



## Planning and Performance Committee

**Date:** 21 November 2016  
**Venue:** Board Room, City Campus

**Clerk to the Corporation**  
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**Present:** Chris Linacre - Chair  
Paul Corcoran  
Edward Highfield  
Pete Norton  
Amy Smith  
Seb Schmoller  
John Timms  
Anne Wilson

**In attendance:** John Gray, Director of Marketing and Digital Engagement for agenda item 5  
Graeme Hathaway, Assistant Principal Learning Improvement and Innovation for agenda item 6.2  
Alison Shillito, Clerk to the Governing Body  
Heather Smith, Executive Director and College Principal  
Sharon Smith, Vice Principal - for agenda item 6.2  
James Smythe, Deputy College Principal  
Darren Tidmarsh, Executive Director of Human Resources and MIS

### Action

**16/5/1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Jay Bhayani and Michael Maloney

**16/5/2 Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September and updated action record**

1) Minutes

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

2) Matters Arising

i) Minute 16/4/6: Positive Engagement Policy and (Student) Disciplinary Procedure

The Committee noted that the revised version of the Policy, incorporating comments made at the previous meeting, would be considered for sign-off by the Executive Board before being reported to the Committee at its meeting on 23 January 2017.

AP SS & IP

3) Action Plan

It was noted that there were a number of actions outstanding. The Chair requested that the actions be completed in time to be reported to the January meeting.

Clerk

**John Gray, Director of Marketing and Digital Engagement, attended for the following item**

## 16/5/3 Marketing Strategy

- 3.1 The Committee received a presentation on the impact of the Marketing Strategy on 2016/17 enrolment and considered the issues arising as follows.
- 3.2 The Director of Marketing and Digital Engagement explained that the marketing action plan had been developed out of the learner review in 2015. It was focusing on:-
  - i) Raising awareness of the College in the city region with campaigns targeted at recruiting 16 -18 year old students and apprentices.
  - ii) Process improvements to recruitment and apprenticeship processes aimed at increasing conversion rates of enquiries to applicants and enrolments by ensuring consistent service standards for responding to and following up enquiries.
  - ii) Programme of engagement with schools had started and was building
  - iv) Improving awareness of employers by establishing 'Job Connect' service to market apprenticeships to employers, establish and maintain strong relationships with employers and to match potential apprentices to apprenticeships.
- 3.3 The Committee asked for the rationale behind the poster campaign using a stylised graphic design with few words and no pictures of students. The Director explained that the graphic design, echoed in the website re-design, was intended to be distinctive conveying a generic message to excite enquirers to find out more, via the website, social media or by attending an open day. Information about particular courses and images of students were being used in social media content.
- 3.4 The Committee discussed the effectiveness of the action that had been taken.
  - i) The College had received positive feedback about the impact of the poster and social media campaigns on awareness amongst young people.
  - ii) The total expenditure on the marketing materials and campaigns had been £28,000 and a significant amount of interest - media time, web site clicks, enquiries - had been generated for what is a relatively modest spend.
  - iii) There had been a small decline in applications in 2015/16 but the rate of decline was significantly lower than the previous year and was largely focused on applications to Peaks, whereas City and Hillsborough application rates had held up well.
  - iv) The Director's assessment was that the action taken had been less successful recruiting to part time courses aimed at 19+ students and higher education.
- 3.5 The Committee wanted to know how the strategy was adapting to reflect the lessons learned and market challenges with a declining population of 16 - 18 year olds in the region and a highly competitive market for apprenticeships and Higher Education. The Director responded that the College was:
  - i) Continuing to improve processes aimed at converting interest into enrolments. It was suggested that the College needed to ensure that the Enterprise Advisor Network was fully aware of its offer.
  - ii) Reviewing its higher education quality and growth strategy by engaging with existing students to find out how the College could make its provision more attractive to its own students or develop different provision. The HE Tutor Mentor role was already having a positive impact by working with level 3 students to raise awareness of progression opportunities.
  - iii) Developing its image bank of students to promote particular courses and a

distinctive Higher Education offer. Governors suggested that students should be involved in promoting the College at open days and in school engagement activities as they could be ambassadors for how the College transformed lives through learning.

- 3.6 The Committee discussed how governors could support the College's awareness raising activities and community profile. Governors requested that the College's twitter link be re-circulated so those governors who used social media could re-tweet items of interest to their networks. Clerk
- 3.7 The Committee thanked the Director of Marketing for the presentation. Members were satisfied that appropriate action was being taken to maximise applications to the College's learner responsive provision but noted that there was intense competition for apprentices and also for local higher education students. The Committee requested an update on applications and progress on product development and HE growth strategy at its March 2017 meeting.

