

**HERTFORD REGIONAL COLLEGE CORPORATION  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
QUALITY, STANDARDS & CURRICULUM PLANNING COMMITTEE  
WEDNESDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2018**



**690 PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS**

**690.1 Attendance, Apologies for Absence & Membership**

**Membership:** Ricky Irons  
Tony Medhurst  
Sam Pettican  
Jan Wing (Chair)

**In Attendance:** Mike Carver  
Jayne Chaplin (Clerk)  
Angela McLean  
Wayne Wright

**Apologies:** Charlotte Simmonds  
Stephen Alexander

**690.2 Declarations of Interest**

None reported.

**690.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 December 2017 were confirmed as a correct record, and were signed by the Chair.

**690.4 Matters Arising**

None to report with all matters covered on the agenda.

**691 IN-YEAR PERFORMANCE MONITORING & DEVELOPMENT**

**691.1 Quality Monitoring & Improvement**

Reports were presented on year to date activity and progress in the implementation of quality improvement objectives for 2017/18, comprising:

**691.1a Performance Targets (Strategic Objectives) Update**

A report updating members on progress in the implementation of the strategic curriculum and quality performance objectives proposed for 2017/18.

After acknowledging that it remained too early to predict an overall achievement rate for the year, there was consideration of performance against predictive indicators of achievement, which:

- Highlighted the current overall retention rate to be 96.2% compared with the 94% retention rate target for the year.
- Showed overall attendance to date at 83.41% with the figure higher for vocational programmes at 89% and lower for English and Maths lessons at 70%.

After noting the overall year to date position and with members reflecting on their experience of and observations during their recent link activities with the curriculum areas (Minute 691.1d refers), review with management included:

- Consideration of retention rates by Directorate and Curriculum Area, including sub-contracted provision:
  - i. Commending those areas with a retention rate of 100% or above the College average. Observing the 100% retention rate for sub-contracted provision, members were advised that it was not uncommon for sub-contractors to record such a rate, noting it to be reflective of the types of shorter qualifications that the majority tended to deliver.
  - ii. Discussing further with Management those areas identified with retention below 97% and questioning the extent to which any particular factors had been identified by way of explanation. Members were advised that whilst there were instances of impact on data of relatively small numbers of students citing ACCS (Access), WORK (Workwise) and PSER (Public Services) as examples, ensuring the continued engagement of particular student cohorts was recognised by members to be challenging, Such challenges notwithstanding, there was question of Management of action in this regard, welcoming assurance that focused monitoring was continuing to minimise any potential for further withdrawals with the ongoing review of data assisting in the early identification of any specific areas for attention.
  
- Attendance to date, reflecting on the rates by curriculum area and in particular on the contrast in data:
  - i. Between vocational lessons where attendance for 16-18 learners was higher than for adults and in English and Maths lessons where attendance for adults was better than for 16-18 year olds. There was discussion with Management of the factors underlying the contrast, acknowledging it to be attributed almost certainly to the compulsory nature of the subject matter. Questioning how this was to be addressed members were advised of action taken, including the delivery of English and Maths as an integral element of all programmes of study for full-time learners; and a campaign promoting the importance of acquiring such skills to enhance future career prospects.
  - ii. Between the Directorates and focusing where attendance was reported to be lowest, in Construction, Engineering and Workwise observing in the context of earlier discussion (point (i) above refers) the challenges in maintaining the engagement of learners. There was note, in contrast, of the rates in the Service Industries and Creative and Enterprise Directorates questioning Management about any specific reasons for the distinction, noting the positive impact of the focus on the critical nature of maths and English, including on attendance. Whilst the distinction in the different student cohorts was acknowledged, there was discussion of and assurance was welcomed that practice yielding positive results was shared across and within Directorates.
  - iii. Exploring with Management more generally the current strategies and new initiatives for improving attendance, noted to include involvement in a national project involving

the sending of texts to students and parents throughout the academic year, which a study had shown how this could increase achievement by 2-4%.

- iv. Discussing with Management the monitoring and verifying of data welcoming confirmation of improved recording and staff interrogation of data with weekly review and with Management support in intervention and action with the Directorate and curriculum areas as appropriate.

There was then note of the most recent activity and developments to progress the objective to continue to revitalise the curriculum offer for 2018/19 to ensure it responded to local, LEP and national priorities (See Minute 629.1).

After discussion, the update was noted.

