



724 PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS

724.1 Attendance, Apologies for Absence & Welcome

Membership:	Vikie Bew	
	Peter McCallion	
	Tony Medhurst	
	Jan Wing	(Chair)
In Attendance:	Mike Carver	<i>(Until Item 721.2b)</i>
	Jayne Chaplin	(Clerk)
	Katrina Dougherty	
	Susan Feltham	<i>(Item 725 only)</i>

New members were welcomed to the meeting.

724.2 Declarations of Interest & Confidential Items

There were no Declarations of Interest or confidential items.

724.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 9 October 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

724.4 Matters Arising

Policies: Nomination of a Designated SEN Governor (Minute 722.2)

It was noted that the matter had been considered at the December 2019 meeting of the Corporation and it was agreed that the matter would be the subject of further discussion at a forthcoming meeting.

725 COMMITTEE BRIEFING

A presentation was provided by the Director of Curriculum and Apprenticeships providing an update on changes to and progress in improvements to the quality of provision within the area.

After noting the introduction of an interim Operations Manager Role and performance management measures setting out expectations and targets to ensure the improvement of achievement, members were advised of:

725.1 Changes and developments in staffing, training and processes, including:

- Quality improvement measures including staff training, the provision of support of teaching and learning, Internal Quality Reviews and regular performance monitoring meetings; along with compliance with and development of data reporting. It was noted that in addition, the training had been provided in preparation for Ofsted re-inspection
- Work in the move from Frameworks to Standards with awarding bodies providing training around the development of apprenticeship programmes for the new standards. It was noted that whilst currently 37% of provision was delivered to Standards, the objective was 100% delivery of standards, in-line with the government and Ofsted expectations.

725.2 The focus of attention on achievement, noting the setting of income targets for new learners and employers to ensure the meeting of number allocations and growth with planning for 2020/21 underway.

725.3 Performance to date noting Retention and Attendance rates to be 85% and 90% respectively.

Discussion included:

725.4 The shift in focus and the impact of the changes introduced, noting that whilst the latest Student Survey highlighted more positive feedback, further work was required.

725.5 The interactions with employers observing the need for appropriate dialogues with subject specialists, noting how introductory conversations were establishing working relationships with more detailed discussions with the appropriately skilled practitioners then taking place in curriculum areas.

The Director of Curriculum was thanked for an interesting and informative presentation.

Susan Feltham left the meeting.

726 IN-YEAR PERFORMANCE MONITORING & COMPLIANCE

726.1 Strategy & Business Planning

Updating members on progress in the delivery of the College Strategic Plan and business planning, reports were received, comprising:

726.1a Strategic Objectives & Business Planning Update

Review of the update on the year to date position in the achievement of the 2019/20 strategic objectives included, as indicators of year-end achievement, the year to date rates for:

- Retention noting that at 96.8%, it was 1% lower than the figure recorded in the previous year, attributed to the reporting of data at a slightly earlier point in the year. Responding to questioning, confidence was expressed in the data based on the work undertaken around timely withdrawals confirming the figure remained high and compared positively with sector norms. Confirmation was also welcomed that retention for Apprenticeships (College delivery) was significantly above the previous year's final outturn.
- Attendance, welcoming the current full-time rate of 87.5%, which whilst noted to be below the College 90% target, represented a further improvement of 1.1% on the figure recorded for the period in the previous year. Whilst recognising the three-year improving trend, the focus was noted on maintain and improving the position.

Questioning in further detail included:

- Year to date retention rates, noting the difference in retention between College and subcontracted delivery at 96.4% and 97.9% respectively, noting this to be reflective of the greater number of starts in the former. Reflecting on the 21 of the 31 areas with rates at or above 96%, there was discussion of the 10 below 96%, acknowledging with smaller cohorts the disproportionate impact of any changes in number.

- Discussion of attendance rates, focussing on those areas recording the lowest rates but recognising the improvement in the STEM and Curriculum and Enterprise directorates of 0.5% and 2.1% respectively, compared with the equivalent time in the previous year.

Members then noted the positive outcome of the spring term Student Survey and that curriculum planning for 2020/21 was underway with details of planned offer for 2020/21 to be shared at forthcoming meetings.

The report was noted.

726.1b Enrolment Update

A report was reviewed updating members on the current position for 16-18 enrolments and providing a first look at applications for the 2020/21 academic year, noting:

- Current year enrolments to have improved since last reported but whilst slightly below the funding allocation, represented an increase in 16-18 learners. Members noted the feedback from the ESFA, highlighting under recruitment as a Sector issue with no reversal to date in an upturn in the demographic decline in 16 year olds leaving school; and the activity of local sixth forms in continuing to compete strongly to maintain their position.
- Recruitment activity for the 2020/21 academic year, welcoming report of the increase in first choice applications compared with the same point in the previous year.

