

**Date:** 27 March 2017  
**Venue:** Board Room, City Campus

**Clerk to the Corporation**  
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**Email:**  
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**Present:** Chris Linacre - Chair  
Paul Corcoran  
Seb Schmoller  
Amy Smith  
John Timms

**In attendance:** Alison Shillito, Clerk to the Governing Body  
Heather Smith, Executive Director and College Principal  
James Smythe, Deputy College Principal  
Darren Tidmarsh, Executive Director of Human Resources and SRIS

### Action

#### 17/2/1 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Jay Bhayani, Saleem Rashid and Anne Wilson

#### 17/2/2 Minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2017 and updated action record

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

#### 17/2/3 Matters Arising

##### 3.1 Minute 17/1/3.2 refers - progress on implementation of Markbook

- i) The Chair reported that, following discussions at recent meetings, he had visited the College for a tutorial about Markbook to understand better the reports the Committee is receiving. His assessment was that it seems to be a useful online application for tracking and assessing students. The system does require time spent in setting up a course and module structure but so do other systems including paper systems.
- ii) The Committee wanted to understand:
  - why the implementation of Markbook for entering marks appears to be so low
  - How the College plans to get the system fully implemented
  - What is meant by full implementation (i.e. which types of courses or students the College would not expect to track through Markbook) and
  - What the College's target deadline is for full implementation?
- iii) The Principal commented that the College has identified technical issues about under-reporting of use and there are talks with supplier to fix this. There is quite a lot of work to set-up courses in Markbook and some departments are frustrated that the system is not reporting actual use more accurately. Even with proper reporting we know there are some areas that

are not using Markbook because they see it as difficult to match the assessment structure and schedule to their subject. The supplier is visiting to work with staff on A level, BTEC, and English and maths qualifications to work with staff and use best practice to set it up for each of those qualification types. The supplier will also train experts in each department in using and adapting one of the model structures to their subject. The experts will have time in their work plans in June and July to populate Markbook with course information for 2017/18,

- iv) Governors agreed that the proposals appeared to be a sensible implementation plan and were concerned that the delay in coming to this was an indication of underlying issues with systems planning and implementation. The Principal responded that the College had used ProMonitor (the main product from which Markbook developed) for over 10 years in different parts of the College. Implementing Markbook was one of a number of quality improvement initiatives and it was not until the beginning of 2016/17 that the Principal's team had prioritised Markbook and BRAG as the two most important changes for achieving improvement in student outcomes. Other colleges had indicated Markbook is easy to use but as a large College, TSC staff had found the amount of diversity in course structures and assessment practice a significant challenge to implementation. The work with the supplier modelling different structures is intended to address this. In addition, there is still work to do persuading staff of the benefits of using a College-wide system.
- v) The CEO commented that the appointment of a Chief Information Officer would give the College additional capability in appraising IT systems and planning effective implementation.
- vi) In the next phase of implementation, the Deputy Principal and his team will be using what they have learnt in the implementation of the BRAG process. This has been highly effective and was achieved by visiting each department to explain the process and the reason for the changes; identifying with the department any obstacles to change and support to overcome them and then holding them to account in monthly department meetings.
- vii) Markbook becomes even more important with the introduction of Value Added measures. Markbook can enable tracking of progress against Value Added expected Target and improve the accuracy and automation of BRAG so we must continue to press for full implementation.
- viii) In order to set a clear message to the College about the importance of Markbook implementation, the Committee agreed that 1 September 2017 should be a firm target for completion of Markbook set up for all courses unless there is good reason to have an alternative system for a curriculum area. The Committee would like a report on how we are progressing on meeting this deadline. College Principal to report to September meeting
- ix) The Committee acknowledged that there may be some provision where implementation of Markbook is not practicable or necessary (such as short courses or leisure provision). The Principal and Deputy Principal agreed to devise criteria for programmes that are included in implementation of Markbook - linked to those for determining whether BRAG is used - which may include length of programme and qualification type and report back to Committee how 'full implementation' will be calculated. College Principal and Deputy Principal

### 3.2 Minute 17/1/3.3 refers - design of quality data reports

Chair reported he and members of the Committee had met with Head of Quality

Head of Service

and agreed changes to the report format. It had been a very useful meeting. The quality data report in the revised format will be presented to the Committee's next meeting on 19 June 2017.

#### 17/2/4 Action Plan

##### i) Equality and Diversity training for governors

The Executive Director of HR and SRIS reported that the College Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group had set-up a task team to develop proposals for Equality and Diversity training for senior leaders and he would liaise to ensure that governors are also included in this training.

##### ii) Sustainable resourcing proposals

The Executive Director of HR and SRIS reported that sustainable resourcing proposals are still being developed and will be presented as part of the budget setting proposals for 2017/18. Finance, Employment and General Purposes Committee will be considering the initial budget proposals and issues at its meetings on 9 May and 5 June. At its June meeting, Planning and Performance Committee will be considering growth plans and the HR strategy to support that growth and curriculum changes for technical and apprenticeship programmes.

##### iii) Cyber security risks

The Committee asked the Clerk to report back on how Audit and Risk Assurance Committee plans to address Cyber Security testing of IT systems.

#### 17/2/5 Value Added data

5.1 The Committee received a presentation on the new national measure for school/college performance. In the presentation, the Deputy Principal highlighted the following points.

- i) For academic (A levels) and Applied General qualifications at key stage 3, five measures will be used for judging the performance of education providers (student progress, attainment, English and maths progress, retention and destination).
- ii) Progress is a value added score calculated by assigning each student a nationally determined 'expected progress score' based on their average attainment at GCSE and then comparing it to their actual achievement score at the end of the programme.
- iii) The expected progress scores are set nationally, based on past data and vary depending on the new programme the student is studying. The College receives the target data in the January after the student has completed enrolment, which is after the initial guidance processes.
- iv) If a student achieves their expected progress then the overall result for Value Added is zero. SFA intervention is triggered at more than -0.5 (Academic) and -0.75 (Applied General) progress scores. The average score for General FE colleges is -25 for Applied General qualifications.
- v) Confidence limits are set by the system based on number of entries at that provider. For providers with small numbers of entries there may be insufficient confidence to apply the measure.
- vi) The College uses ProMonitor to record the 'expected progress score' and any locally agreed 'stretch' target, which can be negotiated with the

student but must be at least the same as or higher than the nationally determined 'expected progress' score.

- vii) Academic qualifications are all located in one department in the College but Applied General qualifications are distributed across departments that have a mix of provision. Technical level qualifications will continue to be measured on a combined completion and attainment measure; HE and Access qualifications are not included. This gives the College a complex picture for how its performance is measured.