### **691.1b Interim Teaching, Learning & Assessment Report**

The Interim Teaching, Learning & Assessment Report was received updating members on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) performance based on evidence from formal observation(s), learning walks, learner voice and desk-based reviews.

The report was summarised noting:

- The 100% completion rate for first lesson observations across College (permanent teaching staff) with overall effectiveness of teaching observations across the Directorates and for individual curriculum areas showing:
  - i. 83% of staff observations in CAE, 91% in SID and 62% in STEM were judged to be overall effective with the greatest in year improvement in SID, which increased by 32% in overall effectiveness from 59% in November 2017 to 91% in February 2018.
  - ii. With the exception of electrical, overall effectiveness in STEM requiring improvement. Members were advised however that recent reviews, indicated that this was not a true reflection of teaching, learning and assessment in English and maths and that this profile was expected to improve when re-observations had taken place reporting positive indicators in this regard.
  - iii. The action taken with those Tutors assessed as “not yet effective” reporting on robust performance management, targeted CPD and support.
  - iv. The effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment across the ten College standards, identifying strengths and areas for improvement across college and by directorate and curriculum area, and noting the improved change in profile since previously reported with the overall college profile now showing 90% effective/highly effective across the standards.
  - v. The commencement of the observations of HRG teaching staff noting that this would be the subject of report at the Committee’s next meeting.
- The key strengths and emerging areas identified for development from the Learning Walks observations of additional learning support
- The observations following the Governor learning walks (Minute 691.1d refers)

The report was considered further with questioning of management including acknowledging the improved trajectory of the observation profile and recognising the live nature of the data, welcoming assurance that it facilitated early intervention and support.

After discussion, the update was noted.

#### **691.1c Curriculum Performance Reviews: Feedback**

Pending formal report at the next meeting, an oral report was received providing an overview of Management findings following the recent Curriculum Performance Reviews.

Reporting the focus on those areas considered to be under-performing, members were advised of action taken in the areas, in particular:

- Noting Management confidence of improved performance in Business, Motor vehicle and Construction
- In the context of discussions elsewhere on the agenda (Minute 691.1a refers), welcoming the continued focus on English and maths notwithstanding more positive results

The update was noted.

#### **691.1d Corporation Conference Governor Link Feedback**

After observing discussions that had taken place elsewhere on the agenda (Minute 691.1b refers), members reflected further on the learning walks activities forming part of the January 2018 Corporation Conference.

Concurring that the activities had been instrumental in providing a greater insight into the work of the College and its staff and students, members' observations were reviewed, including strengths and areas for development, noting confirmation of:

- Members' experience of good and outstanding practice, citing examples including observation of very clear learning objectives for sessions, the translation of English and Maths into reality and good level of engagement and behaviour in all classroom sessions
- Positive student feedback and gaining a better insight into areas where improvement could be made to enhance the learner experience.

After expressing appreciation to staff and students for an interesting and informative experience, the report was noted.

#### **691.1e Enrolment: Update**

A report was received providing an overview of the current position for 16-18 enrolments, progression rates for 2016/17 and applications for the 2018/19 academic year.

The report was summarised with members noting that:

- The year to date position for 16-18 learners, in terms of enrolments and funding allocation, was below target. It was reported however that it was anticipated for the overall funding figure for 16-18 funded learners to be met advising members of plans to increase numbers

for the remainder of the academic year, predominantly with sub-contractors including CK Assessment & Training Ltd, the Princes Trust and other partners,

- In respect of destinations:
  - i. The vast majority of the College's 16-18 learners went on to a positive destination with the number of learners without a positive destination very low at 2.9%.
  - ii. A similar position for adult learners with only 5.7% not in paid employment or not looking for employment. Members were advised however of the potential for the figure to be overstated with the possibility for some adults to be pensioners and therefore not be looking for work, in which case it was noted that the figure would fall to 3.7%.
- Whilst current data suggested that first choice applications from 16-18 learners for 2018/19, to be less than for the previous year, there were likely to be significantly more learners applying between now and September 2018.

