

**MEETING OF THE TEACHING, STUDENTS, CURRICULUM, AND QUALITY COMMITTEE
OF THE CORPORATION OF THE SOUTH HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE GROUP**

Wednesday 7 November 2023

Board room, Bishopstoke Road, Fareham

MINUTES

Present:

Emma Champion	Phil Harris-Bridge
Julia Martin (Chair)	Emily Morey - arrived 18.00
Collins Ntim	Natalie Wigman

In attendance:

Georgina Flood (Director of Governance)
Peter Joddrell (Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality)
Andrew Kaye (Principal & CEO)
Ashley Martin (Director of Student Experience & Transition)
Anoushka Ottley (Managing Director, Business and Partnerships)
Ben Sheridan (Vice Principal, Fareham College)
Sandra Prail (Chair of Corporation)

01/23 Item 1 Deep Dive – Self Assessment Review (SAR)

The Committee received a ‘deep dive’ session on the self-assessment review (SAR) process from the Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality. This presentation will be made available via the Governor’s portal.

The DPC&Q noted that the C&Q Chair would be attending the final validation panel of the Group SAR taking place on Friday 1 December, noting that an additional Governor presence would be welcomed. EC volunteered to attend.

A member queried SAR timescales for future years. Could the Committee expect to see this earlier? DPC&Q confirmed that departmental self-assessments (DSAR’s) can’t be scheduled much earlier since they focus on end of year achievement (results of which aren’t available until Oct half term). Its unlikely timings will move much or that that the Cttee will be sighted on much before the first Corporation meeting in December.

ACTION: Emma Champion to be invited to the Group SAR Final Validation on Friday 1 December 2023.

A member queried what position would be in, if Ofsted came today? DPC&Q confirmed we are expecting a post-merger monitoring visit any time after Xmas – this would not be a full inspection i.e. no grade would be given. To prepare we’re looking at other colleges who’ve experienced similar post-merger visits to compare and review themes. We expect culture, apprenticeships (since we had issues in at least 2 of 3 Colleges), well as elements of safeguarding e.g. looked after children. Overall, we feel confident we are starting to apply best practice across the group and look to the visit to provide a temperature check of how we’re progressing.

A member confirmed their confidence in the robustness of the process and asked how this linked into any self-assessment of Governance (since they’re no DSAR (Departmental Self-Assessment Reviews) for Governance). DPC&Q confirmed that it would be usual for Governors to participate to the self-assessment process in a wider sense by feedback their views on their own performance and scrutiny.

The Chair suggested that a short report on the governance perspective of the College SAR be prepared for December Corporation. All agreed.

ACTION: Chair to commission a report on the governance aspects of the College SAR to be brought to the December Corporation meeting.

02/23 Item 2 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Tanya Richardson and Sarah Harder-Collins. Louise Smith was not in attendance.

03/23 Item 3 Declaration of Interests

Members were reminded of the need to declare any personal or financial interest in any items of business to be considered during the meeting. There were no interests declared.

04/23 Item 4 Minutes/Actions and Matters arising

It was noted as the first meeting of the new Committee there were no previous minutes for approval. The DG noted that members were asked to confirm for approval by the Corporation, their finalised Terms of Reference (ToR) and Annual Cycle of Business. A governor noted the opening sentence had a typo after 'experience.' It was also noted a full stop could be added after inclusion. Subject to these changes all agreed.

DECISION: Subject to identified minor changes, the Committee agreed their ToR and ACB for Corporation approval.

05/23 Item 5 Strategic Plan and Merger KPI's

The CEO provided an overview to each KPI report. The Chair encouraged members to focus their attention on those RAG rated items of particular concern or where scores from one term to another (in future reports) have not shifted or gone backwards.

A member queried the inclusion of KPI 44 Adult Education budget (AEB) utilisation. It was agreed this KPI should be allocated to the Finance Committee.

ACTION: Merger KPI 44 to be allocated to the F&R Committee.

A member queried 42 T level recruitment delivery – how is recruitment as a group? DPC&Q noted we are slightly under where we want to be, impacted by GCSE results being lower than anticipated. More students accumulatively, but fewer on T level courses. Balance of level 3 has swung to increased level 2 which presents some opportunity BUT gives - an increased challenge in English and Maths (which is traditionally a difficult area). Future recruitment is well planned and marketing the 'T level' brand continues.

The Chair queried the concern around withdrawal at 3% - does this have a monetary impact? and will this number change in year? CEO confirmed there is not an obvious monetary impact per se, but it does provide an early indicator on next year's challenge to recruit. Merger has given us a notable target and as such the step change from our current position to the next will be huge. It was confirmed that recruitment numbers for T levels will not move in year.

The DPC&Q was asked to provide an overview of the plan in place to drive recruitment for T levels. Governors were informed that T levels are targeted as a school lever qualification - there is a market share ambition, to convert schools/careers advisors and parents that a T level is a viable alternative to A' levels. The exposure to business and the extended placements is used as a strong selling point and we have developed good links with local schools and agencies.

