

City College, Birmingham Corporation

Quality & Standards Committee Meeting

Tuesday 29th January 2008, 5.30 pm

at

**City Academy Saltley, 80 Anthony Road,
Saltley, Birmingham B8 3AA
in room 1**

Present: Mr David Brown – Business member
Ms Monica Coke (Chair) – Business member
Mr Peter Harwood – Acting Principal
Cllr Jon Hunt – LEA member
Ms Mumtaz Hussain – Co-opted member
Mr John Williamson – Staff member

In Attendance: Mrs Debbie Cole – Clerk to the Corporation
Mr Henry Coore – Observer
Mrs Tracy Everett – Corporation Administrator
Mr Anthony Gribben – Director of Student Information
Mr Bob Hawkes – Director of Audit & Compliance
Ms Annella Mochan – Partnership Manager, LSC
Ms Ranjna Parmar – Deputy Principal: Personnel & Services
Ms Shushil Rai – Director of Quality & Teacher Development
Mrs Jackie Willetts – Director of Faculty, Vocational Studies

1. Declaration of Interests

01.08QS The Chair asked if anyone wished to declare an interest. The Chair declared an interest around anything to do with Advantage West Midlands (AWM), her employer and the Project Planning Centre (PPC).

2. Apologies

02.08QS Mr Williamson and Ms Hussain had sent their apologies that they would be arriving late.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 24th May 2007

03.08QS The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

04.08QS The Chair made an observation around the wording ethnic group as she considered everyone to be part of an ethnic group and asked that in future different terminology is used.

05.08QS **Resolution: members unanimously agreed to approve the minutes contained in paper 1.**

4. Matters arising

06.08QS There were no matters arising.

5. Notes of the meeting held on 30th October 2007

07.08QS The notes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

08.08QS **Resolution: members unanimously agreed to receive the notes of the meeting held on 30th October 2007 contained in paper 2.**

6. Matters arising

09.08QS There were no matters arising.

7. Action List as at 29th January 2008

10.08QS Minute No: 188.06QS – The Chair informed members that this was a long standing action point that had not been met. However part of the agenda for tonight's meeting includes training which will start to address this issue. Training will also be a regular item on the agenda.

11.08QS The Chair informed members that minute numbers 63.07QS and 93.07QS were not yet due for completion and would be picked up during the following two meetings.

12.08QS Minute No: 147.07QS – The Chair informed members that the Quality and Standards Committee had been strengthened by the inclusion of the Vice Chair of the Corporation. This item can now be removed from the action list.

13.08QS **Resolution: members unanimously agreed to receive the action list contained in paper 3.**

Members agreed to leave discussing item 8 till later in the meeting.

9. Training/Development

9.1 Introduction to Measuring Success

14.08QS Mr Gribben handed out copies of the training slides. He explained that the session was very much an introductory session which could be built upon. One of his proposals is to compile a set of documents to build and support the work of the committee. Slides are attached to these minutes as appendix A.

Mr Williamson arrived at 5.35 pm.

15.08QS Mr Gribben guided members through the training slides.

16.08QS Mr Brown asked for an explanation of value added. Mr Gribben informed members that the college looks at what a student comes to college with and what they left with.

Ms Hussain arrived at 5.55pm.

17.08QS Mr Gribben asked members if they had any questions relating to the training session.

18.08QS The Chair asked how the college uses the data. Mr Gribben said he would pick this up at the end of the presentation.

19.08QS The Chair asked if the college was being penalised because of the student intake it has. Mr Gribben did not think that this was the case.

- 20.08QS The Chair asked to what extent, where student are dropping out of courses, do the college analyse the teaching and learning practices to ensure students are engaged and motivated. Mr Gribben informed members that clearly there are areas for improvement. They have been identified in the inspection report and even if they had not would have still needed to be improved.
- 21.08QS The Chair asked how many of the colleges programmes do not fit into categories for the college to be marked successfully. Mr Gribben informed members that a large part of our ESOL provision did not fit into that category. However the college has a reducing amount of ESOL provision.
- 22.08QS Mr Gribben guided members through his training presentation on minimum levels of performance (MLP) and asked members if they had any questions relating to MLP.
- 23.08QS The Chair asked if it would be fair to ask for that information on MLP to come to the committee to see where we are and where we want to be. Mr Gribben informed members that the clerk will have recorded their comments and with the clerk he would look to see when in the meeting schedule was the most appropriate time of year to do this.
- 24.08QS Mr Coore requested that the information be kept as simple as possible as members do sometimes get information that is not digestible. He commented that the committee needed to ensure that monitoring is taking place.
- 25.08QS Councillor Hunt commented that earlier Mr Gribben had said that a small course would be disregarded yet he had just seemed to contradict that statement. Mr Gribben stated that this was due to an anomaly in the terminology used. The LSC count short courses, based on the length of time the student is enrolled as a separate category. The MLP reports use the number of teaching hours to determine the weight given to the results of a course.
- 26.08QS The Chair stated that was why she asked the question of whether the college was being penalised. Mr Gribben again confirmed that he did not think this was the case.
- 27.08QS Mr Gribben informed members that he had introduced a system for the monitoring of student progress. The mechanism allows us to target courses where success is below where it should be, and curriculum managers to follow-up issues pro-actively.
- 28.08QS The Chair stated that she would like to see some of that information coming back to this committee. Mr Gribben informed members that this would be the case.
- 29.08QS Mr Williamson stated that the inspection report intimated that the committee hadn't seen this coming. He asked which key aspects needed to be addressed. The Acting Principal informed members that the tool that they had been looking at was a new introduction and only came in on 7th January. Staff have been incredibly co-operative and supportive. Tutors are currently going through individual students to see who are likely to fail. It could be argued that we should have been doing this anyway. In the MOTs we have focussed too much on financial indicators. Its not that the tools were wrong just that we weren't using them as effectively as we could have done. Things have changed quite a bit in the last 2 years.
- 30.08QS Mr Williamson asked with regard to this committee how information could be presented to members more effectively. Mr Gribben informed members that that could be done with information on MLP. The committee would also need to look at the trajectory of improvement and how fast we are progressing. The college has to make better use of national averages.

