. Members congratulated SH on the progress made and received the report for information and assurance.</p>
<p>6.</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p>	<p>Quality Improvement</p> <p>The Department for Education (DfE) 16-18 2018/19 performance measures and minimum standards: MGower presented a summary of the benchmarked performance data of Reaseheath College and provided assurance that the data evidenced good solid performance with no significant concerns. Discussion and questions followed. In response to a question from AM, MGower confirmed that any strategic decisions around increasing functional skills delivery would need to be carefully considered in terms of its impact on the qualification achievement rates (QAR). AT raised the issue of the decline in apprenticeship performance data and MGower noted that the area self-assessed as requiring improvement based on the 2018-19 self assessment report. The reasons for this were discussed and it was noted that the data shown relates largely to frameworks. The meeting acknowledged that the data next year will show standards data and this will be impacted across the sector by the issues with employer and apprentice engagement in end point assessments. It was noted that the data is likely to decline as a result but that the sector average will also decline. PG asked for clarification on the performance targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that governors approve and monitor. MGower clarified that these were set out in the self-assessment report and quality improvement plan (QIP) that the Board approves annually and these year end targets are adapted into termly KPIs such as retention and attendance that are provided to the committee for monitoring in the quality improvement plan report. MGower confirmed that it is these KPIs in the QIP that need monitoring each term to see if things are on track and he agreed to add in the latest available national averages to the QIP. The meeting received the report for information and assurance.</p> <p>FE in year performance dashboard: MGower presented the PowerBI college performance dashboard that had recently been developed. He also took members through the paper received in advance of the meeting that was the quality department dashboard report that is provided to the executive monthly and the FE Academic Board termly. The committee confirmed that they found the quality department dashboard helpful and they would like to receive this on a termly basis, as up to date as possible in advance of the meeting. In relation to the PowerBI dashboard, MGower explained that the executive team use it weekly and it is now used by curriculum area managers, who are starting to embed it at course manager level. He confirmed that he would like to start using the dashboard for governor meetings and the first stage would be to arrange log ins for the committee and arrange a workshop session. PG welcomed the comprehensive health check reports but he requested assurance that the actions are followed up and feed into the relevant QIP. WW acknowledged that whilst these actions are followed up, there needs to be more consistency in adding and monitoring these actions in the QIP.</p> <p>College QIP 2019-20 Update, including focus on Countryside, Reaseheath Training and DART Limited:</p>

	<p>AT introduced the item, noting that he was assured by the information provided in the college QIP and the individual department focus QIPs. JC welcomed the assurance but also noted that there were a lot of different papers and she found it a little confusing and that she would also welcome some more context on the amber RAG rating at review 1 on the college QIP. She explained that she was not sure how some of these, such as retention could be picked up in the remaining time. MGower provided assurance that he considered the college can still hit the end of year targets. MC noted that it is the achievement target that the retention data feeds into and so he considered it is still possible to meet the achievement target at year end. MGower confirmed that overall he is content with the progress on the previous year's performance. AT suggested that the executive summary could give the context around the amber RAG rating that would be helpful to let members know what is still achievable and what is more of a risk of becoming red. MGower added that the emerging risk on quality in full time agricultural engineering will be added to the college QIP for monitoring and PS gave an update in the meeting on the current position and actions in place.</p>
6.4	<p>Members then considered the other areas of focus: Countryside; Reaseheath Training; and DART Limited. Members welcomed assurance of progress made on Countryside and Reaseheath Training. JS provided an update on DART limited and noted that whilst there is good progress in terms of overall achievement there are still some areas of concern, including the impact of the end point assessments and the horticulture programme. She explained the actions in place to mitigate and move the delivery model forward. PG welcomed the actions being taken and emphasised that the continued support from Reaseheath is very important. In terms of the reporting, AT welcomed the way in which the Reaseheath Training QIP had broken down the risk rating to individual areas. He suggested that it would be helpful to review the reporting at an appropriate time for management so that the committee members could ensure that it remains most effective for board assurance purposes. Discussion followed and members welcomed the idea of a higher level of reporting with context in executive summaries and then more detail to drill down to if needed, but not on the face of the reporting.</p>
7.	College Group Strategic Risk Register and KPIs
7.1	<p>FE and Apprenticeships risk update report: MC presented his overview report, with the detailed risk register report provided for information. He noted the overall good position on quality at the moment, but with the need to escalate the provision in FE full time engineering as an emerging risk to quality in that area, as discussed earlier in the meeting. The report was received for information and assurance.</p>
8.	Reports for information
8.1	<p>The following reports were received for information and assurance: College Ofsted Report December 2019 Dart Limited Ofsted Report January 2020 FE Academic Board Minutes</p>
8.2	<p>The committee recorded its congratulations and thanks to all the Reaseheath College and DART Limited team members for the successful Ofsted inspection outcomes, which provide assurance to the governing body on the continued quality of provision.</p>
9.	Items for ratification
9.1	<p>College Security Policy: the policy was provided for ratification. The committee noted that the executive had reviewed and approved the policy and the college was holding a security meeting in the coming weeks to further review the level and implementation of campus security measures, but that it was requested to approve the policy as it is due for its scheduled review. JC asked that the security meeting</p>

