

External Relations Committee

Tue 04 June 2024, 18:30 - 20:00

Over Teams

Attendees

Board members

Dave Vasse (Principal), Tim Stockings (Committee Chair), James Gould (Vice Principal), Jamie Davies (Member), Kay Sandford-Beal (Director of Governance), Tayma Bachoo (Student Member), Maurine Lewin (Member)

Absent: Marian Orafu (Member), Jonathan Service (Assistant Principal), Natalie Firth (Member), Philippe Chaudhry (Member)

Over Teams

Meeting minutes

1. Welcome, apologies for absence and confirmation of quoracy

Information

To welcome members, accept apologies for absence and confirm that the meeting is quorate.

Tim Stockings

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting. Apologies had been received from Natalie Firth, Jonathan Service and Marian Orafu. Philippe Chaudhry was absent but apologies had not been received. The meeting was confirmed as quorate.

1.1. Confidentiality Statement

Information

All matters discussed during this meeting are confidential until the minutes are approved. Any items recorded Reserved Business remain confidential after the Reserved Business minutes have been approved

Tim Stockings

The Chair drew members' attention to the Confidentiality Statement.

2. Declarations of interest

Information

To ensure that any declarations of interest are declared against any item on the agenda.

Tim Stockings

None were declared.

3. Minutes of the last meeting

Decision

For members to approve the minutes of the last meeting on the 6th February as a true record.

Tim Stockings

DECISION:

The minutes of the previous meeting on the 6th February 2024 were approved as a true record.

 3. Chair approved - Minutes_External Relations Committee_060224.pdf

4. Matters Arising from the minutes of the last meeting on the 6th February 2024

Information

To monitor the completion of actions not appearing elsewhere on the agenda.

Tim Stockings

It was noted that all actions resulting from the previous meeting had been completed or included within the agenda.

 4. Action log External Relations Committee 060224 updated.pdf

5. Skills Strategy Overview

Governors to be provided with overview of the Skills Strategy before focus on key elements:

Information

James Gould

The Skills Strategy document, distributed to members in June 23 and the February 24 report, had also been shared with a June 24 update to provide context for those new to the committee.

 5. Skills Strategy Update.pdf

 5.1 Skills Strategy June 23.pdf

 5.2 Skills Strategy Report Feb 24.pdf

5.1. Work Experience

Governors to be provided with updates on the Work Experience programme progress.

JG highlighted the volume of work that had been completed by the college to modernise the curriculum in order to reflect the regional skills demand and confirmed that inroads into the required legal duty had been achieved. In particular, it was agreed that work experience for students had proved very beneficial.

Q - Gov: What is the process that students go through to access this type of quality work experience? i.e. how are the students chosen?

A - JG: It is provided for the full time vocational Level 3 students, but our challenge has been poor engagement, due to the limitations of the placement only lasting for a week. Therefore, next year we plan to support students with increased preparation in advance of the placement. We are aware that such an experience is currently not on offer to those studying A levels and hope to increase opportunities next year to address A level student engagement with employers.

Q - Gov: The purpose of the college is to prepare students for what comes next. What are the measures for success? And how can we tap into alumni to address the London skills agenda?

A - JG: We have found that placements are not of the same quality as those experienced before the Covid pandemic and that students are benefitting more from Skills Challenge weeks.

Governors were informed that surveys are completed by both students and employers at the end of work placements to measure success.

The Principal highlighted the future need to interrogate and analyse reasons, not only behind employer-college relationship breakdown, but also what may contribute to a successful, long lasting employer relationship. This would be useful information to track, to ensure the programme's ongoing success.

A Governor queried how employers are thanked or acknowledged for their involvement. This acknowledgement would be provided through the delivery of a Community Awards event, hosted by the college towards the end of the summer term (28th June 2024).

Information

James Gould

5.2. Shifting Curriculum

Governors to be provided with updates on how the curriculum is shifting to meet local and regional demand for skills.

The Chair asked how SLT and the Corporation can ensure that the curriculum remains relevant and that the college is delivering what it should be?

A - DV: this is the importance of the annual Accountability Statement (recently formally approved by Governors) which will then be submitted to the DFE. The statement includes a 'skills section' which describes our intent for the curriculum. This is evaluated by Ofsted against externally set criteria.

It was noted that Governors had been involved since the beginning of the academic year in the evaluation and consideration of regional skills needs, growth and quality to inform how the curriculum should change going forward. JG shared that data had revealed high demand in the areas of Finance, Science Technology and Pharmaceuticals. The college had also completed its own analysis of economical demand and adapted the curriculum to fit local needs. A strong example of this was the college's ESOL provision which had made significant progress in recent years.

Q - Governor: Are staff engaged with this need to demonstrate impact and what can staff do to support?

Information

James Gould

A - JG: Every course provides employment related data, reflecting how destination data is aligned to local needs.

The Chair emphasised the importance of equipping students for the next stage of their journey.

5.3. Stakeholder Engagement

Governors to be provided with updates on Stakeholder engagement.

Nothing further to report.

Information

James Gould

6. Strategic Safeguarding Update

Decision And Information

James Gould

6.1. Prevent Risk Assessment

To review and approve the Prevent Risk Assessment.

JG presented updates to the Prevent Risk Assessment, produced using the DFE created template. The updated document had also been shared with the local authority for feedback.

The Chair commented that the document was comprehensive but suggested it be rationalised, with categories consolidated, to ensure that the document was accessible and meaningful for Governors. The Principal highlighted that each risk was relevant. The Chair commended the piece of work but shared his concerns that if inspected, Governors would be expected to be fully knowledgeable of the entire contents of the risk assessment. A simplification of the document would also facilitate need for updating.

