Strategy Event - Monday 14 November 2016

Attendance

Kathy Atkin - Staff Governor	Caroline Morrison -Assistant Principal, Student Support, Inclusion & Progression
David Battell – Estates and Services Manager	
Jay Bhayani – Governor	Sally Neocosmos –Vice Chair
Nigel Bisatt- Head of Finance	Pete Norton -Staff Governor
Ian Brown – Governor	Jason Pepper -Executive Director Finance & Resources co-facilitator
Paul Corcoran - Chief Executive	
Neil Fletcher – Governor (Chair of Audit & Risk Assurance Committee)	Martin Plummer -IT Manager
	Seb Schmoller –Vice Chair
John Gray - Director of Marketing	Alison Shillito, Clerk
Peter Harrison -Assistant Principal, Planning &	Amy Smith-Student Governor
Andrew Hartley-Director of Business Development	Heather Smith - College Principal, co-facilitator
Graeme Hathaway -Assistant Principal, Learning Improvement & Innovation Curriculum Enhancement	Sharon Smith - Vice Principal
	James Smythe - Deputy College Principal
Edward Highfield – Governor, co-facilitator	Darren Tidmarsh -Executive Director HR & SRIS,
Chris Linacre – Governor (Chair of Planning & Performance Committee)	Gil Vasey – Governor (Chair of Finance Employment & General Purposes Committee)
	Anne Wilson – Governor
Iain McKinney-Vice Principal	Richard Wright -Chair of Governing Body

Introduction – the Chief Executive Officer welcomed governors and staff to the Strategy Event. The objective of the event was to consider medium and longer term goals to help inform review and adjustments to current plans.

Longer term vision – College in 2031

There was broad consensus that the City would continue to need and benefit from a large, public sector college offering a broad portfolio of professional/technical education and training. It should be central to providing skilled personnel to industry and commerce in the City region. The benefits of this model over alternatives were:

- **Critical mass** – a large GFE provider could sustain different specialisms that it might be uneconomic for smaller private providers to offer and it could be resilient in periods when certain subjects were less popular among students or local. Cross-subsidisation to enable range of provision
- **Not-for-profit** – it would re-invest surpluses to maintain high quality estate and technology. It could be trusted to put the interests of students and the city region at the heart of its operation because it is independent and not driven by shareholders.
- **Inclusive growth** – those from disadvantaged areas would be the people needed to fill the skills gaps. Making an impact on socio – economic profile of the City. Skilled work making people more employable and able to command higher wages – helping to address worsening inequality in the City.
- **Pro-active -** balancing the needs of all its stakeholders - successfully balancing needs of the City with external demands / funding (doing the right thing)

- **A learning community** – for students and staff – providing lifelong learning to our staff, students, returning students in a learning community that unites people from all parts of the City – promoting social cohesion as well as excellent learning.

In 2031, what will be the five indications that The Sheffield College is effectively transforming lives through learning? **How will we know if we are achieving goals?**

- **Trusted provider** – high scores for satisfaction from students, staff and employers - how many would recommend Sheffield College
- **Measurable Impact on local economy** in terms of skills level of workforce, average household incomes; no skill shortages in economy and attracting new business/investment into City due to availability of skilled work force. College will have maximum number of apprentices, learners of all ages may well learn in the workplace, not in our buildings.
- **Ofsted/sector regulator judgment** – that College is consistently good with some curriculum areas of outstanding/nationally recognised provision – where College can attract a premium, its alumni are sought after and it can offer (unique) very high quality technical/professional provision including higher education - directly for some subjects or through partnerships for others – to attract and develop high performing staff as well as students.
- **Earlier age engagement** – higher awareness of College and the routes it offers among younger children. Parity of esteem for technical/professional education so not considered second best
- **Indicators of learner aspiration on entry and leaving and progress** – high retention figures and performance on progression measures for learners between starting point and end point but also of aspiration of learners
- **Lifelong Learning –** excellent performance in students progressing to employment or further study. Alumni returning to update their skills or learn new ones = KPI not just the % who would recommend the College to friends but also the % willing to return for more learning later in life. But as there may be little/no public funding for 19+ learners will need to position ourselves as good value for employers investing in staff training and individuals wanting to retrain or update their skills.
- **Highly efficient** – enabling College to afford attractive levels pay and conditions to attract staff 'at the top of their game'.
- **Confident users of technology to support and enable learning** – all courses enhanced by effective and integrated online content, support and processes – digital by default for services that students and employers want to be able to access digitally as well as supporting flexible learning opportunities.

