



## Planning and Performance Committee

Date: 19 June 2017  
Venue: Board Room, City Campus  
Present: Seb Schmoller - Chair  
Paul Corcoran  
Saleem Rashid  
John Timms  
Anne Wilson  
In attendance: John Gray, Director of Marketing (for agenda item 5)  
Matt Newbould (for agenda item 6)  
Alison Shillito, Clerk to the Governing Body  
James Smythe, Deputy College Principal  
Darren Tidmarsh, Executive Director of Human Resources and SRIS

- Action
- 17/3/1 **Apologies for absence**  
Apologies were received from Chris Linacre, Jay Bhayani and Heather Smith. The meeting was chaired by Seb Schmoller, Vice Chair, in the Chair's absence. The meeting was quorate.
- 17/3/2 **Declarations of Interest**
- Seb Schmoller declared an interest in Pivotal, an organization that had provided training to the College and was briefly mentioned in the paper considered under agenda item 6.2.
  - Saleem Rashid declared an interest in discussions in part 6 of the agenda as a Maths lecturer employed by the College.
- 17/3/3 **Minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2017 and updated action plan**  
The minutes were approved as an accurate record.
- 17/3/4 **Action plan**  
The Committee noted that the priority and timing of a number of items have yet to be agreed.
- i) The Clerk to liaise with the lead staff responsible for the actions to agree timescales for completion. Clerk
  - ii) The Chief Executive Officer agreed to contact Amanda Spielman, Ofsted Chief Inspector, to follow-up the action to invite her to visit the college. CEO
- 17/3/5 **Product Development**
- 5.1 The Director of Marketing made a presentation to the Committee updating

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governors on the implementation and impact of the Product Development Steering Group and process.

5.2 The Committee noted the following in particular.

- i) The initial focus of the Steering Group in 2015/16 had been on identifying need and developing new/refreshed programmes within curriculum areas. In 2016/17, the Steering Group had a more outward facing and strategic focus looking at provision by employment sector.
- ii) The Steering Group's maps of programmes and qualifications from level 2 to level 6 by employment sector would ensure clear progression routes, for learners, more coherent provision and that the provision is matched to local skills needs and student demand.
- iii) The sector maps span multiple curriculum areas and will improve more efficient resource-utilisation by enabling the College to identify and remove unnecessary duplication and add new provision to address gaps.
- iv) As well as developing the College's portfolio of courses, the Steering Group had also looked at themes including the higher education student experience and programme standards. As a result of this work, the College would be implementing changes to its estate and support arrangements to improve the HE student experience.
- v) The priorities for 2017/18, would be developing new apprenticeship standards and continuing to develop a distinctive higher education portfolio that meets student and employer demands.

5.3 The Committee discussed the report as follows.

- i) Governors considered the College's agility in responding to opportunities. The Director of Marketing responded that the mapping process enabled the College to identify and tailor training provision more quickly. The nature of the recruitment and validation cycles for higher education means that there is a longer lead time for new provision and successfully launching brand new provision is a long term investment.
- ii) Governors recommended that the College should engage more frequently with individual employers in developing provision. It was also suggested that the College establish employer forums for its main employment sectors (the Chair commented that this was commonplace in Sheffield FE in the 1970s and 1980s). The Director of Marketing said that the sector provision maps would provide a focus for discussions with employers about their specific training and apprenticeship needs as well as the sector needs in general. Under the organisation change proposals, the new Director roles would be more strongly oriented towards business development and employer engagement.
- iii) The Director of Marketing said that the steering group had encouraged staff to suggest ideas for new provision. Many proposals did not make it to development due to concerns about demand being sufficient to make them viable and justify the investment in development and launch. Governors stressed the importance of the Steering Group engaging staff in the process; giving timely feedback to proposers of the outcome of suggestions and the reasons why ideas are not being taken forward.
- iv) In 2017/18, the College is proposing to develop its portfolio of provision in the "digital" area, informed by work with a consultant on demand for skills in the growing regional digital economy. The initial focus would be on software engineering provision. It was suggested that the College may also

want to offer provision to meet the increasing demand for administrative as well as technical staff with cyber security qualifications and skills.

- 5.4 The Committee noted the presentation and congratulated staff on completing the mapping of the College's portfolio by employment sector. This mapping would be helpful to learners and employers in identifying the study programmes, progression opportunities and qualifications most appropriate to their needs.

#### 17/3/6 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Quality Plan update

- 6.1 The Deputy Principal presented the report, which included the latest update on the outcome of Quality Development Reviews of teaching and learning, student attendance and forecast achievement rates.
- 6.2 It was noted that the College current interim target for improving teaching quality is that at least 10 out of the 12 departments should be providing consistently good teaching and learning. The report indicated that six departments are currently doing this. Governors asked about progress towards the target and how pace could be increased to ensure the target is achieved more quickly. The Deputy Principal responded that at least three of the departments categorised as requiring improvement are close to good. The shift in the balance to 50% of departments demonstrating consistently good teaching has enabled improvement efforts to be more tightly focused on particular departments or parts of departments that are still under-performing in spite of coaching support and development plans.
- 6.3 In terms of teaching standards, development reviews and walkthroughs indicate that good practice in teaching and learning has significantly improved. All departments hold weekly whole team meetings and there are cross-college staff development days to ensure that all teaching staff have access to best practice advice and support. For many staff, the target is now to move from "compliant" to excellent teaching. Where developmental approaches are not successful in supporting staff to improve their practice then the College is implementing competency procedures that ultimately can lead to termination of employment.
- 6.4 Forecast achievement rates are improving compared to last year, although there is a slight drop compared to the January forecast. The College's predicted achievement rate of 82% is only very slightly below the recently published National Achievement Rate of 82.1%. Deputy Principal will be updating the report on 15 June and including comparisons with the National Achievement Rate Tables that were published on 15 June. The Committee asked for this report to be circulated to members following approval by Executive Board.
- 6.5 The most significant area for improvement in attendance and achievement rates is English and maths. A large number of the College's intake arrive with a deficit in one or both of these subjects and have to take functional skills or GCSE in addition to their study programme. There have been improvements in teaching and learning of English and maths. In addition, the College has been offering intensive revision sessions prior to exams to improve exam preparation and attendance. Attendance at English and maths GCSE exams looks to have improved as compared to last year. The forecast for GCSE achievement looks to have improved slightly as compared to last year to 82.3% for GCSE English and maths which is 2.5pps above the 15/16 national rates (English 80.3% and maths 79.3%). Confidence is significantly lower with the forecast Basic Skills English and maths achievement rates (L1 and below). Through curriculum completing the predicted achievement rate exercise they are forecast to improve to 68.7%, which would be above minimum standards (63%) and 4.5pps above 15/16 National Rates.

Deputy  
Principal  
Clerk

6.6 The overall achievement rate for apprenticeships is approaching a level indicating that provision could be assessed as outstanding. Performance of 16 -18 year old apprentices is below the rates for other groups and therefore the College cannot self-assess as outstanding until this is remedied. The Committee stressed the importance of not losing sight of the aspects of current provision that need to improve under the pressure to expand provision. The Chief Executive Officer commented that organisation change proposals include an additional apprenticeship quality manager post that is currently phased for recruitment in January 2018. If there is need for this additional capacity sooner, then the Executive would review and adjust the phasing.

CEO

6.7 The Committee noted the report, which included some significant improvements in forecast achievement rates for 2016/17. It was also noted that the performance indicators in the report are updated monthly. Members requested that the updated report, including analysis of the College's profile against the recently published National Achievement Rate Tables, be circulated to the Committee following approval by the College's Executive Board.

Deputy  
Principal  
and Clerk

### 17/3/7 Teaching and Learning Quality Data Report

7.1 The Head of Quality Audit introduced the report, which had been redesigned in consultation with Committee members to ensure the measures reported are ones that members find more useful in informing scrutiny and challenge. Many of the issues arising had been highlighted and discussed as part of the Quality Update (reported above). The Committee considered other issues as follows.

7.2 In scrutinising attendance data, it was noted that in most departments, attendance is around 80% whereas attendance in department 216 (English and maths) is significantly below that and is depressing the overall average. As discussed earlier in the meeting, Members were aware that there are a number of reasons that students can become discouraged in English and maths and this may affect behaviour of those that do attend.

7.3 A member asked if poor behaviour in class may be discouraging attendance by other students and if the College could do more to support staff to tackle poor behaviour. The Deputy Principal responded that the College does have procedures for tackling poor behaviour and is happy to work with staff and the Speak up and join in group to ensure there is effective reporting of issues and consistent action to tackle these.

