

## THE WINDSOR FOREST COLLEGES GROUP

### MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE QUALITY & CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Wednesday 19 June 2024 at 5.00pm (*online via Zoom*)

PRESENT:	Tina Coates	Chair
	Jacob Clay	Governor
	Nathan Garat	Governor
	Rob Lewis	Governor
	Gillian May	Group Principal & Chief Executive
	Janet Robertson	Governor
	Antonia Spinks	Co-opted Member of Q&C Committee
	Signe Sutherland	Governor
	Alison Wheatley	Governor
	Angela Wellings	Chair of Corporation
APOLOGIES:	Aaina Khan	Student Governor FE
	Ksenija Pavlovska	Student Governor Sixth Form
	Jeremy Spooner	Co-opted Governor
IN ATTENDANCE:	Amanda Down	Principal Sixth Form
	Anne Entwistle	Principal FE
	Tracy Reeve	Group Director of Governance
	Karen Griffiths	Group Vice Principal (VP) Quality & Apprenticeships

#### MINUTE

##### No

1. **Apologies for Absence**  
Apologies had been received as shown above.
2. **Notification of any other urgent business**  
There was no other business notified.
3. **Declarations of Interest**  
No member declared a conflict of interest with the agenda.
4. **Minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 April 2024**  
The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 April 2024, having been previously sent to members, were agreed as a true record and would be taken as signed by the Chair.  
**All Members were agreed.**
5. **Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting Held on 25 April 2024**  
The Director of Governance presented a report which confirmed that all matters arising had been actioned or were not yet due for action but were on track for completion.  
**NOTED**
6. **Curriculum Risk Register (RR)**  
This item was presented by the CEO/ Group Principal (GM). Members considered the curriculum risk register 2023/24 detailing the key strategic risks in relation to curriculum priorities. Members were reminded of the five strategic priorities for TWFCG, namely:
  - i. Growth - with a particular focus on 16-19 study programmes, adults, apprenticeships, and Higher Education.
  - ii. Quality – high quality, always, everywhere.

- iii. Personalised learning - study programmes and learning experiences at all levels that are based on a starting point, clear aim and individual need.
- iv. Alliances - to develop alliances to support students, employers and local communities.
- v. Finance – Improve the financial health rating from 'RI' to 'GOOD' by FY25, improving the financial point score year on year

GM reminded the meeting that there was now a separate Risk Register for IT as well as Apprenticeships so the risks in relation to these factors were not reflected on the Curriculum Risk Register. The meeting considered the following risks in more detail:

Risk 1: Uncertainty and risks associated with emerging national curriculum reforms (Current risk score of 12 'amber' after mitigation). The meeting was assured that the college continued to keep a close watch on all aspects of curriculum reform and would be providing targeted IAG for learners in response. Reworked curriculum plans were now in place for September 2024 reflecting delisted courses. The college was now actively engaging with the plans for T level delivery. GM highlighted that the impending general election on 4 July meant that no further policy decisions would be made or announced during the period of purdah. There was also likely be an ongoing pause to curriculum reform and further defunding of courses if a new government was appointed in July. The meeting noted that there was still some ongoing nervousness around T Levels; Ofsted had highlighted their concerns in relation to drop-out rates. GM informed the meeting that an additional hour a week for delivery of maths was now funded and the college had timetabled this for 2024/25. The meeting discussed whether this additional call on learners' time might have an impact on worsening attendance.

Risk 2: Ongoing recruitment & retention of key staff/ Higher staffing costs/ Potential Trade Union action (Current risk score at 16 'amber'). The meeting was reminded of the ongoing issue with 'hard-to-fill' vacancies across the FE sector and WFCG was struggling to deliver some courses due to a lack of specialist staff. There would be a Level 5 Apprenticeship in Education & Training introduced in September 2024 to encourage recruitment of industry specialists. The meeting was reminded of the need to maintain the staff costs as a percentage of income ratio below 70%; anecdotal evidence from other colleges supported this becoming more difficult. The ongoing issues around staffing costs were discussed and GM informed the meeting that the upward pressure on pay meant that the WFCG salaries were now closer to what could be expected in the schools' sector.

