Brooklands College

Minutes of the Curriculum and Performance Review Committee
co-ordinated remotely via 'Zoom' meeting platform software across various College and domestic locations, commencing 16.00 hrs on 25 November 2020.

Present:	Jackie Pearson	Chair
	Mary Hughes	Vice-Chair & Safe-Guarding Governor
	Dr Barbara Spittle	Vice-Chair of Governors
	Teresa Roberts	Staff Governor
	Christine Ricketts	Principal
In Attendance:	Princess Badilla	Student Observer
	Muhammed Bilal	Student Observer
	Simon Lovegrove	Assistant Principal (Curriculum)
	Andy Russell	Assistant Principal (Apprenticeships, Partnerships and Student Experience)
	Dr Stephen Dowbiggin OBE	Interim CEO
	Jonathan Lipscomb	Clerk to the Governing Body
Apologies:	None	

PART 1

1. Action in the event of fire

Action to be taken in the event of fire was left to the individual.

2. Welcome and apologies

The meeting was confirmed as quorate.

3. Declarations of Interest

Dr Barbara Spittle declared that she Barbara Spittle is a former Chair of Governors of East Surrey College and had been a Governor of Merton College prior to its merger with South Thames College.

Dr Stephen Dowbiggin OBE declared his position as Chair of the Sainsbury's T-Level Committee.

4. Notification of Any Other Business

The Committee Chair had not been notified of any other business.

5. Minutes of the Curriculum & Performance Management Committee Meeting

The draft minutes of the meeting on 3 June 2020 were considered and the Clerk asked to clarify three points, after which they will be signed by the Committee Chair.

i. On page 2, para xiii, the reference to English and Mathematics being problematic was unclear. The Principal explained that for English and Mathematics, the COVID exposure risk for teachers was higher as

instead of being 'bubbled' with a set of students, their teaching would be one element of the input to a number of 'student bubbles'. This had been addressed by allocating one or two teachers to a given curriculum area (e.g. to teach everyone in Sports & Public Services) to limit the number of students taught by each.

Asked if virtual learning could not facilitate safer teaching, the Assistant Principal (Curriculum) reported concerns that students at lower levels were disengaging from virtual learning and that in Mathematics there was a further difficulty in that virtual learning made it difficult for teachers to scrutinise calculation methods which were at the root of any difficulties.

ii. On page 3, para ii, clarification was again sought, with the Principal explaining that as it had not been possible to visit all the lessons during the previous term (Term 3), a different approach would be taken; dipping into lessons, examining resources and talking to both teachers and students. This term a complete learning review of the entire SEND area had been carried out and every teacher had been seen.

The Clerk was to note that this item was 'now completed'.

iii. On page 5 and elsewhere, references to 'Vice Principal' are to be changed to 'Assistant Principal'.

6.   Matters Arising

There were no matters arising other than on the agenda.

Items for Consideration and Approval

7.   Update from Principal on current COVID-19 actions and impact on student and staff experience

The Principal outlined the current status of the College's ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

i. From March to date, there have been 17 confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 at Brooklands: 11 from among Full-Time students, 4 from the adult cohort and 1 within apprenticeships. In addition, 1 teacher has tested positive.

ii. To date, the number of groups that have required to be isolated is 4. The process is to contact the DFE and to talk through each case. It is not always necessary to isolate a whole group if an infected individual has not been on site for perhaps, two weeks.

iii.

iv. The Business Continuity Group continues to meet on a weekly basis to discuss, adapt and review COVID protocols, in line with the most recent Government advice.

v. The College is in the process of increasing numbers of students on site. The Government recommendation for FE Colleges is a 50% presence but currently Brooklands is at 64%; mainly 16-18yr old students. It has become clear to SLT that students on levels 1 & 2 are struggling with the 'one week on – one week off' routine and are starting to disengage, so there is now an emphasis on them returning at least for any practical elements of their courses.