9.2	<p>review how things are working in practice, including the use of the security barriers at the main entrance.</p> <p>RESOLVED: The College Security Policy is ratified, noting that the executive team will report following their review of the policy implementation in the autumn term when a further committee review will take place.</p>
10.	<p>Any other business</p> <p>10.1 It was confirmed that the business continuity planning for the impact of the coronavirus is well underway, with a meeting planned with the college management team later in the day and that the governing body would be kept informed, with a full report to the forthcoming board meeting.</p> <p>10.2 AT expressed congratulations on behalf of the committee to MGower on his appointment to the role of Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality.</p> <p>10.3 Members were invited to the Landex peer review feedback session taking place later in the week.</p>
11.	<p>Any items to escalate to the risk register/report to Board</p> <p>11.1 It was agreed to report the following key points from the meeting to the Board:</p> <p>The committee recorded its congratulations and thanks to all the Reaseheath College and DART Limited team members for the successful Ofsted inspection outcomes, which provide assurance to the governing body on the continued quality of provision.</p> <p>AT expressed congratulations on behalf of the committee to MGower on his appointment to the role of Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the business continuity planning for the impact of the coronavirus is well underway, with a meeting planned with the college management team later in the day and that the governing body would be kept informed, with a full report to the forthcoming board meeting.</p> <p>The good work and progress on performance dashboards, presented to the committee in the meeting and intended to be used for committee reporting going forwards.</p> <p>The presentation on delivery staff feedback on the use of digital resources was very useful and highlighted the good work going on, but with the main barrier to successful consistent implementation across college being the current infrastructure and noting that the strategic plan includes as a key objective the achievement of such infrastructure to fully support the development of the digital strategy.</p> <p>The committee supported the decision by executive to cease carrying out the FE Choices survey for FE provision this year – this matter had been considered in the last two committee meetings and all agreed that it does not serve a useful purpose over and above the college’s own survey and benchmarking analysis that it carries out with access to all the required information and there are no real disadvantages to the college from no longer taking part in this survey.</p>

	<p>The approval of the College Security Policy at its scheduled review, with a commitment to have a further look at the measures in place and the implementation of the policy in six months time – in the autumn term committee meeting.</p> <p>The risk position on quality was reported and accepted as good overall, with good external assurance from Ofsted, but with the need to escalate the provision in FE full time engineering as an emerging risk to quality in that area of provision. The challenge of engagement of employers and learners in end point assessments in apprenticeships was also acknowledged as a risk to year end data, which is a sector wide issue.</p> <p>The very positive overall progress on the development of the new Academy of Land and Environment was welcomed, with the main risks to manage going forwards being the maintenance of the specialist staffing and the complexity of the qualifications and awarding bodies in this area of provision.</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>Date of next meetings The dates of the next meetings were confirmed as: Thursday 30 April 2020 2pm – joint meeting HE Committee Monday 22 June 2020 at 10.30am</p>

The meeting closed at 1.40pm.

Signed:

Dated: