

Minutes of the Quality of Education and Skills (QES) Committee on Tuesday 7 October 2025 at Truro College

Members: S Sanderson (Chair), N Basher, L Batchelor, R Bray, L Chessman, O Marshall-Whitley, M Tucker (Principal), F Wall and Chris Wathern

Also Present: L Briscoe (Director of Student Experience), A Bull (Director of Curriculum Development), L Maggs (Director of Operations, Penwith College), H McKinstry (Director of Business Partnerships & Apprenticeships), V Pearson (Director of Learning, Assessment, Support), W Randle (Head of Governance) and R Townsend (Chair of Corporation)

Item	Discussion/Decision	Action
1	Apologies, introductions and declarations of interest Apologies were received and accepted from Robert Townsend and Daphne Skinnard. There were no further declarations of interest to those contained on the register.	
2	Minutes of the previous meeting The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2025 were approved as an accurate record.	
3	Matters Arising The Committee reviewed the matters arising report. It was agreed that the Head of Governance would liaise with the HE task and finish group to review next steps and future Governors on the Ground (GOTG) activity.	WR
4	Progress against Strategic Objectives The Committee received the papers updating on progress made against objectives 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 of the Strategic Plan, and the associated risks. Amongst the points raised, the additional work required within Progression Pathways and the changes made to the enrichment offer were noted. A discussion took place on the delivery of tutorials. The Committee were pleased to hear the content was being well received and whilst recognising the ongoing challenges in this area, noted the conflicting views on the delivery mechanisms; the SMT will further explore student views with the student council. A Governor shared insights gained from recent Governor on the Ground (GOTG) visits; it was agreed that the College will explore cascading an alternative tutorial delivery method which has proved successful at the Penwith campus, to support all students with their next steps after College, including University and apprenticeships. It was noted that a recent curriculum planning day reflected on the further development of transferable skills to meet local and national skills needs. A Governor reflected on recent national events and was keen to learn the College's response within tutorials. It was noted that tutorials can be quick to respond to current events either through amending the programme to incorporate key messages or promptly within tutorial, examples linked to recent events in Manchester were shared.	LBr MT

	A Governor requested clarity on the charges being made for sports academies. In line with sector practice, the College introduced a graduated scale linked to the academy offer during the efficiencies programme. Examples of the costs were shared and it was understood that bursary support might be available in some scenarios. It was reported that coms linked to this is completed earlier with students and this expectation is included within offer letters; there has been no impact on recruitment to these academies. The College will review the website to ensure this highlights the additional costs. The Committee Chair noted that an update will be provided at Corporation on the government's defunding of the IB and students completing 4 A Levels including Maths/ Further Maths. A Governor reflected on the amber risk rating linked to growth in FE within the academic year, it was confirmed that the College have not modelled the budget on growth.	LBr MT
5 5.1 5.2 5.3	Employer Connect The Committee thanked the Director of Business Partnerships and Skills for a clear and useful report. Key government strategies An overview of key strategies was shared. It was understood that the second LSIP plan is under development for 2026 and the priority sectors will be shared with Governors once known. Employer and business update and engagement Due to businesses involvement in the devolution plans for Cornwall, the Employer Connect meeting has been rescheduled to reconvene in December. Work placement and employer engagement strategy The College have reviewed the effectiveness of the work placement offer in place, designed to ensure student workforce readiness. As a result, expectations of placements have been redefined to add value and a staff member has been appointed to oversee placements and develop additional virtual and international opportunities. A sharepoint link will be shared with Governors. In response to a Governor question, there is support available for SEND students to access physical placements as well as virtual placements. To enhance the support available, the College are appointing an industry expert purely focussed on enabling SEND and high needs students' work experience, working with the business community to aid them in recruiting and supporting staff with additional needs. In response to a Governor question, this is a new role and there is evidence of need, this role will also support learners without an EHCP. In response to Governor question further details on the Skills Bootcamps were shared. It was understood that the College collate data on attendees to enable them identify if they are supporting SEND students, yet it was noted that not all adults wish to share this detail.	HM
6	Accountability Agreement Future Skills agenda The Committee received the paper and noted this is the third year of delivering against the plans contained in the Accountability Statement and understood a full governor review on how the College meets local skills needs is required. The Committee reflected on previous feedback provided at the June meeting and a Governor volunteered to support the next reiteration of the statement.	HM/ FW
7	Quality Improvement Plan 2024/25 A lengthy discussion took place on the disappointing national and local outcomes in GCSE English and Maths and their impact on College enrolments to programmes, the adjustment to offers made and resourcing requirements. To respond, the College have implemented various	