vi. This is being carefully planned, with the Directors of Curriculum assisting with risk assessment and additional intervention and support is being offered to those Directors who feel that they would benefit.

vii. Currently the data from the first learning visits is being analysed. Further work is required to develop innovative ways to deliver teaching and learning to engage with struggling students. The College has published 'Top Tips' for teachers who are teaching remotely, e.g. use of cameras and the checking of real-time engagement.

viii.   Overall, student practical work is behind where it needs to be as a consequence of the period of half-time remote attendance. Practical elements are necessarily a prominent feature of Brooklands' courses There is a clear need for students to attend in person to improve skills and complete their qualifications. The fifty-fifty split was only ever intended to be for one term.

8.   Enrolments and Achievement Rates [CP 20/21-01] (SL/AR)

Enrolments

i.   Currently, enrolments stand at 1,404 (2019: 1,323) representing 6% growth year on year. This exceeds our allocation target of 1,400 and is the equivalent of 95% of our in-house target. Other local colleges have not performed this well.

ii.   The College is happy with the performance in this respect of Health & Social Care, Hair & Beauty, Sport, Public Services, Business and Construction.

iii. Areas of concern include Travel and Tourism, Childcare, Hospitality, Media and IT. One IT course had been cancelled, having failed to recruit sufficient numbers at Level 2.

iv.   Following the recent predicted GCSE results, there has been a clear trend for students to apply for courses at Levels 2 and 3 and groups at Level 1 are quite small.

v.   Some students who have achieved the necessary grades are nevertheless not coping at L2 & L3 so are being monitored. A small number have been moved down to a more appropriate level.

vi.   Staff are doing their best and laying on additional classes for strugglers, but some incoming students have received generous grade, raising parental expectations. This complicates any attempts to adjust levels downwards.

vii. It is disappointing that IT is not more popular, and it is unclear why. The College has tried to address the content of its offering to make it more appealing. It may be that students with an interest in IT (and particularly elements such as programming) stay on at school to take A levels along with Mathematics.

viii. It is not known whether local Sixth Form Colleges are suffering similarly. The Assistant Principal (Curriculum) had hoped that if students struggled in a Sixth Form environment then they might decide to come to Brooklands instead. He understands however that those colleges are sufficiently reluctant to lose students that they will put them through at AS Level for the sake of their achievement level data.

ix.   There is a possibility that this year may prove to be different, particularly if students cannot even reach AS Level. It may be a question of having the right offering.

x.   There had been no interest the previous year in a 'safety-net' course (to begin in January) such as that which was named 'entrepreneurship', a generic business skills course. The Assistant Principal was however prepared to market it once more in these new circumstances.

xi.   The Principal reported improvements in marketing and instances where via her own networking contacts, students requiring more support come to Brooklands from Sixth Form Colleges. Marketing materials are being developed whereby students can take a tour of a particular curriculum area and within that students talk for example about their experiences of IT and what they are doing. There is a clear difference between an A-Level and a technical course in IT. More work on progression routes (technician support etc.)

xii. It should be remembered that IT provision is not only for young people but must also be focussed on local adults gaining essential digital skills.

xiii. The need to increase AEB funding is a major target for the College so alongside current provision, new provision has already been launched to re-train adults on furlough or who are unemployed. New courses coming on stream in January are recruiting now. 24 Adults have enrolled for a Level 1 OCR Government backed diploma in Essential Digital Skills.

xiv. Courses require 16 people to run. Otherwise they are not feasible or sustainable.

xv. The College is also working with the DWP to provide adults with essential digital skills. The DWP will refer people with no access to IT or just insufficient basic skills. Employers too will recommend furloughed or redundant workers and once more the role of the College will be to supply training, with a view to moving people back into employment.

xvi. The Spelthorne BC link was discussed. This will provide a 'Youth Hub', being a one-stop shop for advice, guidance, counselling and financial support. Individuals will be assisted to move onto traineeships, apprenticeships or other full-time programmes, or supported into employment. Brooklands hopes to base these hubs on College campuses at Ashford and at Weybridge.

