

## THE TRAFFORD COLLEGE GROUP

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Higher Education Curriculum & Quality Committee  
held on Wednesday 22 November 2023, at 5.30pm via Microsoft Teams**

<b>Present:</b>	Emily McIntosh	(Chairperson)
	James Scott	(Principal and Chief Executive Officer)
	Sarah Drake	
	Fatema Desai	
	Graham Luccock	
	Claire Stocks	(Co-opted Member)
<b>In Attendance</b>	Alison Duncalf	(Deputy Corporation Secretary)
	Carmen Gonzalez-Eslava	(Deputy Principal)
	Jane Nickisson	(Assistant Principal Higher Education & Skills)
	Danielle Judge	(Assistant Principal Apprenticeships)
	Andrea Ormisher	(Head of Higher Education Quality and Standards)

**Minute No.****HEC&Q/34/23 Apologies for Absence**

The Deputy Corporation Secretary (DCS) reported that apologies for absence had been received from Marie Templeton (HE Student Representative).

Kurt Allman was not in attendance at the meeting.

A welcome was extended to Andrea Ormisher, the recently appointed Head of Higher Education Quality and Standards (HHEQS).

**HEC&Q/35/23 Declarations of Direct or Indirect Interest in any of the meetings business items**

There were no declarations of either direct or indirect interest in any of the meeting's business items

**HEC&Q/36/23 Minutes of the Higher Education Curriculum & Quality Committee Meeting held on 14 June 2023**

The minutes of the meeting were approved and accepted as a correct account of the meeting's proceedings.

**HEC&Q/37/23 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

Members were referred to the previously circulated Action Proforma and information on progress against actions from previous meetings of the Committee.

The following additional updates were provided:

- i) HEC&Q/22/33 – Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) in the context of Artificial Intelligence and ChatGPT

The Assistant Principal Higher Education and Skills (APHES) outlined the steps taken to provide assurance for teaching and learning in the context of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Chat GPT.

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Reference was made to the steps put in place in relation to the HE Conduct Procedure which also now included misuse of AI. There was confirmation that the Procedure would be shared with all students and the HE Enhancement Officer.

In terms of the use of established software all staff had attended sessions on the understanding of the misuse of AI with further additional external training was also planned.

It was stated that there was confidence in the in robustness of the Group's approach and it was agreed that the action be closed.

**Action: Deputy Corporation Secretary**

ii) New Report Template

It was reported that members had provided positive feedback at the Board meeting in relation to the new report template. It was added that the template supported the reading of documents in a more strategic way. There was agreement that the action be closed.

**Action: Deputy Corporation Secretary**

iii) HEC&Q/31/23 – Resignation of Co-opted Member of the Higher Education Curriculum and Quality Committee

Reference was made to the current Co-opted Member vacancies and the opportunities to recruit. The Chairperson and the Co-opted Member undertook to give consideration to potential applicants and to share these with the Corporation Secretary (CS).

Discussion took place around the expertise that members may wish to address. Areas of specialism/expertise identified by members included apprenticeships and curriculum areas with more technical expertise such as construction.

**Action: Chairperson/Co-opted Member/Corporation Secretary**

There was agreement that the action remain open.

iv) Future meetings of the Committee

Members expressed a preference for a future meeting to be held at the Stockport campus at a time which potentially aligned with another meeting or a link visit. The DCS undertook to progress the matter further with the Chairperson and Corporation Secretary.

**Action: Deputy Corporation Secretary/Chairperson/Corporation Secretary**

**There were no further matters raised by members arising from the minutes that had not been addressed or were covered elsewhere on the agenda.**

**Minute No.****HEC&Q/38/23 Higher Skills Strategy 2021-2024 – Action Plan and Progress Update**

The APHES, in place of Deputy Principal (DP), referred members to the previously circulated report and an update on the Higher Skills Strategy Action Plan for 2023-2024.

There was confirmation that following the development and approval of the Group's Higher Skills Strategy, an action plan had been produced for 2023-2024 which continued the objectives and actions that were underway during the previous academic year.

It was noted that many of the actions continued to be in progress and valid in terms of meeting the overall strategic objectives. The APHES stated that the plan had been updated in November 2023 and would further be reviewed and updated at key points in the academic year i.e. March 2024 and June 2024.