Risk 3: Under recruitment leads to non-financially viable curriculum areas (Current risk score at 12 'amber'). GM highlighted that this key risk associated with 16-18 enrolment was being closely monitored and managed but remained a challenge. Group sizes had been reviewed in November 2023 to inform planning for 2024. GM reminded the meeting that the recent curriculum planning project – supported by the FE Commissioner Team – had not led to any substantive recommendations for change or action. Student applications were strong for 2024/25 and would be discussed later in the meeting.

Risk 4: Mental health and wellbeing for students and staff (NEW risk with a post-mitigation score at 9 'green' NOT 'amber' as showing on the report). The Chair pointed out the error in the colour classification of the risk – 12 should be 'amber' and 9 should be 'green'. Principal FE confirmed that supporting 'at risk' learners was taking a big proportion of staff time. The increased incidence of poor mental health was also having a negative impact on retention, outcomes and attendance. GM highlighted that this new risk associated with staff as well as students was being closely monitored and actions to provide mitigation were being put in place (this would be discussed later in the meeting).

The meeting agreed that it was appropriate to delete the previous Risk 1, Financial and Quality risk associated with the self-assessed RI grade for Langley College after the successful Ofsted inspection in March 2024. The Link Governor for Langley College (RL) sought confirmation that all aspects of the Langley Improvement Plan had now been completed. AE confirmed that she would work with Vice Principal Quality (KG) to ensure that the Post Ofsted Action Plan covered any aspects of the Langley Improvement Plan that had not been fully completed. AE also informed the meeting that she would be working on a joint Self-Assessment Report (SAR) 2023/24 and Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) 2024/25 for the two FE colleges. There was nothing that specifically applied to Langley College in terms of Areas for Improvement; they were now common across BCA and Langley. The meeting commended the positive impact of the Langley Improvement Plan for 2023/2024.

***The updated Curriculum Risk Register was NOTED and RECEIVED.***

**Post Ofsted Action Plan** *[This report was taken at the start of the meeting.]*

KG reminded the meeting that she had drafted this action plan from comments received from Ofsted inspectors during the visit and cross-checked for any additional actions needed after the final report had been received. KG informed the meeting that there had been little additional progress since the last report to the Board on 17 May; many of the actions would start to move forward during the new academic year 2024/25.

KG assured the meeting that the key urgent HR actions in relation to safer recruitment had now been completed to meet the Ofsted deadline. The leadership and management inspector had been informed and he had acknowledged receipt of the College's letter. KG confirmed that the Ofsted Action Plan was now being used as a live document, it had been shared with all staff and would drive quality improvement during 2024/25. The actions within the Ofsted Action Plan would be included in self-assessment reports 2023/24 and Quality Improvement Plans for 2024/25. The Quality & Curriculum (Q&C) Committee would review progress against this Ofsted Action Plan at every meeting of Q&C Committee in 2024/25.

**The Post Ofsted Action Plan update was NOTED.**

8. **Academic Report: in-year performance**

The meeting noted that the in-year achievement data 2023/24 had not changed since last reported to the Board in May 2024.

8.1 **Apprenticeships:** *[This report was taken at the start of the meeting.]* The meeting received a presentation from VP Quality and Apprenticeships (KG) which explained the mechanism and background to Apprenticeship Achievement Measurement. The meeting was reminded of the move from Frameworks to Standards in 2020 and the government target announced in 2022 for a national achievement target of 65% for apprenticeships by 2025. The meeting noted that in March 2024 the national achievement rate for 2022/23 was confirmed as 54.3% (up from 51.4% in the prior year). KG highlighted the quality indicators within the Apprenticeship Accountability Framework and the meeting noticed the 'trigger' thresholds for each of these. Those not yet confirmed as 'green' for WFCG were noted as follows:

- **Achievement:** the figure for July 2024 was predicted as good at 68.6% (BCA 65.2% and Langley 75%) but not yet confirmed. The meeting was reminded that achievement rates between 50-60% would be classified as 'needs improvement' by the DfE. Confirmed achievement at May 2024 was 56.1% (BCA 53.4% and Langley 62.5%).
- **Employer and apprentice feedback:** Yet to be confirmed.
- **Off the job Hours:** WFCG was still waiting for confirmation from the ESFA Funding Audit (currently being undertaken by PwC) that this threshold had been cleared.
- **Withdrawals:** DfE trigger for classification as 'at risk' if an organisation had withdrawals higher than 20% or 'needs improvement' if 15-20%. The current withdrawal rate for WFCG was 7.1% so this was a 'green' risk.
- **Past Planned End Date:** KG was awaiting confirmation on the percentage of WFCG apprentices who were beyond their planned end data.

KG informed the meeting that the Link Governor for apprenticeships (SS) was keen for the Quality & Curriculum Committee to see how the accountability requirements around apprentices were being tightened up by DfE. As detailed above, KG confirmed that WFCG was hitting most of them – the recent Ofsted 'good' for apprenticeships was key - but the 'end point data' threshold was currently a risk for WFCG. However, Governors were assured that this was due to a delay in updating the apprenticeships data because of the demands of the ESFA funding audit; there was not an issue with achievement. SS confirmed that the new DfE targets were a long way beyond what had been in place for the last 10 years; it would be a challenge for colleges to fully comply. The meeting discussed the action that DfE would take if a flag for under performance against one of the thresholds was raised. The meeting also noted the potential implications of a change in government after 4 July 2024 and the Labour Party's statements in relation to FE Colleges and apprenticeships.

**Apprenticeship Risk Register:** The meeting noted an updated version of the Apprenticeship Risk Register. KG highlighted that following the recent Ofsted inspection in March 2024, where the apprenticeship provision was graded 'Good', several risks on the apprenticeship risk register had been either removed or reduced. However, a new risk had been included relating to the concern surrounding the potential loss/ reduction of apprenticeship provision at BCA. The meeting discussed the following risks in more detail:

- **Funding Audit** (Risk score 'green' at 9): The funding audit – which started in October 2023 – still continued with an anticipated end date in June. Queries continued to be responded to promptly by the team and a number of additional 100% checks had been requested by auditors PwC. The meeting was reminded that queries were now given oversight from the ESFA who are also monitoring the progress of the audit. Governors noted that FE Week recently published a short article noting that the WFCG – along with a number of other colleges - had not yet published their 2022/23 accounts. KG confirmed that the risk score had reduced from 16 to 9 to reflect the reduced risk of funding claw back as each query was closed.
- **BCA – Greenkeeping** (Risk score 'red' at 25): The meeting noted that the manager for Greenkeeping Apprenticeships at BCA had recently submitted his resignation and planned to join an alternative training provider that is well established in the industry though does not yet offer apprenticeships. SLT were anticipating a potential move of the majority of the Greenkeeping provision to this alternative provider as they introduced an apprenticeship provision. Governors were assured that SLT were currently in the process of reviewing the group's apprenticeship provision and would provide a full cost contribution analysis to governors. This risk was currently rated high due to potential loss of income and need for consideration of alternative provision.
- **National Recruitment of Apprenticeships** (Risk score 'amber' at 12): Nationally the rate of recruitment of apprentices had slowed and WFCG's softening pipeline reflected this picture. KG confirmed that the risk had reduced slightly from 16 to 12 to reflect the actions taken within the provision to explore alternative apprenticeships, eg the introduction of apprenticeships at Windsor College.
- **Apprenticeship Achievement** (Risk score 'green' at 8): Achievement rate (May 2024) is currently 56.1% (BCA 53.4% and Langley 62.5%). Predicted achievement rate for July 2024 is 68.6% (BCA 65.2% and Langley 75%).