## 5.2 The Committee considered the presentation as follows:

- i) Governors asked if the progress measure would be an opportunity for the College given that some students may have under-performed earlier in their education. The Deputy Principal commented that it can be fairer than using only attainment scores but expected progress is based on averages so when standards improve generally expected scores will increase. The College's score will at least have to keep up with national trends. In addition, a small number of students missing their target significantly can have a disproportionate impact on the overall score.
- ii) The Committee wanted to know how the College is responding to the challenges. The Principal responded that students on BTEC programmes needed to be achieving more merit and distinction grades as achieving a Pass standard is not sufficient for many students to make their expected progress. Staff and students need to understand the target grade and how to achieve it. Staff must set high expectations in assessment for students to achieve the targets. It is helpful to have a modular curriculum and schedule assessment of modules so they are completed through the year and staff and students can see the progress they are making to the target.
- iii) For individual students, the BRAG process is the main tool to enable staff and students to know if they are on target and managers to project overall Value Added scores. At departmental level, the Quality Development Review process monitors performance. Notice to Improve panels are revisiting curriculum areas to review what is going well and what not so well and what interventions are being most effective. In improving departments they are seeing positive strategies such as additional classes that 'stretch' students into higher graded work or develop exam technique, senior staff mentoring students and other targeted student support.
- iv) Reviewing the results for the College's curriculum areas, governors noted that expected progress scores varied by subject and that a lot of the College's provision is in subjects with higher negative value added scores, such as Sciences and Psychology -0.68. Staff commented that these differences are seen across the sector. Seeing such patterns can be helpful for initial advice and guidance e.g. reviewing if students have sufficient prior attainment in maths to achieve expected progress in science subjects.
- v) Governors asked how teaching teams are kept appraised of individual and group progress and if there is any indication of better or worse performance by classes taught by agency staff. The Principal responded that ProMonitor allows curriculum leaders to generate lists of Red or Amber rated students and identify groups of under-performing students. Most groups are taught by a mix of staff so student performance may not be attributable to an individual teacher but there is evidence that staff absence and the number or turnover of teachers teaching a programme has a negative impact and such areas are more difficult to turnaround.

- 5.3 The Committee thanked the Deputy Principal for explaining the value added measure. This information will help governors in interpreting and asking questions about future data. The discussion also reiterated the importance of ensuring full implementation of Markbook for tracking progress.

#### **17/2/6 Qualification Achievement Rate (QAR) Data 2015/16**

- 6.1 The Committee received the annual data report on student qualification achievement rates for 2015/16. The Deputy College Principal presented the report highlighting that the areas of most concern are the achievement rates of 16 -18 students and Level 3 apprenticeships. The in-year quality data for 2016/17, indicate that retention rates for apprenticeships reported next year will be lower. Governors considered what the College is doing to address the decline. The strategies include enhanced Initial Advice and Guidance processes, with pre-screening at entry and progression between levels to make sure students are ready for apprenticeship at the new level. Entrants requiring more preparation are being directed to College's Apprenticeship Advantage programme prior to entering an apprenticeship.
- 6.2 Governors noted that excluding subcontracted work from the QAR calculation resulted in an overall reduction in the rate for students aged 19+. Governors asked how the College is taking account of achievement rates in reducing subcontracting. The CEO responded that the College is looking to develop a closer relationship with a smaller number of partners that can complement the College's provision and support high achievement. For educational and financial reasons, the College has to be able to provide programmes directly, whilst maintaining quality and at a competitive cost. The College QAR reflects that it provides for the whole city including groups that traditionally have performed less well educationally whereas subcontractors may specialise in programmes or learners with higher completion rates. The Committee requested a future agenda item on subcontracting strategy, from a planning perspective and in relation to the College's growth plans.
- 6.3 It was noted that all the College's Access to HE provision had been rated as 'Green', above national average, a significant achievement as Access provision had been given notice to improve in August. The improvement actions have had a significant positive impact and Bev Turner, Quality Assessment and Standards Officer who had supported this work, was to be congratulated on the achievement.
- 6.4 The Committee received the report and the Chair agreed to write to Bev Turner on behalf of the Committee and thank her for her exceptional contribution.

Director of  
Business  
Developm<sup>t</sup>

Chair

#### **17/2/7 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Quality Plan update**

- 7.1 The Principal presented a report that highlighted the following issues as those causing most concern in making progress on the TLA Quality Plan.
- (i) achieving consistently good teaching and learning - the baseline is higher than it was and the Principal's staff are focusing on the toughest issues such as in-session target setting and questioning techniques but there remain too many classes that do not stretch students. Good practice approaches are not being consistently adopted and management of poor performance is still taking too long.
- (ii) Target setting - this relies on use of Markbook, as previously discussed.
- (iii) English and maths - the department has a new Deputy Head of Learning who is doing good work. Curriculum areas that are providing their own English and maths seem to be achieving better outcomes but the College still has a challenge to convince staff that integrated Functional Skills is the way forward.