ACTION: JG to review, with support from the Chair and bring back to ER Committee.

 6.1 Sir George Monoux Prevent Risk Assessment.xlsx

Decision

James Gould

6.2. Safeguarding Update

To provide governors with a verbal update from the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Jonathan Service had had to send his apologies and a brief recorded update was therefore provided to Governors.

Governors were provided with an update on the activity of Students 'reselling', which had become a recent safeguarding trend over the last few months. The most significant area of concern was mental health and sexual exploitation.

The current Safeguarding Link Governor (ML) requested a date for the termly Safeguarding Visit. She would be accompanied by the incoming Safeguarding Link Governor (Pat Morton) to support a smooth handover of the role once ML's term of office comes to an end in October 24.

ACTION: JG to secure Safeguarding Governors Visit date towards the end of term.

Governors requested further information on the 'reselling trend' and expressed their concerns.

The trend involved the purchase of items via social media (often via snapchat rather than a monitored forum such as ebay), and then the reselling of goods off premises. Governors were informed that on average, a couple of cases were being reviewed every couple of weeks. Governors also discussed what should be the best method for monitoring the trend and suggested that appropriate assemblies be planned to address the issue.

JG reassured members that the Annual Safeguarding Report would be shared at the November Committee meeting and that an assembly programme would be planned around the content of the report.

The Principal highlighted that the role of this committee is to be reassured that the college is using its resources effectively. The annual Safeguarding report would provide this assurance, together with further detail on key issues and trends. It was understood that Governors need to be aware of what is happening

Information

Jonathan Service

within the college on a day to day basis, but that this could be shared via the reports completed by the Safeguarding Link Governor further to any Safeguarding termly visit.

ACTION: Safeguarding Link Governor to complete and share report following each visit.

7. SEND Policy

Decision

James Gould

To review and approve the updated SEND policy

JG had made the necessary suggested minor amendments to the SEND policy to accurately reflect the role of the SEND Link Governor.

JD, as SEND Link Governor confirmed he was happy with the policy but recommended that an operational document should sit underneath to details day to day processes.

DECISION: The SEND policy was **approved**.

 7. SEND policy.pdf

8. KPI Table and Marketing Update

Information

James Gould

Governors to review updates and progress.

Reports had been shared with Governors in advance of the meeting and JG provided reassurance that he anticipated that the college would be on track against forecast. Questions were invited.

Q - Governor: How will a changing government impact B-tecs and T Levels?

A - JG: This is very much a discussion point within the SLT. The college can decide not to run some of its transition courses in September, but modelling will be required to ascertain if Level 2 should be retained. The college's aim is to shift the balance of provision from September 2024, rather than prioritise rapid growth. Growing A-Level provision does involve an element of risk, and Governors have received various updates regarding the college's Marketing strategy and curriculum design to inform this process.

The Principal shared that a focus of a Labour Government would be on workplace strategy and as such, funds would be directed towards technical further education, resulting in B-tecs being diminished.

The Chair highlighted the emerging theme of quality over quantity and that this was a strategic concern for the Corporation as a whole. The college needs to ensure that students are retained and benefit from the college's educational offer.

JG emphasised that the college's aim is to shift from September 24, rather than place focus on growth. This involved risk, but it was considered that the current appetite for risk was strong. Reassurance was provided in the form of strong student retention over the last 2 years.

 8.1 KPI 2324 Review May 2024.pdf

 8.2 Marketing and Recruitment paper June 2023.pdf


9. Committee related risks

Discussion

Tim Stockings

To identify committee related risks to escalate to the Corporation (Most Recent Risk Register shared with Board for reference)

Governors reviewed the most recent Risk Management Report, which had also been shared at the May 24 Board meeting. Governors did not identify any further committee related risks to escalate to the Corporation.

 9. MX_Risk Register_8 May 2024.pdf

10. Annual Review of terms of reference

Decision

Tim Stockings

To review and approve the committee's terms of reference (annual review)

KS had made minimal amendments to the Committee Terms of Reference to ensure that it was consistent with the newly created Scheme of Delegation and Governors were invited to consider if any further amendments should be made at this opportunity for annual review.

The Principal questioned the real meaning of the phrase: 'Exercise oversight' and suggested an amendment

to all terms of reference to "Be Assured of the effectiveness of.."

He also suggested an additional bullet point making relating specifically to the 14-16 provision.

The Principal also suggested the inclusion of specific policies that the Committee held responsibility to review and approve.

ACTION: KS and JG to discuss appropriate wording and clarify policies that the Committee is required to review and approve

 10. External Relations ToR - June 24 for review.pdf

10.1. Scheme of Delegation

Governors to review the Scheme of Delegation (as recommended by the Governance and Remuneration Committee) and ensure it accurately reflects the External Relations Committee's terms of reference.

The Chair commented that this would be a useful document for Governors and asked that KS ensure that any updated Committee Terms of Reference be reflected in the next version of the Scheme of Delegation.

ACTION: KS to ensure any amendments to the ER ToR were reflected in the next iteration of the Scheme of Delegation.

 10.1 SCHEME OF DELEGATION v2 for review.pdf

Discussion

Tim Stockings

11. AOB

To discuss any urgent items, not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

An item of confidential business was documented under Reserved Business.

Information

Tim Stockings

12. Date of next meeting

To confirm the date of the next meeting of the committee as Tuesday 5th November at 6.30pm

The next meeting date of Tuesday 5th November at 6.30pm was confirmed.

Information

Tim Stockings

13. The meeting closed at 19.43

Information

Tim Stockings