KG highlighted the change since the last iteration of the apprenticeships risk register with the risks around Greenkeeping (GK) at BCA now being at numbers 1 and 2. The meeting was reminded that management had to put forward a very well-argued case for the GK at BCA during the recent Ofsted inspection as the points raised by inspectors were fair. The GK courses were not as supportive for apprentices as they could be. The meeting discussed the impending loss of the GK courses manager who was key to the delivery but was leaving WFCG to go to another training provider, BIGGA. Governors noted that currently the only GK training not offered by BIGGA was apprenticeships. Although it would take time for BIGGA to set up the provision and register as an approved apprenticeship provider, moving forward new business in GK would be a tougher piece to win for WFCG. The meeting agreed that there would be a need to consider strategy in these courses for the next 18 to 24 months. KG confirmed that there was also the opportunity to keep current GK employers if the quality improved. Governors noted that there would be some mitigation by adding apprenticeships at Windsor, but the final impact was uncertain.

KG highlighted the long-running ESFA Funding Audit which was having a big impact on the Apprenticeship Team and their workload. The protracted audit had started in October 2024 and PwC were still asking for more sampling and data in relationship to apprentices. Although the ESFA were now supporting resolution of the audit this ongoing challenge for the apprenticeship team was having a negative impact on business development. However, KG confirmed that the softening of the pipeline was in line with national trends.

Governors sought additional clarity on the quality issues with the GK courses and asked whether the College should consider pulling out of this provision. KG asserted the importance of working to get the quality right as there was a large number of students and it would be important for BCA's reputation. There were also quite a few staff employed around this provision. KG informed the meeting that the team was currently looking at good practice at a college in the north with apprenticeship provision graded as 'outstanding'. Although BCA's GK learners were not going anywhere soon management would need to take a cautious

approach to the future. KG informed the meeting that the college had already reassigned the four Level 5 GK learners to another college as it was not cost effective to continue this delivery.

The Q&C Committee Chair asked what governors could do to support management with these issues, especially the ongoing ESFA Funding Audit. The CEO (GM) assured the meeting that the ESFA were now fully supporting the college and were aware of the operational impact; including being unable to appoint the new external auditors for the 1 August 2024 contract. Governors were assured that management were working with the ESFA to bring the audit to a conclusion as soon as possible.

**Adult and Higher Education (HE) provision:** Principal Sixth Form (AD) presented the update report for Adults and HE which was largely taken as read. The meeting was reminded that the targets within the Strategy Map 2022-2025 for Adults and HE were £2.9m and £0.75m respectively by 2024/25.

8.2 **Adults:** AD confirmed that at the time of reporting, 2,698 adults were enrolled on non-full-time courses compared to 1,688 as reported in September 2023 and against 2,725 enrolments in 2022-23. AD confirmed that the final figure would increase as it would be boosted by the Skills Network recruitment; there had been a significant increase at Langley College from 1147 in 2022/23 to 1314 plus some additional online provision. The meeting was pleased to note that the College had achieved 101.93% of its Adult Education Budget (AEB) allocation but only 58.19% of its GLA allocation. AD confirmed that increasing the GLA funded delivery remained a key priority within curriculum planning for 2024/25. WFCG had continued to offer online learning in conjunction with The Skills Network but had taken a different approach in 2023/24 which had resulted in fewer enrolments and impacted GLA funding but resulted in an increased net income for the College. The meeting was assured that current forecasts indicated that the College had met the target of increasing 100% adult recovery to £2.9m with a total predicted income of £3,046,744. There would also be a boost in GLA income with provision in the satellite sites at Southall and Hayes.

**Higher Education:** Recruitment to Access to HE and HE courses had remained steady and an updated HE strategic plan had now been produced to support further growth and development in the provision including the introduction of new Higher Technical Qualifications (this would be the next paper to be considered by the meeting). Total income for HE at 11/06/2024 was £608,567 against a target of £0.75m by 2024/25; this had increased from £0.48m in 2021/22. The meeting noted that currently there were 131 learners enrolled on HE courses; these numbers did not include three Level 4 courses which are supported by HE curriculum, pastoral and tutorial support teams but included within the main FE funding streams. Recruitment to Access and Pre-Access courses had remained positive with 26 learners enrolled on L3 Access courses and 23 on Pre-Access L1 and L2 courses. The latter had provided a clear progression pathway for ESOL learners, and management anticipated similar enrolment numbers in 2024/25. The HE Team was continuing to plan for the introduction of Access to Animal Management at BCA from September 2025 which would support access to veterinary nursing courses at HE. AD highlighted that growth had been achieved this academic year in some HE courses but marketing and promotional strategies, both internal and external, remain key to growing the HE provision particularly in new courses such as the Educational Studies Foundation Year. Governors were assured that new marketing activity was planned to support recruitment for 2024/25 in conjunction with actions taken to consolidate and strengthen the current course offer. This had included the decision to offer the Child Development and Learning course solely at BCA from September 2025 rather than at both our Langley and BCA campuses to meet learner demand. From September 2024 WFCG would be delivering the Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ) in Business and moving away from the HND and Foundation Degree. Whilst there was a great deal of similarity between the courses the HTQ course content was more current and therefore more applicable to learners who were working in the industry.

