

Date: 17 March 2021

Clerk to the Corporation
Granville Road

Venue: Zoom (Online Meeting)

Sheffield, S2 2RL
Tel: 0114 260 2620

Email
alison.shillito@sheffcol.ac.uk

Present: Beri Hare (Chair), college governor
Gwyn Arnold, college governor
Peter Brooks, college governor
Angela Foulkes, Chief Executive and Principal and college governor
Kathryn Fulton, President of The Sheffield College Students' Union, and college governor
Richard Moore, co-opted committee member
Seb Schmoller, chair of governors
Steven Spence, staff governor (left at 10.00 for Ofsted meeting)

In attendance: Andrew Hartley, Executive Director Commercial and Operations
John Mothersole, college governor and Chair Designate (until 09.30)
Nick Rudkin, Vice Principal Apprenticeships (09.35 – 10.00)
Alison Shillito, Governance Advisor and Clerk to the Governing Body.
Paul Simpson, Executive Director People
James Smythe, Vice Principal Student Experience (08.30 – 08.40)
Anita Traffon, Deputy Chief Executive and Deputy Principal
Elise Temple, Assistant Principal, Quality, Teaching, Learning and Assessment (08.45– 09.30)
Robin Webber-Jones, Vice Principal Higher Technical Education and Academic Studies (10.30 – 10.45)

Action
by **by**
whom **when**

21/2/1 Welcome, introduction and apologies

- 1.1 The meeting received apologies for absence from Stephen Betts and Sol Miah.

21/2/2 Declaration of interest

- 2.1 The Committee noted the standing declarations of the Chief Executive and Principal (CEP), staff governor and student governor. The staff governor is involved in supporting some of the work presented in item 6. It was agreed that no action was required on this or the other standing interests noted.

21/2/3 Minutes of the last meeting

- 3.1 The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting on 3 February 2021 as an accurate record.

21/2/4 Matters Arising & Action Record

- 4.1 The Clerk presented the Action Tracker, reporting on three actions not on the agenda:

Minute 20/4/18.2, OFS (Office for Students) regulations: The Clerk reported that the Search, Remuneration and Governance Committee (SRG) had considered the college's governance arrangements against the precepts in the HE (Higher Education) Code of Governance. SRG had agreed that the college complies with the essential requirements of the HE Code. The committee noted the report and agreed the action was completed.

Minute 21/1/9, HE Access and Participation Plan: Using the comments and updates received from members, the Vice Principal Higher Technical Education and Academic Studies (VP HTEAS) had improved the draft and submitted it to the Office for Students (OFS)

Minute 21/1/11 Review of the meeting Due to pressure of meeting time, the two presentations postponed from the last meeting will be offered as an additional governor enrichment session as soon as possible.

- 4.2 The Committee agreed:
- that all the actions arising in the minutes of the last meeting had been included in the action record;
 - that the actions marked as complete, or agreed as such in the meeting, should be removed from the tracker.

21/2/5 Student Experience

- 5.1 James Smythe, Vice Principal Student Experience (VPSE) joined the meeting to introduce a streamlined paper incorporating the termly updates on Safeguarding and student behaviour. It was noted that the paper rated student behaviour as amber, due to the attendance rate being below target. Staff are working hard to bring the attendance rate up to target, particularly for English and maths classes.

- 5.2 Members considered the report and the key issues discussed were:

Measuring attendance: a member queried how the college is determining attendance with the flexibility of remote learning. The VPSE said that the college uses the same measure for attendance as the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). If students do not attend an online or on campus class then they are recorded as absent. Staff contact absent students to find out if they are okay and the reason for their absence. The behaviour policy has a route for escalating formal action if phone calls do not have the desired impact on their attendance.

Excellence in safeguarding: based on their engagement with safeguarding staff, the Link Governor for Safeguarding endorsed

the green rag rating for safeguarding and asked how the college benchmarked against other colleges. The VPSE said that he had recently spoken at a national event about the college's arrangements and its work with UNIHeads. He was pleased to see that The Sheffield College (TSC) is already implementing the approaches being highlighted as good practice by other colleges. This is an area where TSC has excellent group provision and is willing to devise bespoke individualised support for students who need it. The report gives some examples of the impact of this work and there are other examples where action by safeguarding has supported learners to stay in learning and succeed.

Radicalisation: a member asked about awareness of the threat of far-right extremist groups such as the hundred hands. The Deputy Chief Executive (DCE/DP) said that the college actively monitors trends in extremist activity through its participation in regional Prevent networks and contacts with police. The college is not aware of any activity involving TSC students and continues to monitor its digital networks for material promoting extremist groups.

- 5.3 The committee received the report.

VPSE left the meeting at 08.40

21/2/6 Quality, Teaching, Learning & Assessment

- 6.1 Elise Temple, Vice Principal Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (VP QTLA) joined the meeting to give the quarterly presentation on the operation of the college's teaching quality improvement and observation programme. The presentation included data on the type, number of reviews, outcomes and action being taken with staff whose teaching is not meeting expectations. In addition to formal observations, the Quality Team is also conducting thematic reviews of online provision using short online visits to identify and disseminate good practice. The VP QTLA said that the team had already completed a review of some kind with every member of teaching staff. By the end of April, all staff would have participated in an online review.
- 6.2 Members considered the presentation and welcomed that activity had continued throughout lockdown. The main other issues discussed were as follows:
- **Digital Development Programme:** the number of staff completing looked impressive and it would be useful for governors to see what proportion of teaching staff were achieving each level.
 - **Coaching and development:** a member asked how the college is using online reviews for further development. It was noted that staff receive a detailed development report from the longer online review visits. The sessions that are observed are also recorded and the staff member and reviewer can both view recording and discuss it in the context of the feedback. Staff have given positive feedback

on the online review visit process and how they have benefited from the feedback and support provided.

- **Stretch and challenge** in online classes: a member commented that stretch and challenge was reported as a commonly raised area in the online supportive reviews. The rating for stretch and challenge in thematic review seemed high for practice observed in short visits, which seemed inconsistent. The VP QTLA said that the rating in thematic observations is based on good practice observed during short visits. The behaviour may not be observed in a short visit. The Online Supportive Review is an extended observation lasting 45 minutes. If the observer is not seeing appropriate stretch and challenge at the right points in the class then it will form part of the feedback.
- **Grading scheme for thematic visits:** are the gradings of 90% of all visits meeting or exceeding expectations on the high side? The VP QTLA said that these are short engagements, like learning walks. In the detailed reviews, the reviewer has more time to observe the full range of behaviours. All staff receive constructive feedback on how to develop their teaching further.

- 6.3 The committee received the report and welcomed the evidence of the improvement in teaching quality.

21/2/7 Complaints

- 7.1 The VP QTLA presented the regular termly report on complaints. The committee noted the report including the reduction in the number of complaints compared to the same time last year. Members expressed caution about the numbers given that students learning remotely were less connected to their studies.

21/2/8 Mid-Year Position Statement

- 8.1 Anita Straffon, Deputy Chief Executive and Deputy Principal (DCE/DP) presented the Mid-Year Position Statement, which had been produced following comments made at the December meeting that the Self-Assessment Review (SAR) 2019/20 was too conservative. At that meeting, the committee agreed it would be useful to receive an update that is bolder about the college's achievement and more fully reflects the passion of managers and staff to strive for the best experience and outcomes for learners. The DCE/DP said that the document is structured using the Education Inspection Framework and includes evidence of impact for 2020/21 that was outside the timeframe of the SAR.

- 8.2 Members considered the position statement and the key issues discussed were.

Language: members acknowledged that the committee had asked for something bolder, communicating the confidence and cohesion of staff pursuing the shared goal of outstanding

learning, teaching, and assessment. Members commented that they thought it was an improvement on the SAR in terms of articulating that TSC is a good college. The statements are supported by evidence of impact. As the year progresses, there will be further evidence of impact available to add to this so that the college is well-prepared for its next inspection.

Apprenticeships: this is self-assessed as requiring improvement. In response to a question, the DCE/DP said that this accurate self-assessment would not restrict the overall judgement of effectiveness and the college is able to demonstrate the effectiveness of its FE and adult provision.

- 8.3 The Committee received the Mid-Year Position Statement and commended the DCE/DP and VP QTLA on their work in continuing quality improvement throughout the pandemic and the impact they and colleagues are having and demonstrating in the position statement.

21/2/9 People update: Employee Engagement Survey 2021

- 9.1 Paul Simpson, Executive Director People presented the results of the recent staff survey. This is the first survey that the college has run itself, it uses questions from previous surveys and from the Ofsted employee questionnaire as well as questions relating to COVID-19. Some of the questions are from a set shared with York College to enable benchmarking. The presentation focused on the results for TSC and action being taken to address the main points in the feedback.

- 9.2 The committee considered the changes to the presentation and asked for clarification on the following.

Comparison with 2019 survey scores: members noted the significant improvement in the responses to most of the key questions that are comparable to previous survey. This was in the context of a higher participation rate overall and no questions receiving overall scores in the lowest quartile. Members said this was excellent progress and provided further evidence to back up the statements and confidence in the position statement. The EDP (Executive Director People) said that within the overall results, there remained some areas with higher dissatisfaction for questions. To address this, managers had received anonymised data to help them focus further research and remedial actions.

Teaching staff feedback: the most worrying aspect of the 2019 survey had been the low engagement score for teaching staff responses. Members warmly welcomed the evidence of a significant increase in satisfaction of teaching staff in 2021 survey, with scores of around 70% being satisfied or very satisfied with key aspects of their role and the college. This was an important milestone for the college and evidence of the improvements reported in the Mid-Year Position Statement.

Leadership and Management: this showed a significant improvement compared to the 2019 Survey. The free text comments included quite a lot of complimentary comments

about how leaders and managers had handled COVID-19. There was still room for improvement with the response to the question on internal communications showing satisfaction at 55% (increased from 24% in 2019). Managers would be undertaking further work to understand how college communications could be improved to reach those groups that remain dissatisfied.

Timing of follow-up survey: it was noted that the college had been running full employee engagement surveys biennially. It was suggested that it would be useful to have another survey in 9-12 months' time to see that substantial progress is being maintained and improved. The EDP said that he was planning for a short pulse survey of key questions at the end of the academic year. It was important that managers understood and acted on the feedback to inform the next survey.

Information Technology (IT): members noted that the largest cluster of "free text" responses to the question "what one thing would improve your experience" was around IT equipment. This was interesting given the amount of equipment provided to staff to work remotely. It may reflect the heavy reliance on IT currently.

- 9.3 The committee received the presentation, welcomed the assurance that staff morale corroborated the Mid-Year Position Statement and commended the Executive Leadership Team on their work on staff communications and leadership that achieved the excellent progress reported in the survey and the EDP for his work on the People frameworks. The committee agreed

ACTION:

Clerk to circulate the presentation slides to members.

In presenting the results to all governors, it would be useful to highlight the questions that overlap with Ofsted Employee Questionnaire.

Once managers have digested the information, the committee would like to see the actions, improvements, and impact at college level.

21/2/10 Apprenticeship update

- 10.1 The Chair welcomed Nick Rudkin, Vice Principal Apprenticeships (VPA) to the meeting. Andrew Hartley, Executive Director of Commercial and Operations (EDCO) presented the report. The main points highlighted were
- **Achievement rate** at end of February 2021 is at 50% (13 percentage points (pp) ahead of same point in 2019/20)
 - **Pass rate** for standards is 97% for standards and 53% of passes are at high grades.
 - **Attendance** is good at 90% considering lockdown.
 - **Retention** had fallen since P3 but was above target.

- **ESFA feedback** is positive on the college's progress against the plan to remedy the breach in minimum standards. The next report is due at the end of the college year.
 - **Awarding bodies** granting the college direct claims status indicates confidence in the college's quality assurance and ability to maintain standards.
- 10.2 Members considered the report and the main issue discussed was how far the college could differentiate the factors constraining progress that were outside its control for example apprentices being deployed into other roles due to COVID-19. The chair said that this would not be taken into consideration at inspection as all providers would have some impact due to external factors.
- 10.3 The committee received the report and was satisfied with the college's actions and plans to continue to improve timely completion. The Chief Executive and Principal reported that Peter Brooks had agreed to be the link governor for apprenticeships to give governors additional assurance on progress in this important aspect of the college's provision.