Progress against each of the 5 objectives was presented and the following was highlighted:

**Strategic Aim 1 (SA1):** Adapt and grow the Higher Skills offer in line with national/regional policy developments.

Positive progress was reported against this aim following the strategic decision to base all new provision at the Stockport University Centre for which funding from the Office for Students (OfS) and HE Injection Fund (HEIF) had been allocated to support the provision of specialist equipment as appropriate.

There was confirmation that mapping of T Level progression routes into level 4 and 5 technical qualifications continued to take place and that a new Green Skills Hub was being created at Stockport, with the renewal technologies launch planned for January 2024 and which would "twin" at Stretford around the commercial element.

**Strategic Aim 2 (SA2):** Maximise recruitment opportunities through penetration into key market areas

There was confirmation that there was to be an increase in focus on the activities to increase internal progression and to improve recruitment from employers into higher level study which was being supported by the new HE Engagement and Enhancement Officer (HEEEO) and HE Outreach Officer working in collaboration.

It was noted that the whilst the objective in relation to HE Alumni continued to be rated as red work had now commenced to progress this key aspect.

**Strategic Aim 3 (SA3):** Provide a curriculum that was employment-focused through effective partnership working +

It was reported that the good progress was being made against the objectives. Members noted that Employer Advisory Boards (EABs) had been established in all key subject areas as part of the Group's Employer Responsiveness Strategy and the embedding of the Employer Partnership Teams. It was confirmed that the HHEQS would be attending all EABs to provide a HE perspective.

The focus upon embedding industry engagement areas and the benefit from the Occupational Standards as part of the HTQ provision was highlighted.

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**Strategic Aim 4 (SA4):** Develop innovative and flexible models to better meet the needs of students and employers

It was reported that good progress had been made on producing a detailed and clear Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) to support the underpinning of the quality assurance and quality improvement framework for HE.

**Strategic Aim 5 (SA5):** Support the development of regional and local collaborative arrangements to enable increased recruitment and progression

Members noted that there had been positive progress working with a widening participation provider for the delivery of a flexible offer to hard-to-reach students and for which there had been strong recruitment in September and with a new course offer for 2024-2025 being actively promoted.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A member asked a question in relation to SA4 and the innovative and creative opportunities for delivery, particularly around CPD and what was available to support staff in this area.

The APHES responded that she had met with a key contact earlier in the day in respect of bespoke training opportunities. In addition, it was stated that some qualifications were being turned into a blended model with a view to presenting a more flexible offer that was more attractive to students. It was confirmed that there was still a need for further work around the curriculum to support such a move. The comment was made that such a move was not just about taking the materials online but was also about adapting to an alternative form of delivery.

- A further question was asked in relation to SA4 and the Access to HE Diploma.

There was confirmation that the recently appointed HHEQS was leading on this area and was to commence a full review of the curriculum offer which would also include reviewing the pre-access provision and how this could be grown.

Reference was made to the introduction of Access to Engineering with a view to providing a progression route on to established provision. The demand for pre-access to HE was also highlighted, which also included a Media progression route. There was confirmation that the new qualifications were scheduled to commence in September 2024 with plans well advanced and applications having already been received.

There was recognition of the comments made in respect of blended learning models and assurance was provided that progress in this area would be moved forward gently and in the correct manner.

- A member commented on the Green Skills agenda and asked a question in relation to SA5 and the collaborative developments with partners. The reference made to Sheffield Hallam University was noted and it was asked if there were any developments underway from a Greater Manchester (GM) perspective.

The Principal and CEO (PCEO) responded that a meeting was scheduled for the following week which would involve the 9 Principals and 5 Vice-Chancellors.

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Members noted that the Group had signed up to a Civic Agreement and further that Richard Caulfield (Senior Policy Manager, GM Colleges) had, this week, made a presentation to the Vice-Chancellors in relation to current FE provision. The PCEO undertook to provide a further update to the next meeting of the Committee.

**Action: Principal and CEO**

- A question was asked by a member in relation to Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs), the target market, the securing of the kitemark and the areas under development.