	measures to include a review of the Level 1 and 2 offer and the development of a Level 2 offer for academic learners and they may consider future entry requirements for some courses. Additionally, the partnership with the Education Endowment Fund, to share practice and pedagogy with schools, is available. The College is accessing free additional online tuition for its own English and Maths students. A discussion took place on local and regional strategies within primary and secondary schools within this area. The challenges for the College in meeting this condition of funding were noted, to include the financial implications such as resit costs, invigilation, rooms and meeting exam concessions, in addition to the impact on recruitment and retention. The Committee noted the need for government direction in the anticipated curriculum reforms.	
8	Student Data Update The Chair summarised that the data was very positive, with excellent achievements rates. The College provided examples of where teams had worked together to improve on last year's outcomes and how this good practice can be shared across the College. The College remains proud of the staff's commitment to students especially with the challenges presented during the last academic year. The discussion moved to focus on specific areas of improvement which will be further explored when the College SAR is reviewed by Governors. Achievements - the following key points were noted: ▪ 14% of students got 3 As and A*. ▪ There are larger achievement gaps between 'in care students' and their peers. ▪ The impact of improved performance management processes linked to KPIs, once implemented, will be monitored. ▪ 75% of students exceed their targets based on GCSE results. Attendance – the following key points were noted: ▪ The impact of the inclusive practitioners on SEND/ High Needs students' achievements was noted in comparison to non-SEND learners. ▪ The need to adopt a similar approach as above, for students eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) and 'in care' students was noted, i.e. FSM eligible A Level students achieved 13% lower than their peers. ▪ The impact of transport on attendance and retention was noted. ▪ The College are reflecting on the 5-day timetable for A Level students. ▪ A review of occupational students' attendance and any good practice that can be shared is underway. ▪ Increased tutor ownership of data is being explored. ▪ The reporting mechanisms for reporting attendance and related challenges were considered. ▪ The change in data collection and impact on future reporting of attendance with the removal of attendance at enrichment/ academies was noted. ▪ The College plans for coms with parents to emphasise the importance of attendance were shared. Following a lengthy discussion, Governors requested access to live/ more current data in the next report to Committee, to enable trend analysis and identification of gaps. A Governor will complete a GOTG meeting with the Director of Quality to review the data in more detail and support reporting for the next meeting; noting that some of the data required will be included in the SAR. Retention – the following key points were noted: ▪ The target to increase A Level retention was not achieved; likely due to induction with changes have been implemented this year. ▪ The College continue to undertake work to improve retention and it is felt that there is a greater understanding by all staff on the importance of retaining students. ▪ The majority of students who leave their programme have either previously moved courses, have additional needs, are in care or eligible for FSM.	CW/ LM