### **Sharon Smith, Vice Principal, attended for the following item to discuss the English and Maths Strategy**

#### **16/5/4 Teaching and Learning Quality Assessment Report**

- 4.1 The Deputy Principal presented the Teaching Learning and Assessment quality report. This was a consolidated report which included the actions arising from the Post Inspection Action Plan and the Improvement plan. In response to the Committee's request, the focus of the report for this meeting would be the English and Maths strategy and the implementation of Developmental Observations. Other aspects of the report would be highlighted at future meetings as data became available.
- 4.2 The Deputy Principal tabled an example of the dashboard data that had been developed for monitoring the impact of the plan and would form the basis of future reporting. The measures included in the dashboard had been chosen by curriculum teams as most helpful. Through the BRAG process, most students had agreed learning targets. Progress towards them had been assessed (blue/red/amber/green). By January, the dashboard data would provide a whole college picture of progress that could be interrogated by curriculum area, course, level or individual learner.

#### **English and Maths Strategy**

- 4.3 With the Plan update was a detailed report on the improvement actions for supporting English and Maths. The Committee considered the report as follows.
- 4.4 It was noted that the English and Maths improvements were still RAG rated as red. This was because the team wanted to see the feedback from the first Quality Development Review on the effectiveness of the improvement actions before re-assessing the rating.
- 4.5 In response to the outcomes of the improvement activities in 2015/16, the Committee wanted to know what had changed and why the revised strategy was likely to be more successful. The team responded that in reviewing the Strategy and continuing or changing the improvement actions they had
- i) Drawn on those elements of the previous 'maximising achievement' programme that had been most effective in stimulating student engagement and achievement.
  - ii) Been more systematic in collecting good practice from and benchmarking the effectiveness of activities against those colleges that had been most successful in supporting students elsewhere to achieve in English and

Maths.

- iii) Engaged with students in focus groups and individual learning conversations to understand the reasons for students' reluctance to attend English and Maths, what incentives might encourage them to engage and overcome the obstacles that students themselves perceived as discouraging attendance.
- iv) Adopted a positive focus on passing the exam - encouraging students to see it as a passport to other things.

4.6 Governors welcomed the focus on individual learners and commented that they could understand students feeling discouraged with repeating English and Maths or that it was too much additional work. It was noted that research about student attitudes towards maths suggested that improvement actions might need to be differentiated by vocational area and be different for Maths and English. Members suggested that involving students and employers in delivering positive messages about the lifelong benefits of English and Maths might also be useful.

4.7 In response to questions about sector benchmarks for achievement standards in English and Maths, it was commented that for a college with a similar demographic profile, achievement rates of 30% C grade or above at GCSE would be normal. The College was aspiring to do better than this and the relentless work on the strategy and student communication supported this. The Committee thanked the team and looked forward to seeing the impact in future presentations of the dashboard data.

**Graeme Hathaway, Assistant Principal Learning Improvement and Innovation, attended for the following item**

**16/5/5 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Improvement Plan: progress update**

- 5.1 The Committee received a detailed report on the outcomes of the developmental observation pilot, lessons learned and how it was being implemented as part of the wider plan of action to ensure consistently good teaching, learning and assessment across the College.
- 5.2 In considering the report, governors appreciated that the coaching approach was consistent with the values of the College. Reviewers had undertaken additional development to improve their coaching skills but building capacity meant that implementation was taking longer than anticipated. Governors asked the strategic change leads for their assessment of the effectiveness of the current approaches in achieving the degree of change required in the timescale available.
- 5.3 The team confirmed that the coaching and staff development approach was a long term commitment to achieving consistently good teaching across the College. There were promising signs that it was bringing about positive changes. The approach was being supported by other actions such as the BRAG process for students to ensure individual target setting and monitoring, Quality Development Reviews to improve practice in curriculum areas and changes to staff Performance Development Reviews to ensure more consistent target setting and review. These continuous improvement approaches provided both short and long term changes.
- 5.4 The Committee thanked the Principal, Deputy Principal and Assistant Principals for their reports and the consolidated format which would facilitate monitoring and review of progress across a complex and challenging change programme. The Committee requested regular updates of the results of the improvement plan. The report for the next meeting should include detail on Quality Assurance.

College  
Principal

**16/5/6 Learner Achievement 2015/16**

- 6.1 The Deputy College Principle introduced the report of the confirmed learner achievement data for 2015/16 and tabled a glossary of terms to assist members in

understanding the terminology.