**HE Strategy:** The Principal Sixth Form presented the revised College HE Strategy. This outlined the plans for growth and development within the HE provision to meet the current strategic target of £0.75m by 2024/25. The meeting was reminded that the Higher Education offering at WFCG was small (approximately 124 students) but this was an important provision for the College, designed to meet employer and educational needs, both locally and nationally. Governors were reminded that the College Group delivered HE provision across three of its colleges (BCA, Langley and Windsor) and course delivery had been reviewed and

rationalised to ensure there was no overlap. The majority of WFCG provision was delivered at Langley College which had been supported with the creation of a suite of HE rooms, funded by the Thames Valley LEP, and DfE funding via the Higher Technical Education Fund Level 5 Professional Practice in Health & Social Care. The current provision (September 2024) included Level 4, 5 and 6 courses which meet several of the key identified national, regional and local skills priorities as well as widening participation in higher education from our local communities. Current provision was directly linked to identified skills gaps in health and social care, education and the screen industries. AD confirmed that WFCG would be delivering its first Higher Technical Qualification in Business from September 2024 to better meet current industry needs. SLT were currently exploring other options that would provide pathways for students from new T-Level qualifications as well as adults returning to higher education. AD highlighted that to secure the future of the college's HE provision, raise its profile and secure its economic viability, the College was aiming to increase the number of students enrolled, with a particular focus on part-time provision to support forecasted local demand in areas such as business administration, health and social care and education. TWFCG was committed to developing its higher education provision by expanding the range of courses offered, both independently and in partnership with local HEIs and employers, ensuring that the facilities and delivery continue to be of the highest possible standard. The HE Strategy included a commitment to supporting students gain access to HE through the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE). AD highlighted the link with the Royal College of Nursing as the college was investigating writing its own Higher Technical Qualification (HTQ) in this area which would address an adult skills shortage.

The meeting noted the detail of the HE Strategy and Governors asked the following questions:

- RL sought confirmation on the strategic targets shown on page 52 - £0.75m from £1.8m a few years ago. AD confirmed that this was a typographical error and £1.8m should read £0.48m.
- RL sought clarity on the last row on page 53 regarding the BA Hons. This was stated as being 'one day a week for one year' and RL asked whether this was just for one module. AD informed the meeting that this was for a top up year to Level 6 for learners who had already completed a Level 5 qualification. This was for learners who were working alongside studying (staff in care homes, social care, nursing, play therapists etc.). It enabled these adults to access this provision as it was delivered in a compact way over one year.

***The Academic Update was NOTED.***

***The Higher Education Strategy was NOTED and RECEIVED and would be taken to the Board for APPROVAL in September 2024 with the revised Strategic Plan 2024-27.***

**To Board**

9. **Safeguarding Update: Mental Health and Wellbeing**

Principal FE (AE) presented a report to the meeting which provided an overview of the challenges some students were facing in relation to poor mental health and wellbeing. The report identified the significant increase in mental health referrals and the potential impact on student experience and achievement.