xvii. There are clear targets for progressing young people into employment and/or training and Local Authorities will bid for central funds and if successful will hold the budget. There is no funding available to the College directly for this work, however, the visibility of the College is improved and if a co-ordinator is placed then financial support for that post will be forthcoming. Furthermore, any students enrolled on College courses by this route will attract funding in the usual manner.

xviii. The work with 'Youth Hubs' was only intended to be for the current year, but it is looking increasingly likely that it will continue. The College, with facilities already available, is able to assist with the sustainability of such initiatives, possibly to the College's advantage.

xix. Across Elmbridge and Spelthorne Borough Councils 1,200 young people presented as being at risk of not being in education or training (NEAT) over the previous two months. There is clearly a demand and a part for the College to play.

xx. This work is helping to build strong links to local borough councils, the value of which is not to be underestimated, particularly with our ambitions for the Weybridge site.

Achievement

i. Achievement for all funded learners decreased by 2.5% to 85.9% and currently sits at 0.7% under the 2018/19 national average.

ii. Achievement by 16-18yrs learners decreased by 0.5% and now sits at the national average of 86.2% whilst the achievement by 19+ learners decreased by -5.3% to 85.3%, which is 1.9% below the national average.

The College is still waiting to see what the national average for 2019/20 will be. The Assistant Principal (Curriculum) may receive an indication shortly from the AoC.

iii. Overall, on a three year trend, we are still sitting above where we were in 2017/18.

Notably good performances were seen in Sport (+11.6%), Media (+7.5%), Public Services (+6.3%), SEND (6.3%), Hospitality (+5.7%), Science (5.3%) and GCSE's (+4%).

Other areas who are performing consistently well above national averages are HE and Professional Studies (+22.7%), Health and Social Care (+13.7%), Art & Design (+7.3%) and Hair and Beauty (+6%).

iv. Areas of concern include Construction which at 75.9% is a slight decrease; also, Childcare, Business and particularly in Adult Functional Skills.

v. Governors noted that quite apart from the effects of COVID, Construction, formerly a flagship area for the College, has been concern for some time now. There had been a staff disciplinary issue in the department

and a member of staff has now left the College. This had directly impacted the availability of achievement data as had difficulties with recovering data from agency staff, and this in a year when such data alone may have been sufficient to have secured achievement for students.

vi. The Director of Curriculum for Service Industries and a Programme Leader with a background in quality have been seconded to provide support. The target for achievement is in excess of 80%.

vii. In the Principal's view the embedding of systems and processes consistently across the area is key. Quality Assurance is not consistent and currently there are pockets of both good and poor practice in the tracking and monitoring of progress so that although attendance rates are high, students are not passing. This is particularly the case at Level 1 and Level 2 where curriculum design, sequencing and quality require attention.

viii. Governors remained concerned that despite management intervention, improvement was taking time. The CEO was confident however that the changes that have been made will prove effective in nurturing the green shoots of recovery. Intervention is being led by someone with proven track record in the area.

ix. Several curriculum areas were placed in intervention during the previous year and all have improved except construction. Could further measures be taken?

x. It was agreed that more regular monitoring than by a termly committee was required. The Chair was reluctant to saddle managers with extra work even if the additional scrutiny would be welcomed and it was agreed that the Principal would update the Chair of the Curriculum and Performance Review Committee on a monthly basis. Any further difficulties could then be escalated to the Committee.

xi. It was further agreed that Construction should be a standing item at the Principal's meetings with the Chair of Governors.

Apprenticeships

i. In the previous year the results had been adversely affected by well-documented difficulties. With the strengthening of monitoring processes, the College's data was now back in good order and this has promoted a strong bounce-back though Brooklands' rates remain below benchmark provider rates.

ii. Work remains to be done, with the timeliness of apprenticeships the main challenge. New standards are causing delays with assessments. The Assistant Principal (Apprenticeships, Partnerships and Student Experience) believes that as a provider we have travelled a good distance in getting back to where we were and COVID permitting, the outlook is positive.

iii. The Adult retraining document presented was intended to show how the College's new adult programme is being promoted.