- 7.2 The Committee received the report and commented that the work being done on Quality Development Review seemed to be having a positive impact. The Committee supported the emphasis on BRAG and Markbook and looked forward to receiving the next in-year quality data report at its June meeting.

AP QAS

**Iain McKinney, Vice Principal joined the meeting to present part 6.2 of the agenda**

**17/2/8 Quality improvement issues - Health, Education and Early Years**

- 8.1 The Vice Principal presented two items about issues relating to the Health, Education and Early Years area; firstly a report on the outcome of a review by awarding body, Pearson, and secondly a report on how the College is addressing quality concerns that have emerged about this area from different sources.

**Pearson Review**

- 8.2 The Vice Principal outlined the process by which concerns had been raised with Pearson which had resulted in Pearson doing extensive additional sampling of work. This had identified some work where compliance with assessment regulations was not fully evidenced. The department's previous engagements with the Pearson lead verifier had not identified these issues but the College worked with the Pearson's Team to provide additional samples and identify what had gone wrong. The issues were with work contributing to awards after the normal year end.
- 8.3 The investigation highlighted that the department had not been consistently following College quality assurance processes for students completing after the normal course end and this has been addressed. Since the investigation, the College has tightened up moderation and sign off protocols. Pearson staff have made a further enhanced sampling visit (scrutinising all work from both sites) and the outcome was that the level of assessment was only queried for one piece of work. Pearson has confirmed that the College has demonstrated compliance to its satisfaction.
- 8.4 Governors asked if anyone had tried to raise this concern internally before making a disclosure to Pearson and the VP responded that there was no evidence of this.

**Identifying and addressing quality concerns**

- 8.5 The Vice Principal tabled a paper summarising how quality concerns had emerged about a particular curriculum area from several sources and how the leadership team had gone about addressing those issues
- 8.6 Senior staff meet with the Heads and Deputy Heads of Learning at Monthly Department Reviews to consider performance data from different sources. Towards the end of 2015/16, these reviews were noticing declining rates of student attendance and predicted achievement and wanted to know what the department was doing to address these. In addition there were a relatively high number of student complaints and some were upheld. Performance did not improve and in the end of year Departmental Self-Assessment process it was rated as inadequate. Individual performance for some staff was also identified as capacity to improve. The Notice to Improve process and intervention of Intensive Support Panels, resulted in a course closure and close monitoring of other programmes.
- 8.7 The actions to address the concerns have been engagement with each student to make sure they are on an appropriate pathway. Student retention has gone down but attendance is now improving. The College has been actively managing the performance of staff who need to develop. There is still a great deal of work to do with the team. Long term absence in lead roles has made it hard for the

department to improve at the pace needed.

- 8.8 Governors asked if the issues had resulted from poor planning of an earlier merger of Hillsborough and City departments. The CEO responded that he had received a letter from union representations communicating concerns about the area being disrupted in 2015/16 by planning and timetabling issues, reliance on staff with temporary contracts and a higher number of lecturers per course. Scrutiny of the complaints and performance had brought to light underlying issues across the whole department in teaching and learning and quality assurance that pre-dated the merger. It was noted that, in spite of the issues in some aspects of the provision, the department's apprenticeship provision is maintaining good student retention, achievement and feedback.
- 8.9 It was noted that improvements in other departments given notice to improve at the same time had been more successful in making progress and governors wanted to understand how we apply the lessons learned to other departments. An important factor seemed to be leadership capability within the department to lead the improvement changes. The Committee emphasised that this is an important area of the College's provision with opportunities for growth and it had to improve. The Committee requested a progress report in June on further action taken and its impact on student experience and outcomes.