	▪ The College are developing a data collection tool for internal purposes which will capture students changing courses. ▪ The College shared measures being implemented to support retention and how Heads of Faculties will be held to account for progress in this area. In response to a Governor question, the College are seeking clarification on the Access data and update will be provided at Corporation.	
9	Key strategic challenges linked to student experience The Committee received the paper. A discussion on transport highlighted that the main issue stemmed from students requiring an interoperable bus offer, which currently does not exist. There has been confusion about which passes to buy, and other institutions have also been affected. Operationally, things are working well, with Go Cornwall providing a good service for the tendered routes, the good support for pathways learners travelling independently to College was highlighted. Some student services have been impacted due to the significant amount of staff time spent on resolving issues and complaints. In response to a Governor challenge on the coms shared with students, going forward the College have already started to increase communication with young people about the transport costs to get to College. The Committee noted the potential implications and support that the Rural Transport fund could provide.	
10	Safeguarding/ Prevent Safeguarding and Welfare Report The Committee received the report which will be shared with Corporation alongside a training update on the KCSIE 2025 guidance; changes are limited and linked to AI and online safety. The report contained details on the data from the Smoothwall system and CPOMs. There has been no movement in the types of activities and although mental health has dropped, the College are seeing more complex issues quite early. The challenge to receive information from schools remains ongoing and during interviews some students prefer not to disclose any concerns. It was understood that the College, despite advertising three times, have been unable to secure a compliance officer. The Committee agreed to recommend to Board the approval of the Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk policy and procedure.	SS
11	Annual Mental Health report Deferred to the next meeting.	WR/ LBr
12 12.1	Strategy updates Curriculum Strategy The Committee received the paper and noted the following highlights: ▪ Alternative Academic Qualifications (AAQs) have been added to the curriculum offer in preparation for the removal of Btecs in 2026. These will support students not able to undertake 3 A Levels, for example a student could take 2 AAQs and an A Level. ▪ As the curriculum reform outcomes are not yet fully known, the College is proposing the development of an interim Curriculum Strategy for two years to support the Head of Faculties. ▪ Governors noted the need to ensure the Ofsted recommendations are incorporated into the strategy. ▪ There will be a focus on skills and inclusion within the strategy ▪ The College will consider how Governors can add value to the development of this strategy, i.e. via a task and finish group.	AB

12.2	SEND/ High Needs/ Inclusive practice A draft copy of the strategy has been shared with the task and finish group for review, prior to sharing with the Committee at its November meeting. An update on progress was shared.	
12.3	HE strategy KPIs and progress update The Associate Director – University Centre joined the meeting and reported that following the implementation of the strategy there is a greater understanding of the costs associated with the HE offer. As a result, there has been a reduction in costs and increase in fees due to the success of the Access and Participation Plan (APP) and improved fees and offer negotiated with Greenwich University. The College have streamlined provision and achieved an increase in average group size from 10 -13. Next steps include greater engagement with careers and employers, ongoing refinement of provision and development of new courses to meet local employer's needs. In response to a Governor query, the Kent and Greenwich University merger was noted and the College have been assured there will be no changes to the agreements reached. It was noted that a Governor completed a Governors on the Ground visit prior to the meeting; a summary report will follow.	LBa
13	HE - update on OfS Conditions of Registration and risk register The Committee received the paper. The Associate Director – University Centre highlighted some changes linked to increased OfS focus on improved financial sustainability and course quality. The following points were noted: ▪ Condition E6 has been completed with no comments received from OfS. However, subsequent to the completion of E6 there have been some changes made to this condition. The College await further detail. ▪ The Access and Participation Plan (APP) resubmission was completed. ▪ Condition B1 rating has changed due to the number of courses that need to go through reapproval with Plymouth University. Additionally, the College are also being put through a periodic review. ▪ Condition B6 rating has changed due to changes to the TEF framework and a move to a rolling cycle. The College await further details. ▪ Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) – the College have agreed to monitor the national response to the LLE and will respond accordingly. In response to a Governor question, it was concluded that the College's ability to respond promptly would be determined by the LLE structures implemented – the College would need courses to be reapproved. Olaf Marshall-Whitely left the meeting due to a conflict of interest. Detail contained in the confidential minutes. Olaf Marshall-Whitely returned to the meeting and the Associate Director – University Centre left.	
14	Governors on the Ground 2025/26 The Committee received the paper which will be shared with Corporation. All governors are encouraged to attend GOTG activities; several were arranged during the meeting.	
15	Ofsted framework changes Due to time restrictions this item was deferred to the next meeting.	
16	AOB None	
17	Dates of Future Meetings Tues 18 November 2025 Tues 10 February 2026 Tues 19 May 2026	