There was confirmation that HTQs in the following areas were planned for 2024-2025: Digital; Construction Management; Engineering (Electrical and Mechanical Engineering); and Health Professionals and Associates, with further HTQs to be launched which aligned to the Group's specialisms.

In respect of the target audience, it was stated that a number of opportunities were being pursued which included both existing students and those looking to upskill. It was noted that some full-time students were also self-funding. The view was expressed that with the introduction of modular delivery it was anticipated a wider audience would be reached.

- The member further asked as to whether there were progression routes in place.

The APHES referred to T Levels and the pathway through to HTQs, highlighting Engineering, Nursing and Construction. There was confirmation that the routes for learners had been forensically reviewed from a progression perspective and the learner journey from start to finish.

In terms of take up across the pathways the APHES indicated that the Group would be in a better position to comment on take up next year.

The Deputy Principal (DP) commented on the position of the action plan stating that whilst some actions had been rag rated as green there was recognition that further work continued to be required in these areas. The DP further commented that this included work was taking place at pace to increase the number of learners and attain improved progression of the Group's own learners (rated as amber).

- A member, with reference to Employer Advisory Boards (EABs), sought clarity that the Group was continuing to have a dialogue with Stockport Council (SMBC) and employers.

There was confirmation that conversations were continuing particularly around new innovations. It was added that there was also daily activity and work with both small and large employers.

Members thanked colleagues for the comprehensive report, the Chairperson added that link visits would serve to support the development of the next strategy. Members further stated that they were looking forward to visiting the Green Hub at a later point in the academic year.

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**There were no further questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the progress against the action plan be received and noted.**

**HEC&Q/39/23 HE Self-Evaluation and Progress Update**

The APHES referred members to the previously circulated report and information in relation to the Annual Self-Evaluation Document (SED) and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2023-2024.

The DP reported that as part of the self-evaluation process for 2022-2023, eight key strengths had been identified based on evidence from student data, external examiners reports, CDAR feedback, NSS and other feedback mechanisms. Reference as made to the triangulation of evidence and the identification of areas for improvement.

It was noted that the self-evaluation and subsequent areas for improvement (Afls) were categorised under the headings of Leadership and Management (LM); Outcomes for Students (OS); Academic Quality (AQ) and Student Engagement (SE)

The APHES took members through the key strengths and highlighted the following:

- Significant improvement in overall duration outcomes on previous year: Achievement 88% (+11pp) Continuation 72% (=12pp) (OS);
- Increase to in-year Retention 91.5% and in-year Achievement 90.9% (+9pp) (OS);
- Students from mixed ethnicity backgrounds showed significant improvement in achievement on previous year at 100% (+42pp) (OS);
- Significant improvement in achievement outcomes where 85% of students from quintiles 1 achieved (+10pp) and students from quintile 2 achieved 88.1% (+12.6pp) (OS), encompassing students not normally accessing education;
- In-year outcomes for curriculum areas, showing strong performance in continuation, retention and achievement across many areas (OS);
- Innovative teaching and learning highly commended in some courses (AQ) which also included good feedback from external examiners;
- TEF submission had been completed and a Bronze rating award had been awarded (LM); and
- Outstanding NSS rates above Office for Students (OfS) benchmark in all areas and with the highest rates of all GM Colleges (SE).

The DP further reported that as part of the self-evaluation process for 2022-2023, eight Afls had been identified for 2023-2024, each of which had a clear objective and a detailed set of actions to support their completion.

There was confirmation that the Afls formed the basis of the QIP for 2023-2024 and the following was outlined:

1. Student Recruitment (LM), and the objective to increase recruitment and retention of existing students whilst recruiting externally;
2. Outcomes for Students (OS), and to improve the high classification rates across all student groups and improve achievement rates for some student groups;
3. Effective capture, monitoring and analysis of Student data throughout the student journey (LM) including the development of robust data systems;

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4. Moderation Processes (AQ), and the improvement of quality assurance processes for programme documentation;
5. Teaching and Assessment planning, design and feedback mechanisms (AQ) focusing on the design and delivery of teaching and improving assessment design and the quality of feedback;
6. Academic leadership and rigour within HE curriculum and processes, with a view to ensuring Heads and Programme Leaders had a full understanding of external requirements;
7. Establish bespoke CPD framework and community practice for HE tutors (LM) to be led by the HHEQS; and
8. Establish a clear Student Engagement strategy and student support model (SE) which would encompass a multi-faceted start of the student journey from enrolment onwards, with student voice at all stages and an end-to-end clearly evidenced framework.