7.4 The Committee expressed concern about the different rates of student satisfaction reported between internal and external reports. The Head of Quality Audit commented that the College's surveys are based on all students being invited to complete at least two of the three annual opinion surveys every year, whereas external surveys are based on a much smaller sample. The qualitative feedback in local surveys can be more useful than external surveys in helping staff to make improvements.

7.5 The CEO said that the importance of external surveys should not be underestimated as they provide comparator data against other providers and are used by Ofsted and other external stakeholders to inform judgments about the College. The College's outcomes in the recently published FE Choices survey were below sector average and the overall satisfaction score in the ESFA survey was 10 percentage points below the sector average (80%). Each survey has its own sampling approach and method of administering the questionnaire and colleges play a significant role in these processes. It is important for the Sheffield College to understand the

reasons for its below average scores and any underlying issues in the sampling or management of external surveys that may be contributing to this.

- 7.6 The Committee received the report and requested a comprehensive report on the results of internal and external student satisfaction surveys; information on how the College selects the sample of respondents and manages completion of surveys as well as an analysis of the results and how the College is using and addressing the feedback. Head of Quality Audits and Standards

**17/3/8 Apprenticeships: quality assurance and improvement**

8.1 The Committee received a verbal report on the work being done to ensure that apprentice training quality is maintained and enhanced at the same time as the College is significantly increasing recruitment of new apprentices.

8.2 The Deputy Principal reported that the College is expecting 1020 apprentices to complete their programme this year retention is good and predicted achievement rate for direct provision is slightly improved. There are some concerns that retention in 2017/18 will fall back slightly which could be related to the profile of new starts in 2016/17 and in some areas progression is not as strong as the College would like. There are concerns about level 2 students being ready to cope with the demands of level 3 study.

8.3 An issue is ensuring that students attain and maintain sufficient English and maths to support them to progress to and succeed in higher level study. The College is responding to this by implementing new English and maths and ICT provision in 2017/18 which will be available all year round. Apprentices will be encouraged to achieve the level relevant to their programme aims early in their apprenticeship and then maintain their skills by regular practice and refresh ready to progress to the next level.

8.4 The Committee noted the report and requested a report detailing the risk assessment of apprenticeship growth and how the risks of rapid growth are being managed, reduced or eliminated. Deputy Principal

**17/3/9 Relevant Steering Group Initiatives**

9.1 The Committee received the CEO's oral report noting that two of the initiatives most relevant to the Committee had completed their work. The Steering Groups for Teaching and Learning and Timetabling would continue in 2017/18 with revised targets.

**17/2/10 Governor training plan 2017/18**

10.1 The Clerk presented a summary of the training activities completed by Governors in 2016/17, including mandatory training in equality and diversity, safeguarding and Prevent duty. Members said it would be useful for all governors to have some face to face Safeguarding and Prevent training using case studies.

10.2 In order to establish a policy on frequency of refreshing safeguarding training in future, the Committee asked the Clerk to review practice on governor safeguarding training in colleges rated good and outstanding and report back to the Committee. Clerk

10.3 The Committee recommended to Governing Body approval of the plan subject to further information on setting appropriate standards for governors to update their mandatory safeguarding training.

**17/3/11 Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair for the period 1 September 2017 to 31 August 2019**

The Committee recommended to Governing Body that Chris Linacre be appointed as Chair and Anne Wilson be appointed as Vice Chair of Planning and Performance Committee for the period of 1 September 2017 to 31 August 2019.

**17/3/12 Any other business**

It was suggested that the College should explore ways of raising students' awareness of the monetary cost of their education to the public purse as a way of engendering a sense of the value of their education and promoting engagement, with consideration to be given to running small scale pilot of some kind. The Deputy Principal agreed to take this forward through Tutor Mentor system as a pilot as part of considering new ways to improve student attendance and engagement.

Deputy  
Principal

**17/3/13 Schedule of meetings for 2017/18**

- Monday 2 October 2017 at 8.00 am
- Monday 27 November 2017 at 8.00 am
- Monday 22 January 2018 at 8.00 am
- Monday 26 March 2018 at 8.00 am
- Monday 25 June 2018 at 8.00 am