The meeting noted the current challenges being faced by students:

- In line with the national picture in colleges, there had been a significant rise in reported mental health cases. Nationally this had risen from 6% pre-pandemic to 22% in the academic year 2023/2024.
- The most common mental health issues among students at WFCG were anxiety and depression. This academic year, approximately one in five students (20%) had presented with an anxiety disorder, including generalised anxiety, social anxiety, panic attacks, and phobias.
- Approximately one in five students (20%) presented with depression, ranging from mild to severe, including cases of suicide ideation and attempted suicide. 150 students had reported having suicidal thoughts across the group since September.
- Other mental health conditions observed include borderline personality disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and an increase in eating disorders and self-harm.



The meeting noted that in looking for a reason for this decline in mental health of young people there was not a clear answer but there were many well documented factors which might be contributing. These included: social media, social isolation, drug use (especially cannabis), lack of physical activity and purpose, world news and outlook for the future or a difficult home environment. AE confirmed that poor mental health had a detrimental impact on students' academic performance, including low motivation, poor concentration, difficulty retaining information, changed behaviours, low attendance, low achievement levels, and an increased chance of drop out. In addition, peer relationships and student/staff relationships could be negatively impacted where a student withdraws and stops communicating or becomes aggressive. The meeting noted that staff were reporting that poor mental health was the primary reason for poor progress against target grades or low retention.

The meeting noted the numerous support measures that were already in place as well as plans for future targeted assistance. Governors were assured that the college already provided support to address student mental health, including college counselling services, mentor support with student development officers or pastoral tutors, mental health first aid, and a flexible timetable during times of crisis. The tutorial program focussed on maintaining or achieving good mental health and wellbeing. Staff also signposted students to external agencies when additional support was required. WFCG now also used a therapy dog at key points in the year. A Mental Health and Wellbeing Forum was available for feeder schools to aid learners' transition to college. Staff had also received training in 'draw and talk' techniques to aid communication in foundation and ALFIE (adult learning for independence and employment) groups. The meeting went on to consider the future plans to provide additional targeted support and mitigate further increase in the level of poor mental health in the student population. These included:

- A move towards activities that were required to maintain or achieve good mental health including an increase in clubs and activities to support the development of social skills and to reduce social anxiety as well as additional opportunities for physical activity to raise endorphins and to reduce adrenaline levels.
- Tutorial activities which would put greater emphasis on developing resilience and building the toolkit required to self-manage and successfully navigate through some of life's challenges.
- A focus on male students at Langley College with an increase in after-college youth activity which would be supported by the student development team. This would give some male students the opportunity to build trusting relationships with staff where they felt safe enough to open up.
- The College Group was currently part of a multi-agency working group which included Thames Valley Police and Slough Borough Council to reintroduce youth clubs/ centres in the area.

The Governors expressed their surprise and dismay that the figures had gone from 6% pre-Covid to 22% nationally. The negative impact on poor achievement was a major concern and made it crucial for the College and the governors to focus on this issue. It was agreed that it would be key for Q&C to monitor actions and their impact on an ongoing basis in 2024/25. AE talked about the enormous staff effort that went into supporting individual cases; this had been particularly evident during the recent exams. Governors asked whether a separate action plan would be required for each of the four colleges. AE stated that there was need for a national focus as well as a cross-College action plan. All FE Colleges would be required to have a Mental Health Strategy by 2025 and she was currently working with HR as this would need to cover staff as well as students.

Governors thanked AE for the report and for highlighting the shocking statistics. AW asserted the ongoing issue with a lack of support nationally from specialist services e.g. for child mental health via CAMs. The meeting discussed the likelihood of a post-Covid legacy adding to this issue and AE confirmed that social anxiety had a big part to play as well as the over-use of social media during Covid which had caused ongoing damage. AW asked whether there were specialist support skills that the college needed to draw on for learners. Without this the meeting agreed that the pressure fell on teachers and support staff which placed a huge additional toll on staff in addition to standard teaching duties. The meeting also stressed the need to make this high profile and to look at actions required and HR best-practice to ensure that WFCG was being a good employer for staff.