There was confirmation that progress reports and updates would be presented to each meeting of the Committee with the aspiration of delivering sustained quality performance and growth.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A member in relation to the continuation rates of some programmes asked as to whether the reason for this was known. The view was further expressed that for a number of courses students had enrolled but then not continued.

The APHES responded that this was an anomaly and related to legacy students. It was stated that the majority of these students were already in work and were likely to have commenced study during Covid but since been unable to either continue to afford or accommodate their studies. There was confirmation that efforts were made to make the provision flexible however for some students the commitment had become too great. In addition, it was suggested that the part-time students, including construction and employer sponsored, were often returning to study after a long period away from the sector and there could be issues adapting. The emphasis and focus, moving forward, upon support for part-time learners, who could often be hard to reach, and the opportunities for early intervention to be led by the HEEEO, were highlighted.

It was stated that the understanding the support needs of students would be a priority for the HEEEO, including early assessment. Members supported the notion of early intervention approaches even where there had been no formal disclosures.

- With respect to Teaching and Assessment Planning (Af15) and the focus upon assessment and feedback mechanisms, a member made reference to the strong National Student Survey (NSS) outcomes, suggesting this was typically an area of relatively low outcomes. It was asked at what data was underpinning the action.

The APHES responded that this was not the position across all areas with the action being based on external feedback and the recognised gaps within Pearson Awarding Body provision.

- A further question was asked around access to data and if the Committee could provide any support.

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The APHES highlighted the new HE Strata package which would provide data to support identification of those groups requiring additional support. Assurance was provided that close work was ongoing with the MIS Manager to progress this aspect which would be a key focus for the year.

- A member commented on Af14 in relation to moderation processes and a question was asked around the lack of rag rating at this point.

The APHES confirmed that the first review had not yet taken place.

- A further question was asked in relation to the HE TLA conference held in July and whether evidence of impact could be shared.

The APHES responded that the conference was scheduled to take place in July 2024.

- The references made to academic leadership were highlighted and it was asked as to what this involved.

The APHES responded that many of the Heads of Studies had a wide portfolio which could encompass L1 through to L7, adding that assurance was required that the necessary expertise were in place. Members noted that more frequent meetings were taking place at an operational level with a view to providing a forum to explore programme level detail and with as a means of gaining a more in-depth view as to what was happening on the ground in classrooms. There was confirmation that support was being provided to ensure staff were clear on the delivery strategies and that HE practitioners were confident as to what this meant.

- A member raised the issue of outcomes by characteristics, citing that the group identified as being the most difficult to engage with was working class males. It was asked if a strategy was in place to support these learners.

The APHES outlined the support being provided which had included accessing MMU support strategies and the theory underpinning support and engagement, in particular with learners from the areas of construction and engineering. Reference was further made to the Group's Access and Participation Plan, arising from which there had been some strong white male outcomes. Assurance was provided that the Group would continue to explore the available initiatives to support these learners.

The Chairperson referenced the Index of Multiple Deprivation (MD) as an indicator of participation as well as the opportunity to look at IDA data. The APHES confirmed that this was something the Group would be looking at moving forward.

**Action: Assistant Principal Higher Education and Skills**

The Chairperson recognised the evidence, stating that the provision of triangulation was very positive and good progress was demonstrated.

A member highlighted the Teaching and Excellence Framework (TEF) result suggesting that this was not a small undertaking and something that should be applauded. It was stated that to attain a bronze award, at the first attempt for the merged college, presented a positive outcome. There was agreement that further reporting in respect of the TEF would take place under a later agenda item.



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**There were no further questions or comments from members and following due consideration and deliberation it was unanimously resolved that the HE Self Evaluation Document 2022-2023 and Quality Improvement Plan 2023-2024 be recommended for approval to the Board of the Corporation.**

**HEC&Q/40/23 HE Performance Update 2023-2024**

The Assistant Principal HE and Skills (APHES) referred members to the previously circulated report and information on the current financial performance in relation to student recruitment as at November 2023.