- 31.08QS The Chair asked if the college collected data on students who come in at a low level and progress to higher levels. Mr Gribben informed members that this is an area that is under developed at the college. Mr Harwood explained that there was a particular issue about the degree of focus the college has on success rates. We need to demonstrate progression and have not done that effectively. Mr Gribben informed members that the college suffers from economies of scale as level 1 is so huge.
- 32.08QS The Chair stated that the committee needed more training similar to today's presentation. Mr Gribben asked members to feedback to the Clerk whether they felt the training was at the right level and format and if the length of the training was acceptable for members.
- 33.08QS Mr Coore stated that one of the issues the college has to address is initial assessment. He felt that it was possible that the college system was not right or our internal arrangements were not working effectively. He stated that whether we like it or not the college will only be funded for what it is able to deliver in an effective and efficient manner.
- 34.08QS The Chair asked whether other committees would get similar training. The Clerk informed members that training would be set up appropriate to the committees.

10. Post Inspection Action Planning

- 35.08QS Mr Harwood informed members that the paper is very brief as the college is currently working on the post inspection action plan (PIAP) which is due in to the LSC on 3rd March. He explained that whilst there will be one main vehicle for post inspection action, action planning around inspection has been divided into 2 separate areas, the overarching PIAP and the quality improvement plan (QIP) which is required as a means of drawing down QIA support and will exist as a subset of the PIAP. He drew members attention to the paper and pointed out that there are now a couple of inaccuracies of timing within the plan as it has to be completed by 3rd March. He explained that following the inspection in November the college had to wait for the various support mechanisms to be activated and during that period the focus was primarily on in year improvement against a set of clearly identified revised success targets that have been shared with all staff. Teams have been placed in category in order to allow the college to best focus resources in year and to achieve the headline improvements. These have been shared by staff and are being constantly referenced.
- 36.08QS Mr Harwood informed members that some temporary acting management arrangements have been put in place. He was quite confident that some of those arrangements will continue in some way as SMT need to develop the PIAP.
- 37.08QS He informed members that the college had received its Notice to Improve from the LSC which sets out a clear framework and will run from April 2008 upto and beyond the next inspection. Our CoVe status is currently suspended and the college is not allowed to grow.
- 38.08QS He explained that the PIAP will be a costed plan and will be funded by the LSC through exceptional support.
- 39.08QS Mr Harwood explained that inspection had identified MIS as an area that needs support. Mr Gribben is meeting with a possible consultant who may be able to offer this support. He had met with a number of other Principals and they have pledged their support to the college. The Chair thanked the LSC and the other colleges for their support during this particular time of difficulty.

- 40.08QS Mr Brown asked when the college talks about headline target improvements what does it actually need to achieve. Mr Harwood informed members that if the college retains the volume of level 1 provision then it would be around a 20% improvement. However the college plans to reduce the volume of level 1 provision and raise success rates. One of the things the college recognised it did wrong is the way we treated some elements of ESOL. And this is the focus of particular attention during the PIAP process.
- 41.08QS Mr Brown stated that he got the feeling that over the last few years the college has not listened to the LSC as much as it should have done.
- 42.08QS Ms Hussain asked how realistic the headline target figures were and how they had been agreed upon. Mr Harwood stated that it is possible and other colleges have done it. It is possible to find 3 or 4% by better use of coding. There have been decisions made in the past which have been right in principle but have skewed the results.
- 43.08QS Mr Williamson asked what the main priority was on the action plan. Mr Harwood explained that there were clearly many areas for development but that the main issue was to address poor performance.
- 44.08QS The Chair asked if there would be any actions for the committee in the PIAP. Mr Harwood confirmed that there would not be any actions for the committee but there would be actions for the Corporation as a whole.
- 45.08QS Mr Coore stated that strategic issues need to come to the board. He stated that he was not aware of the possible consultancy arrangement for MIS. Mr Harwood stated that he and Mr Coore needed to have a conversation with regard to this matter.
- 46.08QS The Chair expressed concern and it was agreed that there would be follow up discussion to clarify this and other communication issues.
- 47.08QS The Chair stated that it was clear that communication needs to take place outside of this meeting to pick up that issue. She did not want to get into a blame culture but also we do not want to get into another mess.
- 48.08QS Mr Williamson commented that the Strategic Options Reviews being arranged by the LSC is entirely external and asked if the college has to pay for this. Mr Harwood confirmed that the college did not have to pay for this as it is commission by the LSC who are being very supportive.
- 49.08QS Mr Williamson asked if the college has any input into the review. Mr Harwood confirmed that the college would have input but the process is the LSC's and we cannot influence the process.
- 50.08QS **Resolution: members unanimously agreed to receive the Post Inspection Action Planning report contained in paper 5.**

