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EXETER COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

QUALITY AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 26th March 2018 in the Board Room,
Hele Road, Exeter College**

Present Dave Underwood Chair
Bindu Arjoon
John Laramy
Kira Lewis
| Craig Marshall

Aimee Mitchell
Martin Owen
Caleb Stevens
Emma Webber

Apologies Jo Matthews

In Attendance

	Rob Bosworth	Vice Principal, Schools Partnership and Curriculum
	Julie Skinner	Vice Principal, Standards and Student Experience
<i>Item 6.2 only</i>	Emma Fielding	Assistant Principal
<i>Item 4 only</i>	Gemma Noble	Head of People

Barbara Sweeney Clerk to the Corporation

1. **Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest.** Action

The Chair welcomed colleagues to the meeting.

Apologies were received.

Caleb Stevens, employee of Okehampton College, declared an interest in any items relating to school 6th forms and learner support services.

2. **Minutes**

2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 5th February 2018, as circulated, were agreed and signed by the Chair.

3. **Matters arising**

Quality and Resource Review Days (QRR)

The Principal updated the Committee on the latest Quality and Resource Review Days. The first day had been completed, but other sessions

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disrupted by the snow days. The Committee Vice Chair, due to attend a session which was cancelled, was rescheduled to attend later in the year. Key issues included careful management of transfers at the end of year one, so that rather than lose students, with the corresponding impact on retention and funding, learners were transferred to more appropriate programmes. This benefitted both the learner and the College.

In Higher Education, the Office for Students aimed to increase the link between students and the governing body. The Committee considered and debated the benefits and dis-benefits of governors undertaking guided walks in faculties. Whilst it increased visibility of Governors, this might be limited, and there was a risk of losing oversight of strategic matters. Other mechanisms provided learner contact such as celebration events and the QRR provided additional assurance of individual faculty issues. Identified during Governor appraisals, the matter would be considered further by the Search and Governance Committee when it reviewed the appraisal action plan.

BHS

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) had been reviewed by the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and the question raised of whether this was embedded in the curriculum to support students' understanding of associated risks. The Committee was assured that this was under the remit of the Senior Curriculum Group (SCG).

There were no other Matters Arising which were not elsewhere on the agenda.

Gemma Noble, Head of People, joined for item 4 only.

4. **HR Policies**

- i. Code of Practice on the use of Social Media (This document has an annual review date)
- ii. Disciplinary Policy
- iii. Probation Procedure
- iv. Pensions and Retirement

The draft Policies were received and Gemma highlighted the key changes from previous versions. In the main they were all procedural.

The Code of Practice for Social Media was reviewed annually to reflect the potential for changes in practice. However, there were no recommended amendments and there had been no incidents in the year. The Committee considered the hazard of chat rooms and internet dating. Whilst the policy was high level to cover a range of applications, this would be considered at the next review.

The Disciplinary Policy included one key amendment relating to the

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involvement of Occupation Health to support an employee where the process related to sickness absence. The revised Probationary Policy was now consistent with other policies with the inclusion the right to be accompanied. The Policy also clarified that the probationary review was completed electronically. Finally, the Pensions and Retirement Policy had been updated to reflect the fact that the transition period for auto enrolment had expired, and to recommend that individuals sought independent financial advice. Gemma confirmed that advisory sessions were part of the development days but that all advice was generic.

The Committee agreed to approve

- i. Code of Practice on the use of Social Media**
- ii. Disciplinary Policy**
- iii. Probation Procedure**
- iv. Pensions and Retirement**

Vote: unanimous

The agenda was re-ordered and item 6.2 was taken after item 4

Emma Fielding, Assistant Principal joined the meeting for item 6.2 only

6. **Teaching and Learning**

6.2 Curriculum Update

The Presentation was received and Emma reminded the Committee that there had been significant change over the past year.

Programmes of study for linear programmes had moved from four subjects to three. Whilst four subjects fitted well with modular programmes, in order to increase contact time for linear subjects the number had been reduced to three. Nonetheless, for keen and able students a programme of four subjects was still available. A concern over the reduction to three had been a potential loss of breadth. This was mitigated by the Extend Programme; a range of subjects, without exams, to provide enrichment and to enable students to stand out from the crowd in their job and university applications. This had proved to be a great success and went beyond the traditional curriculum. Whilst timetabling had been challenging, there was a real positive of increased contact time to five hours per subject per week and with more frequent contact. Collapsed classes, rotated through the week, provided additional time during which students received sessions on, inter alia, UCAS, financial management and employability. The range was impressive and well received.

Fourteen subjects were now taught as linear, an increase of ten in the year. Twenty three were taught as modular with an AS level exam, mostly subjects where there was a large cohort, such as English, maths and

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science. The criteria for linear included availability of resources, feasibility and viability. The list of linear A levels introduced between 2015 and 2020 (when all subjects would be linear) illustrated the phased approach. To consider the move a total transition to linear programmes required reflection, and there was a tension between the moral arguments for change to linear against the impact on retention with its corresponding effects on funding if learners did not progress to the second year. To retain exam practice in the linear programmes, internal exams were scheduled with the process and results day designed to mimic external examinations. The two distinct years of the modular programme did not have the advantage of a single linear programme where there was an opportunity in the second year to consolidate the knowledge gained in the first. However for some, there was the benefit of a meaningful exam after one year, recognised externally.