There was confirmation that the report presented a snap shot view of where recruitment stood at a moment in time. Members noted that current enrolment was below overall target, at 88%, however a much-improved position from the previous year was presented. The inclusion of apprenticeship partner data within the reporting was highlighted.

An overview of the recruitment position by college department was presented and the following was highlighted:

- The very strong recruitment in Early Years, where the curriculum had overrecruited, and some significant under recruitment in two key areas – Art and Media and Construction.
- Confirmation that the over recruitment to Early Years had been forensically reviewed and there were valid reasons to support the position.
- In relation to under recruitment it was suggested that a range of factors had contributed to the underperformance included changes in financial and employment circumstances for several construction students and a lack of applications across some of the media courses which would, moving forward, require modification to meet student demands.
- Confirmation that whilst overall numbers were below that of the previous year's total intake, based on the same position last year, the Group was currently at 85% of target, compared to 77% in the previous year
- In comparison to 2022-2023, the final income was £1.6m against a target of £2.2m (-£600k from target).
- A positive income position against the College Financial Forecast Return of £1.764m (+£21k), a stronger position compared to last year and a target that would be reported on throughout the academic year.
- The opportunities for further pipeline income via January starts.
- A targeted approach to improving retention for 2023-2024 through the new HE Engagement Officer role and by making effective use of the hardship funding (50% of HEEO role would be directed to supporting students).
- Fewer colleges were meeting their targets in relation to higher education enrolments with survey data indicating that just 31% successfully met their targets in 2023-2024, in comparison to 42% the year before.
- The huge potential to pilot modular delivery in 2024-2025, as well as non-traditional routes, with the launch of the Lifelong Loan Entitlement (LLE) in 2025.

In terms of next steps and timeline the following was highlighted:

- A full January campaign had been launched to maximise further recruitment opportunities across all Higher National provision.
- The key focus upon supporting retention to maintain the current income position.

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- That future reports would include an in-year position on student outcomes including achievement, completion and progression as well as information around in-year retention and achievement related to HE performance.
- HE performance would be monitored through the implementation of the QIP action plan for 2023-2024 which would be reviewed by a range of evaluation mechanisms.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A member commented on the improved position presented and congratulations were recorded to all staff. Clarity was sought from the member in relation to the impact of an individual's withdrawal from a HE course.

The APHES confirmed that there were three census points corresponding to 25% at commencement of the course; 25% in January and 50% in April/May.

- Reference was made by a member in relation to January starts and it was commented that historically recruitment had been limited at this point.

The APHES commented that January was not the most popular period for recruitment however it was added that Higher National provision comprised part of the offer and for which there were immediate starts. There was confirmation that the January campaign had already commenced, supported by a recent HE promotion event. It was stated that a more deliberate campaign had been adopted and that it was considered there had been more proactive targeting of the potential audience albeit additional recruitment could not be guaranteed.

**There were no further questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the HE Performance Update 2023-2024 be received and noted.**

**HEC&Q/41/23****Higher Education National Policy Update**

The APHES referred members to the previously circulated report and information in relation to key regulatory updates, details around consultations, HE reforms and other essential information from the Higher Education sector.

The APHES provided a brief overview and highlighted the following key points:

- An update on Consumer Regulations (CMA) for HE Providers which had a focus on ensuring an institution was meeting the consumer regulations. There was confirmation that an in-house working group had met and a full review of the available information was being progressing with a view to providing assurance of the Group's compliance.
- An update on Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) which provided assessment of what their impact would be, what they would look like and the transferability of credits. Key questions to be addressed were highlighted to be how can the Group ensure that these changes were communicated effectively to prospective students and employers and the actions that would need to be taken to ensure preparedness for the fee limit rules taking effect in August 2025. Members further noted that the APHES had participated in a related presentation to the AoC the previous week. The APHES undertook to share her presentation with the Chairperson.

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- An update on Office for Students (OfS) consultations and policy including the policy changes around indicators linked to HTQs and the proposal to separate HTQs from other Level 4 and 5 qualifications in its student outcomes measures.
- The update to TEF outcomes of which 56 colleges had taken part and the separate ratings for student outcomes and student experience and an overall rating.
- The updated regulations around Access and Participation Plans (APP) and publications including the new Equality of Opportunity Risk Register.
- Higher Technical Qualifications (HTQs) and their impact on students and funding, as well as confirmation that 106 HTQs would be available for 2023-2024 across Digital, Construction, Health and Science.