9. Brooklands College Self-Assessment Report [CPR 20/21-02] (CR)

The College Self-Assessment Report was examined in detail and in addition to typographical and drafting changes, the following headline points were noted so as to form part of the external validation process due to take place the following day.

Part One – Overview and Context

i. p3 – it will be important for the future to have recorded the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

ii. p5 – it should be made easier to see the numbers in alternative provision.

(The Principal reported that funding for such provision varies. It is cost-effective but could not be used as a strategy by which to increase the College's revenue. It is a question of meeting local needs.)

Part Two – Overall Effectiveness

i.   p10 – point 8 should be strengthened as pastoral work has been a real strength with progression mentors speaking regularly to students at risk whose attendance slightly improved. This has taken a great deal of management time it has gone well and more should be made of it.

ii. p11 – whilst noting that the College's IT infrastructure had improved since the arrival of Logixx (the Staff Governor reported greatly improved helpdesk responsiveness and significant software investment in the Construction area), IT underpins so much that is fundamental, for example MIS data, that it requires continual investment.

It was agreed that It should be made explicit in point 9. To read: '…use of the estate, IT and student administrative…'

Explicit reference to the performance of Adults could usefully be added to point 2.

Judgement – Quality of Education is Good

i.   Judgement is based on the College having 'Good' achievement levels at 16-18 level which forms 70% of the College's provision. Adults have dipped slightly but apprenticeships, whilst still smaller, has shown steady improvement. The judgement is not based on achievement alone but also on improved curriculum design and the delivery of a student experience which broadens their skills progression to the next step.

ii. There was unanimous agreement that the 'Quality of Education [at Brooklands] is 'Good'.'

Curriculum

iii. The Committee members were satisfied with the section on Curriculum.

Intent

iv. Paragraph 3.11 could be made stronger as a quote is available from the OfSTED review concerning students enjoying online learning.

Implementation

v.   The point was made again at 4.13 that it is Level 1 and 2 students who struggle to achieve when learning remotely. Level 3 achievement had improved.

vi. It was agreed that on p16, the numbers of those students taking advantage of bursaries for the supply of IT equipment would be included.

What The College Needs To Do Next

vii. The Committee members were satisfied with the section on 'What The College Needs To Do Next'.

As previously noted, some general editing was required throughout.

9.2   SAR Data pack

This pack is subject to the release of final data at which point it will be updated post-validation. Any changes that appeared sufficiently significant as to impact the judgement grade could then be looked at again in detail.

i.   The term 'Not-contracted or Not known' in the 'Qualification Achievement Rate' tables required clarification ahead of the following day's validation exercise.

SAR Grades Summary by Department

i. It was noted that Construction has become a grade 4. Engineering has struggled too. It missed out on a cohort through poor reporting of staged achievement to the exam board. Diplomas had been claimed but not the certificate stage upon which the diploma relies. This was owing to poor quality processes, specifically data management and without this lapse the figures may have held up year on year, though there was some debate on this point.

ii. Travel and Tourism have small numbers and are not recruiting well but they are achieving grade 1.

iii. Hospitality is also at grade 1 following a much changed offering. Previously everyone started at the same basic level regardless of aptitude. Now it is possible to start at Level 2 and this has greatly increased the interest of those at that level with a resultant increase in performance.

iv. Similar changes are being made in Construction and a similar improvement is anticipated.

v. Hospitality and Catering should have an upward arrow.

vi. Given past concerns over the viability of Sport and the deteriorating facilities, members asked how it had achieved a grade 2.

The Principal reported that a new delivery team had reinvigorated the provision. The improvement is a testament to the determination showed in turning this curriculum area around. Further thought will now be given as to how best to develop the area as it offers us the ability to develop sport within the community. The College does however need to invest in updated equipment. There had been excellent OfSTED feedback from multi-year Level 3 students as to how the provision had improved during their time at the College.

vii. Members agreed judgements ahead of the validation meeting the next day.

[Princes Badilla joined the meeting at 17.45]

10. Quality Improvement Plan [CP 19/20-03] (CR/SL)

Noted:

i. This was considered to be a very clear report and no points were raised.

ii. The Committee Chair will report to the full Governing Body that the plan had been reviewed and accepted.

iii. The previous year, a workshop had been held with Governors and the Chair of the Curriculum and Performance Review Committee had been very proactive in putting together a QIP for governors. Thought was given to repeating the initiative.

iv. A training slot was available prior to the Full Governing Body meeting on 16 December and the CEO undertook to discuss with the Chair whether to divide that slot in two, half for Fusion's review of the estate and half for consideration of the QIP.

v. The Clerk was to supply a template in the form of last year's QIP to the Chair of the Committee and the Safeguarding Governor who would create an initial draft

vi. It was noted that the majority of the KPI's were marked green and some amber. There were no reds.

11. Higher Education [CP 20/21-04] (CR/AW)

Noted:

i. Given last year's concerns over Higher Education, the recruitment of 62 new students was encouraging.

ii. Last year Kingston ceased to run the SENIP foundation degree; one of our strongest courses and Oxford Brookes had initially stated that owing to previously low recruitment numbers, Fda Motorsport would also not run. In the latter case however, strong recruitment enabled us to have the decision reversed.

iii. We now offer a new HND in Applied Forensic Science which is a significant achievement. The course can survive with just 8 students as taught hours are lower and fees are higher.

iv. With the SPA still in progress, the College awaits the identity of its new partner. They are likely to influence the direction of travel in this area and so for the time being, the emphasis is on maintaining steady output.

Items for Information

12. Learner Involvement Overview [CP 20/21-05] (CR)

Noted:

i. It was acknowledged that it is difficult currently for the College to find traditional work placements and it effects how students achieve.

ii. The apprenticeships team is working hard to source a variety of opportunities, for gaining good experience and are focussed on making the most of what is available.

iii. In February it is hoped that a project under the auspices of the College Collaboration Fund will result in the launch of a programme of virtual work experience opportunities using external support (Spring Pod) in Construction, Engineering and IT.

iv. In terms of Learner Involvement, members very much welcomed the involvement of both Princess Badilla and Muhammed Bilal in Governing Body affairs.

[Item 13. was taken in Part 2.]

14. Student Disciplinary Report [CP 20/21-07] (SL)

i. The report was succinct and well written.

ii. In STEM there are very few referrals in stage 1 whereas in stage 2 it jumps from 2 to 20. Early intervention (at Stage 1) would nip them in the bud.

iii. The Staff Governor confirmed that early interventions were taking place but not being recorded properly.

15. Marketing Update [CP 20/21-] (TM)

Noted:

i. The Marketing and Metrics report is an attractive and informative report highlighting supermarkets as a focal point for recent leaflet-based advertising. This has been very successful during periods of lock-down.

ii.   It was reported that the 'Tik Tok' video created to showcase the College's forensic science offering had been very successful, receiving over 300K hits. This could be the way forward for Engineering and other courses. It will be interesting to see if it translates into enrolments

iii. The Chair was surprised at the figures for Facebook interactions and it was explained that the majority of these will be by parents of students as there is generational differentiation between platforms. Nevertheless, it remains highly productive to be on Facebook as both parents and especially grandparents, do influence post-16 choices.

iv.   Changes to the marketing team have resulted in more innovative ideas. They are working well.

16.   Audit Committee response to Internal Audit Report on Curriculum Planning [CP 20/21-07] (JL)

Noted:

i.   The Clerk's report was received without comment.

17.   Any Other Business

i.   There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 18.15.

18.   Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is 17 March 2021.

Jackie Pearson   Jonathan Lipscomb
Chair of Curriculum & Performance Review Committee   Clerk to the Governing Body