The meeting considered how the college could work with families of learners to offer support. AE highlighted the ongoing stigma around mental health and the need to do work with families

to destigmatise this so that they were honest and shared incidence of poor mental health at enrolment. The meeting talked about how the College could involve families and make people more comfortable to talk mental health within families. AS suggested that it was probably harder for colleges to deal with this compared with schools as college students were more likely to be looking for their own agency and 'freedom' from parental input. AD asserted the problem about not contacting parents where earners were 18+. Parents were often very angry and college staff often bore the brunt of their frustration which was hard for staff. There was also often incidence of poor parental mental health. There was also a need to get the community more involved and a planned focus on engaging in multi-agency work with police around youth clubs would help.

The meeting talked about the proposed changes that could be put in at enrolment and during the first few weeks of the new academic year. SS suggested that this might include the creation of self-helps groups within the student body and this idea was agreed as a great suggestion. The creation of safe spaces and quiet areas would be important.

**ACTION: Progress idea of student self-help groups to Student Support Team.**

AE/ KG

Other changes would include staff having a more open discussion with all learners at enrolment and there would be more student clubs in place targeting specific issues. AD reminded the meeting that any action plan also needed to take account of adult students who were doing HE and Access courses.

AE confirmed that the Safeguarding Team had looked at good practice within the sector, but it was now important to have actions in place for the start of 2024/25. The meeting was reminded that as the WFCG Safeguarding Leads KG and AE had undertaken senior mental health training and had picked up some good ideas. Any mental health strategy needed to have online tools and something for students to dip into offsite as they had a limited time at college. This was a challenge as students often found it hard to motivate themselves to access online support on their own at home. AE also informed the meeting that many of the college student services staff were trained mental health champions. The Committee Chair (TC) sought clarity on where the responsibility for this work sat and AE informed the meeting that there was a Safeguarding Team at each of the four campuses. TC asserted the importance of involving the student governors in developing and monitoring the Mental Health Action Plan.

**The Safeguarding Update Report was NOTED**

**ACTION: Develop a WFCG Mental Health Strategy with a time specific Action Plan to identify the key priorities and actions for 2024/25. Draft to Q&C Committee September 2024 meeting.**

AE/ KG

10. **Applications Report 2024/25**

The meeting noted the current applications report for 16-19 programmes at 11/06/24 which showed that the applications for the Group was 13% (603 learners) ahead of the same position in the prior year. The current 'growth' in applications by college was BCA 21% (+360), Langley 15% (+147), Strode's 0% (-6) and Windsor 13% (+102). The big increase at Windsor was predicated on the LSIF partnership work and the change of focus for this campus (to Screen Industries) in line with the strategy agreed by the Governors in July 2023. The meeting also noted the offers accepted by college which was running 8% ahead of the prior year; BCA 10% (116 learners), Langley 7% (36), Strode's -1% (-10), and Windsor 25% (112). The meeting commended the marketing video for the new provision at Windsor College which had been circulated to all governors for information.

**The applications update was NOTED**

11. **Student Voice: Student Liaison Committee Feedback**

The meeting noted a verbal update from Link Governor Langley (NG) who had recently attended a student link meeting. NG informed the meeting that the issue of mental health had not been raised at this meeting, but it might be the case that pro-active and involved students were less likely to be suffering with their mental health. The CEO suggested that link governors should go on walk around the college to talk to other students during future visits.

**The update on Student Voice was NOTED.**



12. **Dates and Times of Future Meetings**

The draft meeting dates for 2024/25 were noted as:

- Thursday 28 November 2024 at 5pm
- Tuesday 18 March 2025 at 5pm
- Thursday 19 June 2025 at 5pm

All to be held online via Zoom. TR confirmed that these dates would be confirmed after approval of the draft meeting timetable by the Board on 3 July 2024

**NOTED**

13. **Any Urgent Business**

**AOB**

*Risks around future funding:* The CEO highlighted a recent article published in FE Week which asserted the AOC's warning of the need for caution around future funding levels – including guaranteed lagged funding – for 16-18 learners. GM assured the meeting that the budget for 2024/25 and 2025/26 had taken a prudent approach to any increase in funding income. The worry was that FE Colleges would be required to deliver growth for no additional income.

**NOTED**

There was no urgent other business notified.

**The meeting ended at 6.10 pm**

Chair ..... Date .....