



Planning and Performance Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on
12 February 2018

Venue: Board Room, City Campus

Clerk to the Corporation

Tel: 0114 260 2620

Present: Chris Linacre - Chair
Gwyn Arnold
Angela Foulkes
Beri Hare
Saleem Rashid
Seb Schmoller

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Email: alison.shillito@sheffcol.ac.uk

In attendance: Amy Smith
John Timms
Anne Wilson
Alison Shillito, Clerk to the Governing Body
James Smythe, Deputy College Principal.

18/1/1 **Apologies for absence** Action by whom Action by when
Apologies for absence were received from Jay Bhayani. The meeting was quorate.

18/1/2 **Declarations of Interest**
• Seb Schmoller advised that he is also a Governor of Northern College
• Saleem Rashid declared an interest in discussions in part 6 of the agenda as a Maths lecturer employed by the College.
It was agreed that none of the interests prevented the governors from participating in discussions.

18/1/3 **Minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2017 and updated action plan**
The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

18/1/4 **Action plan**
The Committee noted that there were several actions relating to Safeguarding and these would be considered under the forward plan for Committee business (minute 18/1/9 refers). A high number of reports were due to be presented at the March meeting, which may need to be extended.

18/1/5 **Education and Training - FE: 2017/18 in year update**
5.1 The Committee received the report and considered the matters arising as follows.

ATTENDANCE

5.2 The Committee noted that attendance was tracking below target and below last year. Members challenged senior management about the effectiveness of the action being taken to improve attendance. The Committee also wanted to know how the College's attendance rate compared to other similar large urban

FE colleges and national benchmarks

- 5.3 The Deputy Principal responded that, as summarised in the paper, the College has eight actions in hand to improve attendance including using data to identify and act on non-attendance; reviewing its attendance policies; simplifying the registration procedure to ensure staff record attendance accurately at each class; and timely follow-up of students who have missed sessions without good reason. Curriculum directorates determine local strategies (such as incentives, trips, prize draws) to encourage learners to improve their attendance and a task and finish group is generating ideas for cross-college initiatives. Regarding benchmarks, the College is not aware of any national comparative data and is seeking out similar large urban GFE colleges with better attendance, such as Leeds City College, to learn from their experience.
- 5.4 Governors were concerned that the paper seemed to suggest that the College only intervened when a student had missed four consecutive sessions. The Deputy Principal said that learners were required to provide reasons for any absence and Tutor Mentors would follow-up every session missed without reason. Governors made it clear that they were not satisfied with a policy where intervention only occurred after four consecutive absences and challenged senior management to review the policy and procedure to secure swifter intervention.
- 5.5 The Acting CEO outlined the steps the College is taking to ensure that absence data is timely and accurate by reducing bureaucracy for teachers taking registers. It was noted that there are practical issues where staff or Sparks associate lecturers are covering a class due to staff absence as they may not have access to the electronic register. The Committee wanted to know the scale of non-compliance on timely completion of registers and how it is monitored and challenged by Senior Management. The Principal and acting CEO said that it is challenged in monthly quality meetings with each Directorate and now is also picked up under 'quality' in Business Review meetings.
- 5.6 Governors stressed the importance of having useable registration systems that are implemented consistently to underpin effective attendance and punctuality policies. The Committee requested data on compliance with registration procedures.

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RETENTION

- 5.7 The Committee welcomed the progress made on the Performance Framework format that the Principal and acting CEO had introduced at the December meeting. In the longer term, governors would want to see the achievement gaps between groups sharing different protected characteristics being included in the data and the issues being cross-referenced with the Risk Register. The Committee requested that in future the data sheets should have clear titles and dates.
- 5.8 It was noted that Equality, Diversity and Inclusion data had yet to be populated. The Principal and acting CEO said that this was work in progress and would highlight equality gaps in the performance data to inform action planning in the Single Equality Scheme.
- 5.9 The data also prompted discussion about the targets used in the Framework, how these are set and the Committee's role in setting the principles for target

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setting. The Committee said that, in principle, targets should be set at least at national rate. It was noted that for some programmes, with a duration longer than one year, poor retention early in the course would carry forward into second year, effectively limiting retention rates in the following year. The Committee's view was that if national rates would be impossible to achieve due to earlier retention issues then targets should acknowledge this but should aim to achieve national rates within two years. Where this was the case there should be a note on the Framework.

Deputy Princip On-going

5.10 Despite retention rates on average being above target, it was noted that some subject areas, as listed in the paper, had below target retention. Most of these areas had also been highlighted in earlier quality reports with negative indicators. The Principal and acting CEO confirmed that in most cases the subject areas of most concern for retention were also doing poorly on other quality measures. These subjects have area support plans in place already with actions and targets set for them to make rapid quality improvement. To support areas to complete local action plans, the College is appointing three additional Learning and Development Coaches, designated from existing staff, to start coaching on a part-time basis from March. This would not be sufficient to support all the staff who would benefit from coaching, but it would increase capacity immediately, pending budget planning for 2018/19, when senior managers intended to increase capacity to 12 (part-time) coaches. It was confirmed that coaches would continue to teach as well as coach although the balance of activity may vary between individual coaches.

5.11 The Committee welcomed the increase in coaching capacity and asked for an update on the full time equivalent (FTE) number of learning and development coaches once appointments had been made and the allocation of coaching and teaching hours confirmed.

Acting CEO March 2018 and Oct. 2018

5.12 Governors noted positively that retention rates are tracking above target and asked if this meant that targets had been too cautious. Governors sought reassurance that retention data is up to date and that curriculum Directors would not be complacent about hitting target. The Principal and acting CEO said that at business review meetings she would be verifying that currency of the data and challenging Directors to aspire to exceed the year-end targets by retaining and re-engaging any current learners at risk of withdrawal.

5.13 Governors were concerned about the high attrition rates reported for a pilot two year GCSE English resit programme. The Principal and acting CEO said that the pilot had not been effective for lots of students and would not be repeated.

PROGRESS

5.14 Members commented that their impression from the report was that there remained issues with some staff not effectively implementing progress monitoring processes. The Deputy Principal said that BRAG implementation was above target although some areas were describing issues in their reports rather than tracking the effectiveness of interventions. Monthly quality meetings were sharing good practice about interventions and on assessment feedback - another area that Ofsted had found to be inconsistent. There was a renewed emphasis on all staff correcting English and maths errors for all assessment. In general, the Committee remained concerned that in some areas there seemed to be a tolerance of non-compliance with monitoring processes and asked to be

reassured that where a process was mandatory, compliance would be sought.

- 5.15 It was noted that work was starting on a major reshaping of curriculum design and structure for 2018/19. Members commented that they had been told previously that structural changes would aid student progress and that the changes were in progress. The Committee challenged that they had not seen the impact of previous initiatives and wanted to know how the new initiative would be different. The Deputy Principal said that curriculum staff and students would be actively involved in reviewing their courses, only implementing shorter study blocks where this would work best. The Committee commented that a mixed economy of differently sized modules could be difficult to timetable and manage. The Principal and acting CEO said that implementation would be based on all courses developing an effective assessment schedule for the whole year including ensuring an even distribution of continuous and formative assessment and, where appropriate, multiple opportunities to take modules.
- 5.16 The Committee asked about the effectiveness of the new Director roles in making the curriculum facilitate student learning as well as more resource efficient. The Principal and acting CEO said that she was already reviewing the role description to make it more helpful in driving improved performance. Members said that it might be useful for some of them to attend a business review meeting to see how the new directorate structures, including the new Director role, were performing. Members were asked to contact the Principal and acting CEO directly if they were willing and able to attend a business review meeting.

Governors w/c 26 Feb

ACHIEVEMENT

- 5.17 It was reported that qualifications were being claimed more quickly than in 2016/17 and at this stage of the year, pass rates were high.
- 5.18 The Committee noted the report.