11. Quality Improvement Plan

- 51.08QS Mr Harwood informed members that QIP is a subset of the PIAP. The first phase of the QIP has 51 days of support for the college. The LSC employ a consultant, which is Tribal, and they commission the QIA. The college now has its lead adviser, Graham Bell. The QIA will largely be his plan.
- 52.08QS The Chair had to leave the meeting a 7.20 pm and asked Mr Brown to chair the remainder of the meeting. Mr Brown took the chair.

- 53.08QS Mr Coore asked how useful our own self assessment process was. Mr Harwood stated that it was not very useful according to Ofsted, however we need a self assessment process. What was wrong with our process was our calibration. We were too generous having previously been much too generous. Our systems are not wholly wrong but we do need a devolved system.
- 54.08QS Mr Brown asked who would be carrying out the recalibration. Mr Harwood informed members that QIA will help if the college is not able to do it itself or we will have a new team in place. We have 12 months to get self assessment right and will be judged on a far greater number of observations during the re-inspection.
- 55.08QS Ms Hussain commented that self assessment should have critical elements as well. Mr Harwood reminded members that governors did a self assessment and it is difficult to get critical.
- 56.08QS Mr Brown asked if it was possible to send the MLP out to members. Mr Harwood stated that it was not that easy. He felt that this may be a training exercise for governors in the future.
- 57.08QS **Resolution: members unanimously agreed to receive the Quality Improvement Plan contained in paper 6.**

Members agreed to take item 8 at this point.

8. Review Quality & Standards Committee Performance Indicators for 2006/2007 and Set Targets for 2007/2008

- 58.08QS The Chair stated that this committee has not performed as well as it could have done, certainly last year there were a couple of occasions when the meeting did not have a quoracy. He felt that an 80% target for attendance was reasonable. Members agreed.
- 59.08QS The Chair stated that this committee should meet more regularly and suggested 6 times a year. Members agreed.
- 60.08QS Councillor Hunt asked if targets for retention, achievements and success of students should be looked at more than once a year. Mr Brown stated that the QIA will focus everybody on these issues. Mr Harwood informed members that in a sense this target was accurate as members would only confirm targets on an annual basis. The issues was around the monitoring of those targets.
- 61.08QS The Chair asked what the current date for confirming targets is. Mr Harwood informed members that the college is looking at the allocation for next years delivery now.
- 62.08QS The Clerk suggested she meet with Mr Gribben to arrange dates for additional meetings at the most appropriate times and a new cycle of business. Following this meeting she would revise the performance indicators and targets and possibly the terms of reference for members to discuss at a future meeting.
- 63.08QS Mr Williamson asked about the monitoring of quality assurance systems. Mr Harwood informed members that the MOT process needed to be re-vamped and a new quality assurance system will be in place by September 2008. Some of the processes within the MOT process are seen as good practice, but the issue is how we use that information. We will be working with the QIA to develop a new process.

- 64.08QS The Chair asked whether the committee should be regularly looking at student destinations and where this information comes from. Mr Harwood informed members that this would depend on whether members looked at intended or actual destinations. He explained that this was not a fully rounded system. Mr Gribben informed members that the college will have to do this. The Clerk informed members that a separate report on student destinations will need to be presented to the committee as the LSC are looking to see that the committee are receiving this information.
- 65.08QS The Chair asked when the most appropriate time to do this would be. Mr Harwood suggested that November would probably be the best time. Ideally the report should include the percentages into higher education, employment and no progression at all.
- 66.08QS The Chair asked if this could be kept as simple as possible and show a 3 year trend.
- 67.08QS Ms Hussain asked if the college had a mechanism for gathering this information. Mr Harwood informed members that systems are in place. If students register with a university is it relatively easy but if they go back into employment it is harder to provide this information. Mr Gribben informed members that this has been an issue for the sector.
- 68.08QS Mrs Willetts informed members that it is also possible to provide internal data for students who progress onto other courses.
- 69.08QS The Chair suggested that this information be reviewed twice a year. Members agreed.
- 70.08QS **Resolution: members unanimously agreed to review the Quality & Standards Committee Performance Indicators for 2006/2007 contained in paper 4 and Set Targets for 2007/2008.**
12. Any other business
- 71.08QS There was no further business.
13. Date and time of next meeting
- 72.08QS Members agreed that the Clerk would meet with Mr Gribben and re-issue further proposed dates for meetings.

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm.