

Minutes Curriculum Strategy and Quality Enhancement Committee (CSQE)

Governance 2024-2025

Date	07/05/2025	
Time	17:30 - 18:50	
Location	Microsoft Teams Meeting	
Present	Mike Sutcliffe (MS) Mario Michaelides (MM) Jenny McLaughlin (JM) Vincent Neate (VN) Tracy Stuart (TS) Jo Swindells (JS)	Chair Vice-Chair Governor Governor Governor Governor
	Keith Smith (KS) Dylan McTaggart (DM) Jo Withers (JW) Clive Hodge (CH) Gavin Hughes (GH) Alex Denley (AD) Tim Hulme (TH)	Ex-Officio, CEO Group Principal, Deputy CEO Chief of Business Strategy Harrow College Principal Richmond College Principal Chief Technology Officer Chief Operating Officer
Note Taker	Nataliia Tymkiv	

Minutes

1 - General disclaimer statement at start of meeting:

The meeting was recorded for the purpose of minuting. No objections were raised.

2 - Apologies for absence

The meeting commenced with PP inquiring about apologies for absence. MS asked if any apologies had been received, and PP confirmed that no apologies had been received. NT also confirmed that no apologies had been received, ensuring that all expected attendees were present or accounted for.

3 - Declarations of Interest

PP confirmed that no declarations of interest had been received for this committee at this time. It was mentioned that a potential conflict of interest had been dealt with offline, ensuring there were no issues to report to the committee.

Cherry Horton-Edwards (CH-E) was proposed to attend the committee as a Staff Governor member for the committee, explaining that her role in support staff would help improve communication with staff members without directly involving her in the curriculum. A Governor supported the proposal, emphasising the importance of having support staff who understand curriculum delivery. The proposal was seconded by Governors and carried through, with CH-E set to join the committee in the next meeting.

4 - Minutes of the last meeting dated: 13 March 2025

The minutes were accepted as factually accurate.

5 - Actions from last meeting

The committee reviewed progress on actions from the previous meeting.

Action 1 (delivery milestones for technology projects) – Completed.

Action 2 (aligning ToRs to ensure collaboration with West London Colleges) – Completed.

Action 3 (mapping document on the IAB engagement levels) – Completed.

Action 4 (strategies for increasing employer participation) – Completed – addressed in the agenda item 8.

Action 5 (review employer feedback influencing curriculum strategy) – Completed – addressed in the agenda Item 8.

Action 6 (rectify the percentage in the Retention by National averages data RC) – Completed.

Action 7 (check on the business growth data) – Completed.

Action 8 (benchmarking report) – Marked as ongoing. The absence of national data tables was noted and the Governor's queried possibility of using last year's data for trend analysis. DM confirmed that the data would be published imminently and agreed to present the current year's data at the next meeting, along with previous years' data for trend analysis.

A Governor suggested using data available in ProAchieve for a three-year trend, noting that going back too far might skew the data. Another Governor challenged the lack of clear communication regarding the benchmarking data, emphasising the importance of respecting the committee's requests. DM clarified the situation, explaining the need for specific named colleges' data and the challenges in obtaining it. The committee agreed to present the benchmarking data at the next meeting on 24th June, with the data circulated in advance.

**ACTION 1: Present the current year's data along with previous years' data for trend analysis at the next meeting.
@DM by 24/06/2025**

Action 9 (Curriculum Strategy aligning to estates strategy) – Completed – addressed in the Item 7.

6 - Risk Register

The discussion on the Risk Register focused on the executive's understanding of risk and the need for clearer reporting standards. A Governor raised concerns about the executive's grasp of risk and the adequacy of their resources and support. KS explained the efforts to provide clearer ownership of risks and secretariat support for internal governance boards. DM highlighted the ongoing work to ownership of risks and the need for continuous evolution of the risk register.

PP suggested providing guidance on risk descriptions through the audit committee. Governors agreed, emphasising the importance of a clear process for managing risk. The committee acknowledged the transformation taking place in understanding and managing risk and agreed to continue making progress towards a defined process.

7 - Curriculum & Skills Ambition Strategy Document - 2 years on

DM introduced the second edition of the curriculum strategy, explaining its purpose to map out a longer-term direction for the curriculum and predict future resource needs. The draft presented was about 60-70% finished, with the second phase to be presented in June. DM emphasised the extensive background work on mural priorities, national datasets, and trend analysis. The strategy document aimed to provide recommendations and views from the executive team for the board's consideration, with timelines and milestones to be included in the final submission.

The discussion on the Curriculum & Skills Ambition Strategy Document focused on the strategic direction and priorities for the curriculum over the next two years. The importance of aligning the curriculum strategy with the Estates Strategy and ensuring decisions are made based on the best interests of the student cohort rather than external directives was emphasised. DM highlighted the need for clear fiscal rules to guide decision-making, focusing on the usefulness to the economy and the viability, quality, and necessity of programmes.

The proposed decisions around curriculum priorities, identifying areas for growth, organic development, and reduction were outlined. The methodology involved a 'go slow, stop' approach, with a focus on delivering programmes that are viable and beneficial for the community and finances. The transformative changes needed in the delivery of adult education, higher education apprenticeships, and the Institute of Technology (IoT), suggesting a more cohesive adult offer and a refocused IoT with a clear emphasis on emerging and priority technologies were discussed.

The discussion included the importance of prioritising sector investment in response to sector needs, applicant demand, demographic growth, and national policy drivers. DM stressed the need to rationalise out areas that did not meet community needs or financial positions. He provided examples of sectors like construction, which are national priorities, and others like beauty and sport, which may require less investment due to mixed viability.

Questions and comments from the committee highlighted the need for further discussion and feedback to refine the strategy. A Governor emphasised the importance of SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) within the strategy, ensuring it is a priority and integrated into the student experience. Tracy Stuart raised the potential of linking the IoT with the government's tech college initiative and exploring higher education

opportunities. Governors also discussed the need for a clear understanding of the viability and investment required for the proposed changes, and KS highlighted the importance of investing in the right capability and capacity to make the strategy successful.

DM responded to these points, acknowledging the need for a detailed sector analysis and the importance of SEND within the strategy. DM also discussed the challenges and opportunities in adult reskilling and the need for a cohesive approach to student engagement and progression. The discussion concluded with TH presenting the emerging estate strategy, highlighting the need for significant investment to address infrastructure challenges and support the curriculum strategy.

ACTION 2: Present the second phase of the Curriculum & Skills Ambition Strategy Document in June. @DM by 24/06/2025

8 - Industry Advisory Boards Update

JW provided an update on the Industry Advisory Boards (IABs), presenting a detailed paper that outlined engagement levels across various sectors, discussing the continuous improvements and targets set for the sectors flagged as Amber, particularly science and A-level sixth form provision. The goal was to move sectors currently rated Red to Amber by the end of the year.

The importance of engaging with sector experts and local universities to enhance student progression opportunities was emphasised. The substantive areas rated Green and their direct links to the curriculum strategy set out by DM were highlighted. Engaging larger employers was deemed crucial for future planning and enhancing employment opportunities for students.

JW shared that the document had been presented to the Skills and Intent committee, which she co-chairs with CH, feeding into the Curriculum and Quality board chaired by DM. JW mentioned the rotation basis invitation for heads and senior leaders with sector responsibilities to report progress, ensuring industry advisor feedback informs curriculum delivery and future planning.

A Governor raised a question about how governors know what curriculum changes result from employer feedback. JW responded with examples from aviation, food and drink manufacturing, and construction, highlighting the importance of softer skills and work readiness.

Another Governor brought up the need for supporting smaller construction companies that cannot afford apprenticeships, suggesting a sector partnership to facilitate shared apprenticeships funded by larger companies and also noted the need for skills in planning and estimating within construction, which overlap with technology areas. JW acknowledged these points and mentioned ongoing conversations and potential incentive payments for smaller businesses employing apprentices.

The Chair thanked JW for the presentation and the committee for their questions and contributions.

ACTION 3: Move sectors currently rated Red to Amber by the end of the year. @JW by 31/12/2025
ACTION 4: Engage with sector experts and local universities to enhance student progression opportunities. @JW

9 - Any Other Urgent Business (AoB)

The Chair opened the floor for any other urgent business but noted that there were no items to discuss. He reminded those presenting to adhere to the guidelines on papers, specifically the one to two-page summary template set last year. PP confirmed the guideline, emphasising the importance of concise executive summaries.

A Governor raised a question regarding whether the Ofsted action plan would be discussed in this committee, given the positive discussion around SEND and its integration into the curriculum strategy. PP confirmed that the committee is designed to take feedback from Ofsted, work with action plans, and coalesce them into a strategy for moving forward. This committee's minutes would be reviewed during Ofsted's revisit.

The Chair concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for their contributions and reminding them of the next meeting on 24th June, which would cover the strategy and potentially other items identified during the meeting.

10 - Dates of the next meetings

The Chair reminded the committee of the next meeting date, set for 24th June 2025, mentioning that the meeting would be an extraordinary one, focusing primarily on the strategy and potentially other items identified during the current meeting.