18/1/6 English and maths update

- 6.1 The Deputy Principal presented the report, commenting that poor attendance at English and maths classes remained a matter of concern and there were also concerns about the number of students who had yet to meet the English and maths Condition of Funding. The MI team were doing further work checking the data as some of the issues seemed to be inaccuracies - e.g. including some students aged 19+ and others whose grades at entry had been recorded inaccurately. Curriculum managers were checking records to correct inaccuracies and identify students who could still meet the CoF. They were also setting up better systems for next year to ensure data accuracy earlier.
- 6.2 The Committee asked how the strategy was addressing training for existing staff, particularly those in vocational areas teaching and giving assessment feedback on English and maths. The Principal and acting CEO said that Directorates are responsible for English and maths within their study programmes and the culture is changing to accept this ownership. One curriculum area had already decided to use a vacancy to strengthen English and maths teaching in the department rather than replace with a vocational teacher. The strategy prioritised better training and peer support for staff teaching English and maths; upskilling existing English and maths staff to be qualified to at least Level 5 standard and rebalancing the amount of teaching done by College established staff rather than agency staff. Each Directorate

needed a clear locus of leadership responsibility for vocational English and maths and budget planning was considering how this might best be achieved.

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| 6.3 | The Committee expressed concern that inaccuracies in the data about students meeting the English and maths Condition of Funding continued to be problematic after reassurances in 2016/17 that processes had been strengthened to prevent this problem re-occurring. The Committee requested that progress on the English and maths Condition of Funding data be a standing item on the Committee's agenda and that an analysis of the proportion of agency staff vs College establishment staff teaching English and maths be provided at the next meeting. | Chair | Ongoing |
| | | Acting CEO | April 2018 |

18/1/7 Apprenticeships:2017/18 in-year update

- 7.1 The Deputy Principal presented the report. The Committee noted that retention had declined for although it was still predicted to be above national rates. The Committee challenged why more apprentices had left. The Deputy Principal said that this had been a side effect of rapid growth prior to the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy. There had been a positive strategy to meet employer demand for new starts under the pre-Levy system. This had enabled the College to buck the downturn in apprentice numbers but had also led to resource issues in ensuring that the new starters were inducted and visited in a timely manner.
- 7.2 The Principal and acting CEO said that the College had addressed the issues by:
- i) Appointing the Commercial Director to lead on the whole Apprenticeship Strategy not just the growth strategy to address the need for better cross-College leadership
 - ii) Allocating account managers to key contracts to build an effective working relationship with the employer. Their duties included liaising with employers and curriculum areas to agree optimum timing for new apprentice recruitment and induction.
 - iii) Revising the Apprenticeship support model.
- 7.3 It was noted that there are some causes of higher turnover, over which the College has little control, for example some sectors, such as customer services and call centres, have a higher level of staff turnover which is reflected in the retention rates for related apprenticeship standards. The Principal and acting CEO said that she had 'Amber' rated all Apprenticeship performance data pending discussion of performance in the next round of business review meetings. Given last year's retention issues, curriculum areas would need to work very hard on retaining apprentices and supporting them to meet targets.
- 7.4 The Committee noted the report and requested a more detailed report on the resourcing of the Apprenticeship Strategy and model having expressed on many occasions their concern that growth was outstripping the College's ability to provide the necessary input.

Deputy Principal	May 2018
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18/1/8 Ofsted outcomes and action planning process

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| 8.1 | The Principal and acting CEO presented a report and it was noted that the draft report expected from Ofsted for factual accuracy checking, had not been received in time to be tabled at the meeting. The information provided at the feedback meeting at the end of the visit was already being used to input to a Senior Leadership Team event on continuous improvement and to re-develop | Deputy | April |
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the Quality Improvement Plan. The new plan would not just focus on issues highlighted by the visit but also the lessons learned during the preparation for the visit and the wider expectations of the Common Inspection Framework for achieving outstanding provision.