**There were no questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Higher Education National Policy update be received and noted.**

**HEC&Q/42/23****Teaching and Learning Excellence Framework (TEF) Outcome Report 2023**

The APHES referred members to the previously circulated report and information in relation to the TEF decision for the Group in September 2023, and to provide an opportunity for members to give consideration to the panel statement and outcome letter.

The APHES, with reference to the panel statement and submission, reported that the Group had been awarded a TEF rating of bronze for both Student Experience and Student Outcomes and a bronze rating overall. There was confirmation that the rating was for a four-year period and consistent with the previous ratings which had also been bronze.

It was reported that the full panel statement and final outcomes had been communicated in October 2023 and would be published on the OfS website in due course. The headline findings were outlined and it was noted that the panel statement concluded that in several aspects, the provision demonstrated high quality features, but in many cases the submission lacked the specific evidence needed to make the judgement of outstanding features and outstanding provision.

There was confirmation that some of the TEF Metrics for 2018-19 to 2020-21 did not sufficiently meet the thresholds and indicators, determined as part of the TEF assessment process to make judgements of outstanding provision, however there was recognition of some areas of high-quality provision.

In terms of student outcomes, it was noted that some of the features were very high quality for most students but that there was inconsistency across the different student groups. It was further noted that two features were identified to be very high quality (SO2 and SO3) and none of the features were considered to be of significant concern.

The APHES indicated that she was satisfied with the rating and concurred with the view that there was a clear lack of evidence of impact. It was added that evidence of impact

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was a focus of the current year's QIP and was an area where there was a commitment to make progress.

Members congratulated the Group on the award and recognised the challenges of consolidating data from the previous college configuration into the new College Group.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A member sought clarity in relation to what was meant by impact, particularly in the context of the outcomes being attained.

The APHES responded that whilst there was data to evidence good outcomes it was considered that there was insufficient clear evidence to support the experience of students and further that specific examples were lacking.

The PCEO added that a further aspect in relation to the evaluation of what was taking place included addressing continuous improvement and what could be done differently to improve the experience. Clarity was provided that the Group needed to demonstrate what it did with the outcomes and that continuous improvement needed to be better articulated and evidenced.

The APHES went on to outline the need to set a 4-year "journey to gold" and the next TEF in 2027, which included adoption of an Evaluation Plan for the next stage of the Group's work i.e. the reporting of the story and articulation of the impact gain.

The DP further started that a lot had been learnt from the experience particularly in relation to data. Members were reminded that during the process there was no on-site attendance and the onus was upon the institution to evidence its work. It was suggested that the Group needed to improve the way it documented evidence and why decisions were being made.

The view was expressed that there was a need to know how and why things happened; the educational gain; and how this was we are going to demonstrated.

- A further question was asked by a member in relation to the lack of a student submission and why one had not been progressed.

The APHES responded that this aspect was within the student framework however it had not been strong enough at the time to support a submission. Reference was made, moving forward, to accessing the elected student representatives and student governors as well as an emphasis on how engagement took place with students. Assurance was provided that there was a commitment to improving this aspect and there was recognition that students had positive stories to share.

**There were no further comments or questions from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Teaching and Learning Excellence Framework (TEF) Outcome Report 2023 be received and noted.**

**Minute No.****HEC&Q/43/23 Office for Students (OfS) Update**

The APHES provided a verbal update in respect of an Office for Students (OfS) update. Members were in agreement that reporting in respect of this item had been addressed earlier in the meeting.

**HEC&Q/44/23 Quality Calendar**

The Head of HE, Quality and Standards (HHEQS) referred members to the previously circulated Higher Education Academic Quality Calendar for 2023-2024.

There was confirmation that the calendar had been provided for information.

**There were no comments or questions from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Quality Calendar be received and noted.**

**HEC&Q/45/23 Student Engagement Update**

The APHES referred members to the previously circulated report and an update to the committee on HE student engagement and a report on National Student Survey (NSS) student satisfaction outcomes for 2023, as well as early indicators of student satisfaction for 2023-2024.

