

**MEETING OF THE CURRICULUM & QUALITY COMMITTEE OF THE CORPORATION
OF THE SOUTH HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE GROUP**

WA215, Watts Building, City College, Southampton
Wednesday 5 June 2024 at 17:30

MINUTES

Present:	Emma Champion Julia Martin Sandra Prail	Sarah Harder-Collins Collins Ntim
In attendance:	Beth Challoner Georgina Flood Pete Joddrell Andrew Kaye Corinna Knox Ashley Martin Anoushka Ottley	Director of Apprenticeships (Deep dive only) Director of Governance Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality Chief Executive Officer Director of Marketing & Communications (until Item 7) Director of Student Experience Exec Director of Business & Civic Partnerships

29/23 Item 1: Deep Dive – APPRENTICESHIPS

The Committee received a ‘deep dive’ session on Apprenticeships by Beth Challoner, Director of Apprenticeships. This presentation will be made available via the Governor’s portal.

Members discussed the reporting of data and were informed of the potential misalignment of results for both achievement and outcome results due to the manner that apprentices have been accounted for (due to DfE request to remove and re-start the EC and CCS students rather than logging them as transfers) BC noted the intention to clarify this with DfE asap.

Members discussed the findings from Governor’s apprenticeship walks noting that the suggestions around marketing and underrepresentation in key STEM areas acknowledging that improvement in these areas was part of a wider agenda in respect of encouraging underrepresented groups. Members went on to discuss the finding that ‘word of mouth’ within apprenticeships seemed very strong with FT students less informed, querying how we include apprenticeship options within the outreach we offer. DPC&Q confirmed that often schools are the barrier for asking for only information or presentation about our FT offer, we do try wherever possible to outline all the possible options for potential students. EDB&CP noted that we have positive numbers for younger students within apprenticeships noting we have 55% of 16-19 compared to the national average of 33% - but agree there is more we can do to improve awareness.

A member sought understanding on the structures in place to support apprenticeship students with work placements and experience especially in technical areas. E.g., engineering and construction. EDB&CP noted we do have dedicated teams to support placements, but much of this allocation is focused on T level statutory placements, more work could be done encouraging and supporting students to source their own apprenticeship placements.

30/23 Item 2: Welcome and Apologies for absence

Members were welcomed to the meeting, there were apologies for absence from EM due to illness.

31/23 Item 3: Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any interests relevant to the agenda. There were no declarations of interest.

32/23 Item 4i: Minutes of previous meetings

The minutes from the previous C&Q meeting held on 28 February 2024 were reviewed for accuracy. Members agreed they were an accurate reflection of the meeting held.

DECISION: Minutes for the meeting held on the 28 February 2024 were approved as an accurate record.

33/23 Item 4ii: Actions/Matters Arising

Members reviewed an 'outcomes' document which outlined the decisions made and actions agreed at the previous meeting. There were no additional comments.

34/23 Item 5: Items of Focus

The Chair introduced this item noting that she would like to direct the meeting to pay particular focus to student voice, the marketing strategy and HE.

35/23 Item 6: Student Voice

The DSE informed members that four students were joining a TEAMS call to participate in providing some feedback.

Students were asked about their progress and enjoyment of their courses so far.

All responded positively, one noted that they weren't clear on the progression routes for them when they are starting their Year 2 (as it has moved to a different campus).

If could change one thing looking back what would have been one change?

One student felt that a student newsletter (which wasn't delivered in time) could have been achieved. Another noted they would welcome consistency in language e.g., assignment or test. An adult student noted the delay in receiving 'kit' for her hairdressing course delayed the start of more practical lessons. Additionally, they noted, due to attending 'out of hours' it was hard to speak to or chase things up via e.g., student services or finances as these members of staff were not available.

The recent student survey suggested students felt SHCG doesn't support you in supporting you to be fit and healthy. Do you agree with this?

A student noted that whilst most Colleges have gyms, there's never enough trainers and they don't seem to be open to 'any' student, just those on fitness or sports related courses. The Adult student noted that similarly, being 'out of hours' meant this was something less easy to access for them. When asked the student confirmed the part time/evening nature of their course meant they didn't feel part of

the wider college and its facilities.

The Governors noted the feedback from students.

36/23 Item 7: Marketing Strategy and Plan

Corinna Knox, Director of Marketing and Communications, introduced this item noting this was the strategy and plan published in March 2024, to help define and set out communications and strategy for SHCG. Members were given a thorough explanation of all six key priorities.

A member noted that priority 6 particularly seemed very staff focused and queried to what extent students been considered in this plan? D M&C confirmed that this document was written mainly from in relation to staff and external stakeholders with student communications falling within the remit of the DSE. All agreed regardless of remit, increasing the student profile within this document would be welcome.

ACTION: DM&C to increase reference to students as stakeholder within the Marketing Strategy

DSE noted that there will be a single virtual learning environment in the fullness of time – this will be an opportunity for development for student communications. The Chair queried if this might include a student newsletter and or the ability to find a similar digital engagement method that could capture analytics etc.