It was proposed that the College continue to retain the modular programme for the majority of subjects in 2018-19. In areas where this was not working, the Senior Curriculum Group (SCG) would evaluate any justification to change to linear.

The Committee considered the item at length, including staff and student governor contributions. It was confirmed that the modular programmes in schools had been phased out and so students entered College with an expectation of a linear programme. However the current mixed economy had resulted in the best success and progress scores ever, and the phased approach managed the risk better.

The Chair acknowledged that the appetite to achieve full transition to linear programmes varied between members but that the decision must be made subject by subject and with the best interests of the learner at heart. The strategic decision must also include the financial viability and impact on funding. The Committee agreed that it was well briefed on the issues and that, as an operational matter, it trusted the Executive to implement in the best interests of the students and College.

The Committee noted the update.

5. Quality Assurance

5.1 Partnership quality assurance and subcontractor policy

The report was received and considered and Rob Bosworth, VP Schools Partnership and Curriculum, highlighted the link to FE week to illustrate the current focus and challenge of subcontracting, including issues of poor quality and fraud. The increase in subcontractor provision by private providers had significantly increased the burden on Ofsted.

The College had consciously reduced its subcontractor provision since 2010 and was better able to manage the quality of a smaller number. Circa 3% of apprenticeships was with subcontractors with the biggest

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having relatively low value. The financial impact of subcontracting was monitored by the Business Services Committee, and whilst there were checks and balances in place to monitor quality assurance, there was no process to provide quality assurance to the Board.

The Committee would receive a full report at its next meeting, and annually thereafter, including an overview of learner feedback and teaching learning and internal inspection. This would provide assurance through triangulation. The report would not be a policy, but an update on the implementation of subcontractors' quality assurance. There would also be an update on emerging opportunities through the apprenticeship levy.

BHS

The Committee noted the report.

5.2 QIP update

The report, comprising the fully populated Quality Improvement Plan was received and taken as read. The final column detailed progress toward the actions and the Committee considered a number in detail where clarification was needed.

The Committee thanked management for the progress and update and **noted the report.**

5.3 Accommodation - Safeguarding

The report was received and taken as read. Julie Skinner, VP Standards and Student Experience, confirmed that whilst Student Residential Accommodation was regularly reviewed by the Business Services Committee, this was the first such report received by this Committee and reflected the importance of safeguarding in this context.

There were several aspect to residential accommodation; Unite was leased accommodation used for College students, predominantly 16-18 Exeter Chiefs Academy, and post 18 HE and International, and Homestay was for 16-18 international students staying with local families.

The governance structure and risk mitigations were considered and Julie confirmed that a new role had been agreed for an accommodation co-ordinator. To illustrate risk management, a selection of documents were circulated. The Committee commended the considerable amount of detail. Starting small had enabled the College to set up appropriate systems and processes. Metrics through MIS were invaluable.

The Safeguarding Governor assured the Committee that there was robust management and good mitigation of risks. Why, therefore, had the risk rating increased? The business model and safeguarding risks were combined under a single risk on the register masking the different strands. However, until an Ofsted inspection, it was prudent to retain a

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higher rating overall.

The Committee commended the report and noted the update.

5.4 Nursery Update

The update was received and the Principal confirmed that whilst the Business Services Committee had received regular updates, reporting on an imminent Ofsted of the nursery was the remit of this Committee.

Nursery risk exposure had doubled with a second nursery. However this had helped staffing ratios. Both would have their own Ofsted rating, even though there was common branding. Reports on Quality Assurance, including safeguarding and internal inspection, would come to this Committee, with Tors amended accordingly.

The new nursery was due to open in September 2018 and there would be a pre-opening Ofsted to review documentation and a further visit within a year. It was imperative to schedule the pre-opening visit, without which the facility could not open, with resulting loss of income. An internal inspection was in progress with the developmental visit completed, and which would provide assurance to the Committee.

BHS

The Committee noted the update.

6. **Teaching and Learning**

6.1 Internal Inspection Mid-Year update

The report was received and considered and Julie provided context for the report. Thirteen faculties had been inspected in three years, including three in the current year, the last of which was the previous week. All had been productive and positive experiences from which action plans had been agreed. The Committee received all reports and the outcome of the latest faculty to be reviewed would be received at the next meeting.

The process was dynamic, changing over the years to incorporate the latest Ofsted focus, currently progression and work based learning.

The Committee agreed that the process worked well and agree to

Note the report

6.2 Curriculum Reform Update

This item was taken after item 4.

7. Risk Register

The Risk Register was received and noted. The circulated register had been reviewed in February 2018 and incorporated the comments from the

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last meeting. The Committee sought clarification on a number of risks relating to ratings and mitigations.

The Committee agreed to

Note the report

8. Minutes/ reports for information

The following reports were received and noted:

8.1 Safeguarding meeting – 9 February 2018

8.2 EDBV meeting – 20 March 2018

8.3 Retention Attendance and Punctuality

8.4 Items to take to Board

The Committee agreed on items to take to the Board on 4th May 2018.

8.5 Items for next meeting

The Committee agreed the items to be included on the agenda for the next meeting on 18 June 2018.

8. Dates of next meetings

Monday 18 June 2018