A member queried if the DPC&Q felt that KPI 62 Curriculum Strategy was still a '4' ? DPC&Q confirmed yes, we are tracking behind and in future years would really like to expect we would be in a better position by this point of the term.

A member requested an update on KPI 52 Apprenticeships achievement rate since this looks an area of concern. DPC&Q confirmed that the CCS (City College Southampton) and EC results were far behind national average last year, knowing that this is likely to be a focus for Ofsted we are working hard to drive improvement. Onboarding has been much improved, relationships with employers are being progressed, but there are significant distances to travel. It was important for Governors to note, it is likely that apprenticeships will score a 3-requires improvement in the College SAR. We have already completed notable data cleansing and process updates to raise standards. It was noted last year's results can't be changed, but we are keen to ensure we can deliver some impact in year before we have a potential monitoring visit.

A member queried of the few KPI's with '4' scores, how confident staff are, that they have the resources and skills in place to deliver these? DPC&Q confirmed they felt confident in all but one, the team have everything they need to deliver in due course. Less controllable is T level recruitment - we can do all we can but it's an area we have the least control over.

A member asked the same question specifically in relation to HE and appetite from validating partners. EDB&CP confirmed that its early days but of note there are lots of opportunities e.g. higher degree apprenticeships tendering via the OFS (Office for Students) to deliver via the IOT (Institute of Technology) to work more collectively. Moving forward changes to structure with a dedicated HE member of staff to align the HE offer across the group.

In summary, the Committee felt that the curriculum headlines areas to keep under close review included; challenge of T levels, improvements within apprenticeships and the curriculum strategy.

06/23 Item 6 Student Video

The Vice Principal of Fareham College introduced a student led video providing campus wide 'student voice'. It was noted, that in line with the 'touring' of campuses for committee meetings, Vice Principals would be using the opportunity to show case their particular campuses in whichever format they preferred.

All members endorsed the nature of the student feedback and offered suggestions for future inclusion and improvement as follows;

- Consider extending the questioning by asking more open-ended questions
- To ensure that adult learners and apprentices areas included in future
- To provide assurance to the students to be honest and critical where relevant
- Consider developing feedback at point of use e.g. student support services and a more instant post-service method to capture feedback.

Suggested questions included;

- What's the one thing we can do to make College better?
- How does your lecturer structure your lessons?
- How do you know you're making learning progress you want/need to make? how to measure this?
- How has the merger impacted you?

Members were clear on the impact of asking the same question to students of all 3 campuses to give a good sense check of how things are rolling out across the group.

Members discussed how to ensure we capture the voice of those students that don't want to engage by using a wide range of methods. Staff noted the use of polls and surveys via tutorials as methods to engage in more confidential manner.

Members went on to discuss the triangulation of the issues discussed in Committee with the students directly e.g. can we ask about T levels, or HE etc and discussed what methods could be used to engage with students. The Dir SE &T reminded members about the other methods agreed for the student voice and the annual plan of student voice engagement e.g. pizza and polling, summer lawn games etc.

A member reminded the Committee it was important to sense check that student voice isn't 'rose tinted' and to ensure that we really give and encourage the opportunity to provide honest feedback and be critical. Members agreed and noted that genuine feedback would only continue to be given if it was felt it had been listened to. It would be important to ensure there is a feedback loop to students. The Chair of the Corporation and the Chair of C&Q have both offered to attend student boards meeting to provide an opportunity to develop this relationship.

Action: Dir SE &T to invite Chair C&Q and Chair Corporation to student board meetings.

The Committee noted the report.

07/23 Item 7 Curriculum & Quality Autumn Term report

The Deputy Principal C&Q introduced this report circulated in advance, noting it was the first of its kind for the new Committee and comments and views were welcomed for content/size and scale going forward.

Of note, members attention was drawn to attendance noting there is a challenge ahead, with all three Colleges falling below 90% last year and early signs this year will be similar. Members were informed post pandemic across the sector and in schools this is shared issue. We are delivering the ongoing methods of intervention and looking at specifying those 'hot spots' where there's potentially a more collective issue. Members discussed at length the use of home/college agreements and their value in delivering accountability for student attendance. It was noted that the age group and 'culture' of college tends to focus the responsibility on the individual over parental involvement. The CEO informed members there is a point where attendance comes up against the fitness to study policy/disciplinary procedures. Dir SE&T confirmed both policies are designed to support but be consistent about expectations around attendance. All agreed the emphasis would be on delivering a consistent culture and expectation of standards for students across the group.

Members discussed attendance monitoring and if parents can access student attendance details. Staff confirmed that formal registers are captured using various reporting systems across the three colleges. There is a plan within the next year to move to a single 'Promonitor' system with provide parental access.