Part Two
Group A questions - Culture and governance

1.1 We often talk about the need for evidence-based decision-making and evidence-based practice. In The Sheffield College's case what impact would evidence-based decision making and practice have upon the culture?

- 'Evidence-based' seemed to suggest backward looking and looking at a narrow range of factual information. Group preferred "informed" decision-making rather than "evidence-based" as this suggested an approach that takes into account a range of sources, qualitative and quantitative information; external benchmarking and good practice information; internal (staff views, experience and expertise).
- Impact on culture depends on how you do it: engendering growth mind set and a culture that empowers staff and students to participate in their own learning and in generating improvements – not data to beat people with.

   Example of addressing inconsistent teaching

- Ofsted review – provided a different perspective on what was happening in classes

- Observations / assessment / judgements
- Best practice / developmental / approach observation.
- Development culture in a Regulatory environment can be challenging if emphasis becomes 'compliance'
- Longer term approach? But the right one

1.2   How do we move from 'top down' directing what needs to be done to a culture built on staff engagement, collaboration and trust?

- Group considered the extent to which current arrangements were really top-down.
- Learning Together Review – tipping point to something better and to improving morale. It is an opportunity
- Communication – has to be two way not just broadcast and it means responding to people, especially when College decides that it will not be doing things requested or suggested
- Consistency / transparency and follow through
- 40-50 champions who have participated and want to see change – make sure we engage them positively as agents of change and part of communication strategy
- How to make things easier – doing the right things in the most efficient ways
- Doing right thing – just need to stick at it? But could we do more, deepen communication?
- Command and control – can be useful in crisis management – not the route to long term improvement, long term learning and engagement.

Group B – Sustainable resourcing

2.1   If we want to reduce costs and offer good pay and conditions we need to improve efficiency whilst also improving outcomes; how?

2.2   How will we establish a sustainable resourcing model?

Challenges - increasing employment costs; issues with temporary/flexible Sparks Teaching Model; need for genuine efficiencies that reduce cost but do not reduce capacity or capability. In future there may well be skills shortages among some of our work force needs. Pension costs likely to continue to increase.
Responding to the challenges -
- Efficiencies (genuine)
- Work smarter (flexibility) – provide effective infrastructure to support new models of learning such as work based learning and technology enhanced learning
- Assessment practice – robust, secure but eliminating unnecessary burdens
- Back office – more efficient and responsive
- Exploring establishing different types of contracts (Sparks)
- Vocational -related pay – pay may need to reflect pay rates in different industries and vocations to address expectations but also supply and demand. Need to do this fairly and transparently.
- Growth in areas at the College – Staff best to deliver
- Resourcing? (differentiated)
- Engagement with Budget Managers
- Educational Character (what is our offer?) (Competitions' choice of provider)
- Using partnership with other stakeholders - secondment / Vocational 'solutions'

Group C - Portfolio and income
3.1   How will our offering of courses for all age groups and geographic coverage need to change to align with the new routes for technical education including apprenticeships? Will this mean ceasing to offer some current courses?

3.2   Is our balance of courses between technical/vocational and academic likely to stand the test

of time and if not how will this balance need to change?

Age group / geography: to maintain character and benefits of a large GFE need to appeal to
- Ages – all
- Demographic change – must take that into account – as size of cohort age groups begins to grow need to be ready to attract and accommodate learners
- Levels – need to complete the ABR mapping exercise – very different
- A Levels (where College can offer something unique and/or competitive)
- Higher Education (where College can offer something unique and/or more competitive via exclusive or integrated partnerships)

Alison Shillito
Clerk to Governing Body