A member queried how Governors could help and or support the branding as ambassadors e.g., Zoom or TEAMS background, social media and linked in profiles. DM&C agreed this would be a welcome approach and a number of these items are being worked on by the team currently. A member queried if brand guidelines might be available to share with Governors? DM&C agreed.

ACTION: Dir Marketing and Comms to share crib sheet/brand guidelines to Governors and ensure they are included in comms relating to TEAMS/Zoom backdrops as well as templates/resources.

The Committee noted the report.

37/23 Item 8: Key Performance Indicators – KPIs

The CEO introduced this item noting this was the first time the Cttee were reviewing a combined merger and strategic plan tracking tool. It was noted four KPI's show 'adequate' progress, with the remaining subject to substantial progress. Areas of focus were noted as being;

- Apprenticeship achievement rates currently sitting at 45% with a target of 50%
- Attendance (adult) is 84.4% and for 16-18 is between 81-87%. Both have a target of 90%, local interventions and a working party group is in place to drive improvement. This is a sector wide issue.

The Cttee endorsed their confidence in the progress of KPI's and welcomed the combined report noting this demonstrated the distance travelled.

The Committee noted the report.

38/23 Item 9: Risk Management

The CEO introduced this report noting this was the update of risks within the remit of the Curriculum & Quality Committee for the Summer Term. Members noted that all inherent and residual risk scores had remained static since the previous term, with only minor changes and additions to control measures. The Cttee agreed it felt comfortable with the monitoring of risks within its remit.

The Committee noted the report.

39/23 Item 10i: Curriculum & Quality termly update

The DPCQ introduced this item noting the following points of note for this year 2023-24;

- Headline group attendance (all provision) 83.8% (down 1.1pp from last update) a sector wide challenge in which whilst we're keen to improve, compares favorably
- 2128 students re-sitting their maths and English GCSE's this academic year across the group (1076 maths and 1052 English) noted disruption and intention to improve resource planning for future years
- Retention 92.9% and achievement 87% (this will likely reduce post summer final assessment), this may also be impacted by attendance figures and its knock-on effect.
- 97 % of Adult Education Budget (AEB) allocation has been met

Looking ahead, Governors were asked to note;

- T level applications encouraging, GCSE results will have an impact
- Curriculum planning is largely completed with Centres of Excellence at Southampton and Eastleigh campuses ready for the new academic year.
- Member's attention was drawn to the ongoing de-funding of BTEC qualifications in favour of a simplified A/T levels/Apprenticeship offer. Members were asked to note tentative steps towards looking at average GCSE scores as alternative entry requirements.

A member requested if future data tables could include an arrow to show direction of travel.

ACTION: Arrows to show direction of travel to be included in future data tables.

A member queried the use of average GCSE scoring as an entry requirement asking if this had been successfully implemented elsewhere? DC&Q confirmed yes, but not in many places. Locally Barton Peveril have this in place for A level entry and USP College group have a qualification 'calculator' on their website that generates a score. Discussions at SHCG very tentative at this stage, looking at some of our current Level 2 cohorts to see how this might impact/work for them theoretically in respect of progression. CEO informed members that DC&Q is working with the Gatsby Foundation within a workstream projects looking at this topic noting that more information may be available in due course. DC&Q cautioned on the potential long lead in time for any changes with the 2025 prospectus signed off this week. Governors agreed this was a potentially exciting development and welcomed being kept abreast of developments.

A member queried the earlier conversation around adult provision, taking on board students view this evening as well as previous 'pizza and polling', what else can we do to make them feel more 'part' of the College? Is this impacting potential retention?

DPC&Q noted historically we have worked very hard previously to provide these resources e.g., library, etc. are open for adults and evening student, but can't justify that additional cost for the return level of

engagement. DPC&Q noted this was more likely based on the induction and the way in which we approach and engage with these types of students and set out the expectations. Governors all agreed that maximizing the positive experience for these students would likely protect and potentially increase a valuable income stream. It was agreed adult and part time students are also likely either employed and or parents and as such have a number of potential stakeholder touch points, we could develop. The Chair endorsed this positive approach to this distinct student population and suggested a learner walk (during adult learner hours) would provide some really valuable evidence. The Chair and S H-C agreed to pick this up and feedback to the Committee.

ACTION: C&Q Chair and SH-C to complete a Learner Walk for adult education working with Director of Adults, Online and Commercial Jo Landon.

The Committee noted the report

40/23 Item 10ii: Group SAR Quality Improvement Plan – QIP

The DPCQ introduced this item asking members to note none of the improvement targets have decreased/lost traction whilst a significant number of items have progressed to either complete or substantial progress since last term. The Cttee were reminded that amber areas are still making progress, just not reaching the levels we feel we should be.

The Committee noted the report.