Vice  
Principal

#### **17/2/9 HE Quality Action Plan progress update**

- 9.1 The Executive Director of HR and SRIS presented the report explaining that HE Academic Board had reviewed progress against the 2015/16 course action plans and made recommendations for cross College changes including training for staff in writing evaluative statements. The Director also reported that the HE Academic Board had revised its constitution to increase the number of student members. This had strengthened the student voice on the Board and seemed to be working well.
- 9.2 The Committee noted the report and that the College had submitted three programmes for validation by the Open University, two have been approved with conditions and one had been referred for further work. Applicants for the unsuccessful programme had been offered entry to existing HND provision.

**Peter Harrison , Assistant Principal Planning and Curriculum Enhancement joined the meeting for part 7.4 of the agenda**

#### **17/2/10 Changes to the College's student intake 2011/12 - 2016/17**

- 10.1 The Committee received a report on the demographics of the College's student intake and how it has changed over the last five years. The Presentation highlighted issues as follows.
- 10.2 The College population comes disproportionately from most deprived areas of Sheffield and students who come from those areas are more likely than other students to withdraw from programmes without achieving.
- i) The College is seeing significant growth in Apprenticeships and there seems to be a correlation with the decline in enrolments of 16 -18 year olds onto EFA learner responsive provision. Looking longitudinally, the impact of new sixth form and UTC provision can also be seen.
  - ii) There had been some suggestion that the College's share of the total number of 16 -18 year old students has declined but this data shows that taking the totality of 16 - 18 enrolments, including apprenticeships, the percentage of students coming to the College has been about the same or slightly increased.

- iii) There continues to be growth in the number and percentage of students disclosing additional needs but the number of students for which the College receives additional funding remains static.
- iv) The lagged funding model presents challenges to grow EFA student numbers and could present significant challenges in responding to the increasing demographic after 2020. The College needs to address this through ensuring it provides programmes efficiently and generates additional income through growth of fee paying programmes such as HE and apprenticeships.

10.3 The Committee received the report and suggested that the College could benefit from wider dissemination of the report's findings and also that the College should explore if further research would be beneficial into the underlying causes of high withdrawal rates for students drawn from the most deprived parts of the city.

#### 17/2/11 Student Union Constitution

11.1 The Committee received the report and noted that the Student Union Executive Committee had agreed proposals for changes to the Constitution to remove the Student Council, which had not met, and to allow sabbatical posts to be extended to up to two years. The Committee endorsed the proposed changes subject to the inclusion of an Annual General Meeting and recommended that the Constitution be redrafted to make sure that the powers of the Council were appropriately discharged. The revised constitution to be presented to Governing Body for approval at its May meeting.

Student  
Union  
President  
and Clerk

#### 17/2/12 Governor Engagement Programme

12.1 The Clerk reported that engagement opportunities had been arranged for most curriculum and support areas and work was in progress to finalise appointments. The Committee requested an update at its next meeting.

Clerk

#### 17/2/13 Curriculum planning to support quality improvement and growth

- i) Market research and product development
- ii) Learner recruitment update
- iii) Sheffield City Region Labour Market Information 2016 Report.

The Committee deferred consideration of the items to the next meeting.

Director  
of  
Marketing

#### 17/2/14 Review of meeting

Governors commented that the extra time had been helpful in considering issues in more detail. This detail did generate a larger number of questions and members would try to ensure that questions are concise and focused on improvement.

#### 17/2/15 Any other business: Prevent Duty

One of the members commented that events in London had highlighted for him the dangers of individuals being radicalised and the importance of the College making every effort to assure that staff and students understand the risks of radicalisation and have information and skills to keep themselves safe and know how to raise concerns if they arise about a learner or via other means. The Committee agreed that there should be an update on Prevent for the Committee and refresher training for all Governors including more detailed training for the Chair of P&P as the Governor with safeguarding responsibility.

Assistant  
Principal  
Student  
Support,  
Inclusion  
and  
Progression

#### 17/2/16 Date of next meeting

Monday 19 June 2017 at 08.00 in the Boardroom, City Campus.