6.2 It was commented that the decline in the downward trend in achievement outcomes had been halted but the rate of improvement needed to increase. It was noted that the College had a relatively high percentage of learners who came from the most socially excluded and deprived areas of the City. It was hoped that new measures being introduced in the sector would support the College by assessing the progress made by students. It was suggested that the College should also consider how it could attract a more comprehensive student intake. Development of the new vocational and technical education routes possibly presented an opportunity to attract students from a wider catchment area.

6.3 The Committee requested a report on the demographics of the College's current student intake and how it had changed over the last five years. ED  
HR&MIS

6.4 They thanked the Deputy College Principal for the glossary of terms and the Clerk agreed to make it available to other governors. Clerk

### 16/5/7 HEFCE Annual Assurance Report and Return

7.1 The Director of Human Resources and Management Information Services tabled the report of the HE Academic Board on the academic quality and standards of the College's Higher Education provision. It was noted that this was a new requirement in 2016 and the quality review processes, including those of validating partners, had not yet adapted to the change and timing. This would be addressed in future years. As well as quantitative data on student retention and achievement, the College had a wide range of qualitative data from students, external examiners, validating partner assessors and link tutors. This indicated that the College is actively assessing and maintaining HE course quality at an appropriate level.

7.2 The Committee considered the report. Members recognised that it was new and the timing difficulties this had caused. They were satisfied that the range of data collected to inform the quality assessment report was reasonable but they noted that at course level there were wide differences between the levels of student satisfaction reported in the National Student Survey for different courses. Some of the variation might be due to differing rates of student participation in the NSS and small cohorts but course teams needed to ensure that where concerns were raised via this or other feedback routes the causes of student dissatisfaction were being systematically considered and addressed.

7.3 The Committee requested that:

- i) The College-level action plan be amended to reflect the need for the HE Academic Board to ensure that the underlying reasons for course level variations in student satisfaction are pursued, addressed and feedback provided to Students. ED HR & MIS
- ii) The HE Academic Board to report on its constitution in particular how it is enabling teaching staff and students to participate in its activities; and HE  
Manager  
Clerk and  
HE
- iii) Preparations and the revised timetable to ensure timely completion of the quality assessment report and action plan for next year. Manager

7.4 Subject to the Chair of the Committee approving suitable revisions to the Action Plan as requested by the Committee and summarised in 7.3 (i), the Committee resolved to authorise the Accounting Officer, acting as a governor to sign the Assurance Return on behalf of the Governing Body. Chief  
Executive  
Officer

### 16/5/8 Teaching & Learning Quality Data Report: Learner Achievement 2016/17

The College Principal reported that the first report on in-year data would be College

presented January 2017.

Principal

**16/5/9 Relevant Steering Group Initiatives - Sustainable resourcing initiative and supporting business development initiative and apprenticeship growth**

- 9.1 The Committee noted that the Governors' Strategy Event had generated ideas meeting the challenges of changes to the College's portfolio, the introduction of new technical and professional routes, growth in apprenticeships, increase in the cost of employing staff and changes to the workforce demographic. It was recognised that this was a substantial and complex piece of work that the Executive and Governing Body would need to approach in a structured way. Consideration of the detailed issues may require discussion at both the Planning and Performance and Finance Employment and General Purposes Committees.
- 9.2 Planning and Performance Committee saw governors' role as assisting the Executive Board to shape and prioritise proposals for consideration by the Governing Body. The Committee requested that a detailed report be prepared for the relevant Committees to consider in March 2017. This would allow the College's Executive Board time to develop proposals in for consideration at its meeting scheduled in February.

**16/5/10 Review of the meeting**

- 10.1 The Committee discussed the conduct of the meeting. It was noted that the papers had been circulated relatively close to the meeting and one large report had been tabled. Members understood the timing issues for the HE report but requested that papers be circulated in accordance with the standards agreed so members had adequate time to scrutinise them prior to the meeting.
- 10.2 It had been a full agenda. The College had a number of challenging change programmes in progress and the Committee had requested additional reports to consider the risks and responsibilities within its remit. The Committee agreed that the scheduled duration of the next two meetings be extended to two and a half hours to enable the Committee to give items full and thorough scrutiny.

Clerk  
Members

**16/5/11 Schedule of meetings for 2016/17**

Monday 23 January 2017 at 8.00 - 10.30 am in the Boardroom, City Campus  
Monday 27 March 2017 at 8.00 - 10.30 am in the Boardroom, City Campus  
Monday 19 June 2017 at 8.00 - 10.00 am in the Boardroom, City Campus