The following key issues were highlighted:

- the outstanding NSS results for 2023 with outcomes being above the OfS benchmark across all areas and the highest scoring in Greater Manchester (GM) being attaining in the majority of sections
- the positive results from the post-induction survey
- the changes made to the HE Support Team including the appointment of a HE Engagement and Enhancement Officer as well as the increased roles and responsibilities for the HE Disability Officer to support students with or without declared disabilities and other students in underrepresented groups
- a key focus on student retention and “at-risk” analysis
- new student voice initiatives which had commenced in October 2024 and included work to improve response rates.

It was noted that earlier reporting had already addressed some of the outcomes and that moving forward milestones against the Student Participation Plan would be reported to future meetings of the Committee.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- Members recognised the positive NNS 2023 and the excellent set of results.
- A member further commented on the positive trajectory around student engagement and asked whether it may be appropriate to have a Student Governor for HE.

The view was expressed that in the context of HE comprising a relatively small percentage of the Group’s income a HE Student Governor may not be an appropriate way forward however it was suggested that as adults comprised in the

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region of 40% of the student population it could be perceived that the adult student voice was underrepresented.

It was proposed that this aspect be progressed further as part of the External Governance Review considerations.

**Action: Corporation Secretary**

**There were no further comments or questions from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Student Engagement Update be received and noted.**

**HEC&Q/46/23 Office for Students Risk Register**

The APHES presented a report which provided the Committee with a copy of the updated Higher Education Risk Register (HERR).

The APHES advised the Committee that the purpose of the report was to highlight the key risks for Higher Education and the mapping of the risks to the Office for Students Conditions of Registration.

The APHES further advised that the HERR should not be seen in isolation and that it sat alongside the HE Quality Improvement Plan and Access and Participation Plan as part of the Group's approach to ensuring the delivery of high-quality provision at Level 4, and above across the Group.

A brief overview of the key issues/risks arising from the update was presented in relation to:

- Financial Risk against 2023-2024 income position
- Delivery of successful student outcomes in line with B3 conditions
- Compliance with CMA guidelines around public information for HE

**There were no issues raised by members arising from the report and after due discussion and consideration it was resolved that it be noted.**

**HEC&Q/47/23 HE Bid Monitoring Update**

The APHES referred members to the previously circulated report and a progress update covering the current HE bids.

The following was reported:

- that the Group had been successful in two HE funds bids: OfS Capital (£1.7m) and DfE Higher Technical Injection (HTE) Fund (£390k);
- £491,161 expenditure and £299,202 was committed to March 2023 with a further £336,075 by 31 July 2023;
- that the HTE injection fund would focus on Digital, Construction, Early Years and Engineering to support the development of new programmes and growth in numbers (HTQ provision);

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- 2023-2024 spend included £212k committed to support development of the Green Skills Hub launch at Stockport College which met LSIP priorities and supported the delivery of Modern Methods of Construction HTQ from September 2024;
- that the HTE project remained on track notwithstanding there was a risk of clawback if student numbers were not secured from the HTPE bid;
- confirmation that from a financial perspective both capital bids were monitored on regular basis via the Resources Committee; and
- that the monitoring returns to both the DfE and OfS were fully compliant with no current clawback risk having been identified.

It was confirmed that further spend would take place between now and the next meeting, in particular in relation to the creation of the Cyber Lab and Immersive Learning Space for which further reporting would take place at the next meeting of the Committee.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A suggestion was made that in the context of the reporting in relation to the Stockport Campus consideration be given to holding a future in person meeting at the site.

**Action: Corporation Secretary**

**There were no further questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the HE bid monitoring update be received and noted.**

**HEC&Q/48/23****Any Other Business**

A member made reference to their recent attendance at the Graduation Ceremony and commented that it was an excellent event at which it had been good to see students' appreciation of their tutors.

It was noted that future ceremonies would include the extension of invitations to Higher Level Apprentices.

There were no further items of business.

**HEC&Q/49/23****Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be held at 5.30pm on Tuesday 5 March 2023 via Microsoft Teams.

**Action: Corporation Secretary**

The meeting closed at 7.28pm.