Reviewing the report, consideration included:

- The year to date position with enrolments:
  - i. Reflecting on the spread over the curriculum areas within the three directorates noting that whilst numbers were slightly down on last year, there had been growth in some curriculum areas whereas others have experienced a decline, including Business, Sport, Hospitality and Tourism, Construction and Motor Vehicle. Discussing with Management any factors attributed to this, members were advised that in the majority of these areas, local school sixth forms offered similar programmes although it was also potentially reflective of reduced interest from learners in areas of low performance.
  - ii. Exploring further the reasons why learners had withdrawn noting where Apprenticeships or employment had been secured, sometimes in the vocational area where those learners had been studying. Whilst acknowledging it to be a positive outcomes for the student, the impact was recognised on College retention rates, confirming that the data in such instances would be retained as evidence to demonstrate that learner progression onto a positive outcome.
- Year to date Applications for 2018/19 acknowledging it to represent an initial picture for the forthcoming year and observing the current areas of growth and decline in applications. There was discussion with Management of:
  - i. The recruitment patterns over the previous three years and the use of the data to predict likely enrolment conversion, reflecting on the variation in and possible reasons for the difference in rates between curriculum areas, noting local competition from school sixth forms as one potential factor along with the quality of the interview experience. Exploring this further and in response to questioning, members were advised how this had informed changes to the process to provide an enhanced experience explaining how this had been successfully trialled in the Service Industries Directorate last year and following positive feedback now had been extended to the other Directorates for level 1 and 2 programmes for this year.

- ii. The reduction in applications to date overall noting the further work to be taking place to boost student numbers including through marketing campaigns, school's liaison and recruitment events, scheduled for both the spring and summer terms.

Following discussion, the report was noted.

## **692 Curriculum Development**

### **692.1 Curriculum Development Update**

Notwithstanding discussions that had taken place elsewhere on the agenda (Minute 691.1a refers) there was further consideration of the curriculum developments to progress the strategic objective to continue to revitalise the curriculum offer for 2018/19 to ensure it responded to local, LEP and national priorities

Reviewing progress with management:

- Confirmation was welcomed that capital funding had been secured from the LEP to update the Colleges electrical training facilities noting that the investment would enable the College to further expand the number and range of electrical courses with work expected to be completed by the end of March 2018.
- Commending the College's success in obtaining further funding to pilot the new work placements for 16-18 year olds for 2018/19 and noting that this was in addition to the pilot that began in the academic year.

Progress was considered with the current curriculum planning process of the existing delivery models for full time learners from entry level up to level 3. In the context of:

- The importance of maths and English there was discussion with Management of developments noting plans for further revisions to the delivery model to encourage attendance in English and maths lessons.
- The development of new curriculum and in response to questioning, members noted areas of current planned changes for next year included IT and Computing, Science, Motor Vehicle, Construction and Tourism

The update was noted.

## **693 Compliance Matters**

Reports were presented providing details of activity and action taken in respect of compliance matters, comprising:

### **693.1a Safeguarding Update**

An oral report was received from the Committee Chair updating members on the safeguarding update for the spring term.

The report was summarised and there was review of:

- Referrals compared with the same point in the previous the year noting the data following the removal of the generic 'other' category the inclusion more specific headings and the creation

of a new category 'contact from external agencies' to record possible safeguarding concerns. There was particular note of the continuation in the recording of a higher number of students falling within the emotional and psychological category, accounting for 65% of safeguarding referrals in the current term.

- The range of activities undertaken, including:
  - i. In respect of Safeguarding, actions undertaken to date, including the work with external partners to develop a student toolkit with activities and materials to support wellbeing, work and training, the audit compliance carried out with subcontractors reporting; and in response to questioning on those areas for improvement identified; confirming safeguarding and child protection policies in place for external contractors
  - ii. In respect of the promotion of Prevent and British Values, the positive reception to refresher Prevent and Run Hide Tell tutorials and workshops. Members then discussed the further training initiatives welcoming confirmation of the availability of such opportunities for Governors, which would be communicated accordingly.

After consideration, the update was noted.

#### **693.1b Equality & Diversity Annual Report**

Following earlier circulation by email, a report was received presenting the College's Equality & Diversity Annual Report for 2017/18.

Responding to the requirement for the data to be made available on the College website and falling outside of the usual meeting cycle, members were reminded that the report had been circulated by email prior to formal publication. With comments invited, members acknowledged that the report reflected how the College met the public sector general and specific equality duties. The report contents were reviewed, reporting that as presented it represented the final version and was reflective of members' comments

Following further consideration, it was **RESOLVED** to **RECOMMEND** for the Corporation to:

- **APPROVE RETROSPECTVELY** the Equality & Diversity Annual Report.

#### **694 ANY OTHER BUSINESS & NEXT MEETING**

##### **694.1 Any other business**

No other business was raised.

##### **694.2 Date of Next Meeting**

**Wednesday 23 May 2018, 4.00pm**

**Signed:**



**Date: 23 May 2018**