41/23 Item 10iii: Safeguarding and Student Experience Report

The DSE introduced this item informing members of key matters relating to student safety and wellbeing. The Committee noted that recruitment to the Safeguarding Teams as part of the Wave 2 re-structure was largely completed with just one or two vacancies at administrator level remaining. It was noted that the number of looked after children and care experienced students has increased in the last year, with notable numbers for the forthcoming academic year, staff support (particularly at Eastleigh and Southampton campuses) may need to be re-assessed.

A member queried if there are any untapped resources or funding streams, we can access to help support these increased numbers and thereby increase our resources. DSE noted this was complex and ultimately the solution is higher in the chain in respect of root cause and government lobbying. Members discussed the workload of the Student Wellbeing team as well as the impact of 3rd party agency reluctance to get involved within a climate of rising expectations. All agreed it would be helpful and healthy to remind our staff members and check our intentions as an organization for when we say no, and or accept there is a limit to our level of involvement in order to manage expectations.

The Cttee were informed that similarly, EHCP numbers for next academic year have increased by over 50%, the revised Safeguarding team structure has accounted for this increase but Learning Support Assistants (LSA's) remain difficult to recruit. DSE noted that there are plans to review LSA development roles and increasing the resources, taking a different angle to their roles, so we can grow our own and increase succession planning and retention.

The Committee noted the report.

42/23 Item 10iv: Higher Education (HE) Update

The EDB&CP introduced this item noting it provided an update on HE for the Summer Term. Members were informed the National Student Survey provided poor results, in most areas we didn't meet all the publication thresholds, as a result the sample size was very small e.g., 12 students in FC. All members agreed this would very valuable data and information should we be able to achieve meaningful engagement. The Cttee were informed that the HE quality Improvement Plan (QIP) intends to look at increasing this engagement for future years. There were no additional comments.

The Committee noted the report.

43/23 Item 11: Link Governor Feedback

The Link Governors who provided reports to the Committee in advance (Safeguarding and Higher Education) were asked to supply any additional comments.

The HE Champion provided feedback on a couple of visits taken place across the group noting that HE programmes are delivered well. It was noted that staff retention was potentially an issue across campuses, with a query raised if there are things we could do to support? HE teaching can be quite can 'niche' and it was noted solutions to replace or provide temporary cover were more complex. Additionally, the Champion noted it seemed that the 3 validation bodies are different in their delivery and involvement with student – is there any work being done to consider reviewing this? EDB&CP confirmed that students can have a very different HE experiences, based on the validation partner they are working with - we need to look at this, as well as the VFM for students (e.g., some students have access to facilities, resources at the universities etc., others do not). The CEO agreed we will be looking to streamline the validation, whilst also focusing on expansion more generally. All agreed there were significant opportunities for increased joint working. A member suggested the HE needs a higher profile more generally and the Committee would benefit from increased knowledge in this area. All agreed.

The Safeguarding Governor noted that the last 'in person' single central record (SCR) checks have been scheduled for this term, one is complete with two outstanding, future checks will be online. Another meeting with DSE and the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) had been held last week, it was noted that whilst previous actions related to site security had been actioned and security had been improved, there were still some ongoing concerns about CCTV at Southampton, Cemast and CETC which are being followed up on. Additionally, it was noted the induction (or lack of) for temporary and agency staff has raised some potential issues with a couple of concerns/issues raised in relation to these types of staff. This will be something to be considered at a future safeguarding meeting. Finally, it was noted that the Safeguarding Governor (outgoing) was invited to a criminal panel – a cross group collaborative approach to assess DBS declarations from student applications.

The Corporation Chair thanked link Members for their contribution noting that during the summer period and in conjunctions with ongoing recruitment for new Governors we will be reviewing vacant Link roles, looking at developing a scope or terms for 'Champion' roles and would welcome Governor's involvement in this in the new academic year. All agreed.

The Committee noted the reports.

44/23 Item 12: Governance SAR – review of TOR and ACB

The DG introduced this report informing members this formed part of a wider self-assessment for Governance. The Cttee were reminded of the request to review both their terms of reference and their annual cycle of business as 'fit for purpose' in preparation for the new academic year. A member suggested that the skills link role is referred to within this TOR.

**ACTION: Reference to Skills Link Role to be added to C&Q ToR.
Subject to minor changes, the Committee approved its ToR and ACB for the year ahead 2024-25.**

45/23 Item 13: Any other business

The DG reminded members it was standard practice to re-elect Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs at the first meeting of the new academic year and as such any changes to the current roles should be notified to them asap.

The Chair provided her thanks (on behalf of the Committee) to Governor Emma Champion who was attending her last Committee meeting. It was noted her 'story' of being a student, student governor and then returning as an independent governance had resonated with many and that her contribution across the years has been significant.

The Chair confirmed that there were no additional items of business.
The date of the next meeting is Wednesday 20 November 2024, taking place at Fareham College.

46/23 Item 14: Meeting reflection/impact assessment

Members were invited to participate in a short SLIDO poll to assess engagement and impact.
The meeting ended at 20.15.