21/2/11 Further Education update

- 11.1 The VP QTLA presented the update highlighting that most of the key performance indicators were on or above target. As reported in the Student Experience report, student attendance is RAG rated amber. In response, staff are following up every absence and stressing the importance of attendance, particularly for English and maths GCSE classes where attendance and the progress made in class will inform teacher grades. In addition, the curriculum team and students are working with marketing to create a student video about the benefits of attendance from the student perspective.
- 11.2 Members noted that within the overall attendance rate, there is a gap between the overall rate and the lower attendance for students from widening participation postcodes. There is also a lower than average attendance rate for students from a Black or Minority Ethnic background, who also are more likely to come from widening participation postcodes. The VP QTLA said that the college is addressing this gap by prioritising students from widening participation postcodes in the return to more on-campus learning. This is intended to get them back into learning more quickly and give them time to work individually and in small groups with tutor mentors.
- 11.3 The committee received the report and welcomed the streamlined structure and concise action-oriented style.

21/2/12 Higher Education update

- 12.1 The Vice Principal Higher Technical Education and Academic Studies (VP HTEAS) presented the report that combined termly reporting on performance against Key Performance Indicators

(KPIs), implementation of the Higher-Level Skills Strategy, and HE student voice activity and the annual update on HE partnerships.

- 12.2 Members considered the report and the key issues discussed were as follows.

Retention: members welcomed the improvement in retention. The lockdowns had been difficult for HE students across the all providers and it was good to see TSC students engaging and being supported to achieve stay and achieve.

Partnerships: a member commented that rationalising provision to two main validating universities and Pearson was a positive move to reduce complexity and increase efficiency.

OFS regulatory changes: a member asked how the college is keeping up to date on this. The VP HTEAS said that as a member of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Metrics Peer Review Group he is monitoring developments. As reported in February, the sector is awaiting publication of the outcomes of the first consultation on quality and standards prior to launch of a further consultation on changes to the TEF and the regime for quality monitoring and intervention. The college's position is to continue to focus on implementing its strategy and providing high quality teaching and student support in line with its mission. The bureaucracy of regulation must not interfere with ensuring a good student experience and outcomes that students and employers value.

- 12.3 The Committee received report and welcomed the assurance on the improvements and progress that the college is making.

21/2/13 Students' Union: five yearly review of the SU Code of Practice

- 13.1 The Clerk presented the review of the Students' Union Code of Practice. This review had been done informally in parallel with the updating of the Students' Union Constitution in 2019/20. This review was a formal check of compliance with relevant legislation with the results documented for publication.

- 13.2 Members considered the Code of Practice and said it was important that the document explicitly mentions that all apprentices are full members of the Students' Union.

- 13.2 The committee approved the Code of Practice document, on behalf of the Governing Body subject to inclusion of explicit mention of apprentices in sections 3-9

21/2/14 Review of meeting and closing remarks

- 14.1 Members expressed support for senior leaders, particularly the Chief Executive and Principal and the DCE/DP who had worked tirelessly and enabled the college to make enormous strides in its improvement journey. The evidence that the committee had received at this meeting on staff morale, student and apprentice attendance and achievement showed the fantastic impact they

are having on the college's overall educational effectiveness as well as keeping staff going through the turnaround of the college, Ofsted visits and the year long major incident of the COVID-19 pandemic. They have set the values and direction for staff as well as selecting and developing a high calibre team of Vice Principals to continue the pace for the whole college to achieve excellence.

14.2 Members also thanked Seb Schmoller for his contribution to the committee, as a long-standing member, a champion for excellent teaching and learning and his support as Chair of Governors.

14.3 Seb thanked the senior leaders, and staff who provide reports to TLQSE and the committee chair and members who have been instrumental in the college's transformation over the last three years.

21/2/15 Date and time of next meeting

15.1 Wednesday 16 June 2021 08.30 - 11.00