- 8.2 The Committee asked for more information about the current constituency of the senior leadership team and the SLT workshops mentioned. The Principal and acting CEO said that SLT comprises all Executive Team members, curriculum Directors and their direct reports. This group includes curriculum Directors and deputies as well as business support and professional services middle managers. There have been two half day meetings of the group so far since December and their focus has been on cross-college working to secure improvements in the student experience and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. One of the lessons from preparing for Ofsted had been that all staff have a role in play in enabling teaching learning and assessment to be more effective - as a minimum by making their business processes more efficient for TLA staff to engage with and/or more student friendly.
- 8.3 The disconnect between business/professional services and curriculum teams was exemplified by the open evening that occurred during the Ofsted visit. Curriculum departments and marketing colleagues worked hard to make sure that the open evening went ahead as planned and was a success, even though many had already worked extra hours in preparation for and during the Ofsted visit. Relatively few support staff, other than those directly involved, volunteered to support the Open Evening and it did not feel like a whole college effort. Governors commented that the silo mentality used to describe the relationship between business support and teaching colleagues had been a consistent theme in the Learning Together Review and was evidence in the results of staff engagement surveys. They supported the Principal and acting CEO's initiative to tackle this through the SLT development events; something that had not been done for some years.
- 8.4 It was also suggested that SLT might want to consider what a 'Student First' business or professional service would look like; what the College should expect of all its support teams; what best practice there is in the sector and how we could adapt and adopt those practices.
- 8.5 In a similar vein, Governors asked how the post inspection plan would be integrated with the action plans for other issues and overall business plan. Members warned of the danger of a multiplicity of plans. The Principal and acting CEO assured the Committee that the post inspection actions would be integrated into a single College improvement or development plan with the objectives translated into the targets and plans of each budget holder flowing through to individual staff. The targets would include quality improvement and assurance targets for all teams, not just curriculum departments.
- 8.6 The Committee noted the report and welcomed the 'one plan; one team' approach, commenting that all staff needed to understand their role in achieving whole organisation goals and the importance of achieving efficiency in non teaching areas to contribute resources to enabling more effective teaching, learning and assessment.

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18/1/9 Thematic plan for business cycle 2017/18

- 9.1 The Deputy Principal presented the report, a plan for catching up reporting on themes within the cycle of business. The Committee noted the report and

welcomed the update. Members recognised that work on revising the performance framework had taken precedence and this had left a number of areas with reports outstanding. The Committee commented that the catch-up plan would generate a heavy agenda for its June meeting. The Chair would review this with the Clerk to see if re-scheduling the March meeting later might ease this pressure.

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- 9.2 Further information was requested about the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) strategy, noting that the College's internal EDI Board had not met since the resignation of its Chair, although there had been a task group to advise on unconscious bias training for managers. The Deputy Principal said that several meetings of the EDI Board had been cancelled due to members being unable to attend. The Principal and acting CEO said that the revisions to the Equality Scheme, due to be presented to the Committee in March, would include a forward look at current year objectives, training and other action. The Executive and senior leadership team had been reviewing the internal College boards and groups structure. The EDI Board would be retained and its membership and remit reviewed and strengthened to make it more effective. The EDI Board would meet on a termly basis with its reports being received by Planning and Performance Committee. Senior managers recognised that they needed to find ways to help staff be able to attend meetings of cross-College groups. Planning and Performance Committee would start to see routine reporting as outlined in the cycle of business.

18/1/10 **Any other business**

- 10.1 A confidential matter was raised under Any other business and the discussion is noted in a separate confidential minute.

18/1/11 **Review of meeting**

Members were invited to comment on the meeting. It was noted that the meeting had over-run and that in future presenters should rely on members having read reports if they have been circulated in good time.

18/1/12 **Date of next meeting**

Monday 26 March 2018 at 8.00 am

It was noted that some members have given apologies for this meeting and it would be useful if a later date could be arranged to reallocate some of the planned agenda load from the June meeting. The Committee agreed that the Clerk should poll members to reschedule the meeting for a date in April. The next scheduled meeting after March is Monday 25 June 2018 at 8.00 am

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