Review in further detail included:

- Focus on those areas experiencing the greatest fall in 16-18 learners, advising members how the Creative and Enterprise Directorate (C&E), had declined to 29% in 2019/20 having previously been the largest directorate with approximately 43% of learners in 2017/18. Questioning further the reasons for such a decline, noted to be predominantly due to Art & Design, Music and Performing Arts and Computing not recruiting to target, members reflected on any potential reversal in demand, sharing observations of recent media reports of forthcoming skills shortages in Performing Arts.
- The analysis of full-time applications for 2020/21 by curriculum area. After observing the increase in 12 of the 22 curriculum areas, there was focus on areas currently showing a decline in applications asking about reasons for such a decline. Concerns were noted about Health & Social Care and Sport, advising members of the potential impact of the diversification of local sixth forms into a greater number of vocational qualifications.

After consideration, the report was noted.

Mike Carver left the meeting

726.2 Quality Improvement

Quality Improvement Updates covering all aspects of College provision were reviewed, comprising:

726.2a Further Education

i Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

The College QIP was presented showing year to date progress.

After observing discussion elsewhere on the agenda (Minutes 726.1a and 726.2aii refer), the year-to-date position was summarised. After noting activity to be broadly in-line with expectations for this period in the year, points of detail were answered and clarified provided as necessary.

The update was noted.

ii Interim Report: Teaching, Learning & Assessment (TLA)

An overview was provided of the year-to-date position following learning walks, lesson observations and internal quality reviews (IQR).

The report was reviewed, noting in particular:

- The completion of classroom based teaching observations in-line with target subject to five justifiable exceptions.
- An overall effectiveness rating of 77%, observed to be a 2% decrease compared with the previous year with effectiveness across the six standards showing the overall college profile already to be 91% effective against the standards.
- The greater focus in the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) on the quality of learning support in enhancing the learner experience, welcoming confirmation of an effective cross College profile.
- The introduction of Internal Quality Reviews using the Deep Dive format adopted by Ofsted reporting that whilst lower in number last year those, taking place were much longer in length and far more rigorous, also providing an analysis of data and discussions with the teachers and students. The detailed information obtained has helped to promote in year improvements in TLA with 87% overall effectiveness as of February 2020 (Table 4).

There was query of the decrease in the overall effectiveness rating, noting it to be largely attributed to the ongoing work required on curriculum intents in the early observations, introduced in response to the changes in the EIF. Members then focused on:

- The overall effectiveness for classroom based provision, noting that at 87%, it represented a 4% increase from February 2019;
- The observations within work based provision, noting the priority placed on areas of risk

Members then reflected on the shift towards a more learner centred focus, experienced during the observation process and observed during learner interactions

The update was noted.

726.2b Higher Education (HE): Quality & Compliance

Developments were reviewed in relation to the College HE provision. Questioning including:

- The reasons for the current year College provision being approximately 9% lower than 2018/19; and the overview of the 2020/21 target numbers noting the focus on the conversion of applications to enrolments.
- The contract for sub-contracted provision with Results Consortium Ltd being finalised, noting it to be for the delivery of HNC in Business of up to 50 students with a planned commencement date of March 2020

- The action to ensure continued compliance with Office for Students (OfS) requirements with discussion then of the quality monitoring and performance arrangements introduced to ensure transparent and rigorous processes for provision across the College, in-line with the requirements of the OfS and the Quality Assurance Agency for England (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education; noted to include the assistance of external consultants in preparation for a future QAA visit.

The update was noted.

726.2c Apprenticeships

See Minute 725

727 Statutory, Policy & Compliance

Reports were received outlining arrangements regarding and confirming the College's compliance with statutory requirements, comprising:

727.1 Safeguarding & Prevent

An oral report was received from the Committee Chair summarising Safeguarding and Prevent activity for the first term of the new academic year.

Activity to date was summarised:

- Noting that despite a threefold increase in referrals the College continued to maintain its 24-hour response time with the majority on investigation recorded to be at no imminent risk of harm. In-line with previous reports, it was reported that those falling within the category of "emotional/physical" continued to remain the greatest number of referrals, and included cases of self-harm or suicidal tendencies. Members were advised of the request for further analysis into the periods over which reporting was taking place to ascertain any instances of "peak periods" in reporting.
- Highlighting the strategies to address safeguarding issues, particularly noting the Mental Health Working Group plans to work towards Hertfordshire's "Healthy young minds kite mark" and the activities in the continuing promotion of Prevent and British Values.

The update was noted.

728 OTHER BUSINESS & NEXT MEETING

728.1 Any Other business

728.2 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 17 June 2020

Signed:



Date: 17 June 2020

(Jan Wing, Committee Chair)