Members were informed 16-19 achievement is strong across the group with some individualised areas of challenge. Of note, 19+ achievement rates with increased free lifelong learning, will increasingly experience challenges. There are some real pockets of underachievement where we need to develop - there are stories and explanations for these. Moving forward it was noted data will be increasingly broken down into gender/SEND and other criteria.

It was noted that apprenticeship achievement has been incredibly varied, with two sizeable curriculum areas in Eastleigh College (EC) that have made a high proportion of the reason scores are so low. We do have a blueprint of outstanding delivery in FC (Fareham College) – this is where and how we are going to improve and show in any monitoring visits our intention to drive improvement.

Enrolments have been positive and withdrawals low (DPC&Q feels the withdrawal rate of 3% is lower than expected and feels this will settle around 5% - figures are being re-checked) In-year recruitment in some colleges which will help to bolster numbers. Most common reasons for leaving include increased numbers of students leaving getting jobs or moving to other providers.

Members were informed English and Maths has performed well as a group, with a particularly positive outlier in English pass rate at EC. We are utilising those strengths and taking the very best elements of the group to drive improvement elsewhere. As discussed earlier, we are experiencing notably bigger class sizes which has an impact on no of re-sits etc, which is additional workload for an unfunded increase in learners.

It was noted that there are some early challenges with capacity within WEX (work experience), but we have had some good early success stories. A member queried the capacity within the team as well as the issue of student not always taking up their WEX placements.

EDB&CP confirmed it's difficult to deliver 100% of student on placements - this is sector wide, but we do support and encourage as far as possible. It was noted there where a small minority of right course, right student where we could have been more confident that students were ready for placement. Recruitment has been challenging with adverts being re-issued at least twice. We have successfully recruited in EC and CCS with one more post to fill (interviews are tomorrow). We have been trying to share resource across the group, but this is traditionally an area that is leanly staffed. The CEO informed the Committee this was a key area to keep under close review – T level students can't pass without work experience, and the Committee should look to the strategy and policy for WEX and be clear/realistic with the targets we set ourselves.

A member queried the DPC&Q that aside from attendance – what worries you most?

DPC&Q confirmed it was likely retention - making sure we keep students engaged, with incentive post Xmas to return to College and generally just staying ahead of the curve. The CEO added that the Committee would be well sighted to carefully watch the volume/impact of English and Maths as well as delivery of Work Experience.

The Committee noted the Curriculum Quality and Innovation report for the Autumn Term

The Chair requested members consent to extend the meeting by a short period to account for the rich debate and sufficient scrutiny of the first meeting of the Committee. All agreed.

08/23 Item 8 Safeguarding Report

Dir SE&T introduced the safeguarding report which had been shared in advance, outlining the work undertaken to align systems and processes post-merger. Items of note included;

- DSL per campus with an additional team underneath – various sizes/set ups
- Group Behaviour Mgmt and Fitness to Study policies to be rolled out.
- UAAR – risk categorisation, high/medium/low risk student has been consolidated across all 3 campuses, this includes low level concern tracking
- NSPCC DSL training /mental health training for increased number of senior managers
- KCSIE Training - all staff have been made to complete read/knowledge check
- Systems in place to support DSL/staff and teams via external agencies.

In response to a question the Dir SE&T confirmed there were two systems in place across the three Colleges but the intention would be to move to CPOMS (a bespoke safeguarding application for the education sector) in the new year.

The Committee noted the report.

09/22 Item 9 Link Governor feedback

The Chair provided a verbal update noting that a suggested Link Governor protocol had been approved at the Governance Committee last week, with roles focussed on Safeguarding, SEND and Skills. It was noted that specific Governors have been allocated to these roles (EC and SH-C for Safeguarding, PH-B for SEND and NW for Skills) the Committee looks forward to their valuable feedback at future meetings. A suggestion for the inclusion of EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) to the SEND role was suggested and was agreed to be discussed outside of the meeting.

The Committee noted the report.

10/23 Item 10 Higher Education (HE) Overview

The EDB&CP introduced a short report circulated in advance, informing members of the Higher Education provision across the group. Key Priorities were outlined as;

- Re-registration with OFS
- Alignment of resources/staff and curriculum allocation.
- Policy alignments
- Review and gap analysis of the wider HE offer across all 3 Colleges

First HEBOS meeting (the internal committee with responsibility for reviewing the systems and processes in place to review quality/output and student progress within Higher Education) has been held, with plan to monitor and review the key priorities above. It was noted a Governor representative for the internal committee Higher Education Board of Studies (HEBOS) would be welcomed. Collins Ntim volunteered to join the Group. All agreed.

The Committee noted the report.

ACTION: Collins Ntim to be invited to future meetings of HEBOS

11/23 Item 11 Any other business

There were no additional items of business, and it was noted the next meeting of the C&Q Committee was scheduled for 28 February 2024. The meeting closed at 19.45