

**SPARSHOLT COLLEGE HAMPSHIRE**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**CURRICULUM, EMPLOYERS & MARKET REQUIREMENTS COMMITTEE**  
**held on 16 February 2017**

**<sup>1</sup>PRESENT** Dr S Eden (C); Mr R Fawcett (E); Mr T Jackson (P) (minutes 1-32); Mr S Morgan (E); Mr S Ward (E).

In attendance: Mr A Hoad, Governor  
Mrs J Venables, Governor  
Mrs S Grant, Vice Principal - Corporate  
Mrs F McCarthy, Marketing Consultant (minutes 30 to y)  
Mr M Simmons, Deputy Principal  
Mrs S Willson, Clerk to the Corporation

**ATTENDANCE**

1. The Committee welcomed Mr Hoad and Mrs Venables who were attending the meeting as guests.

**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

2. There were no interests to be declared in matters to be discussed at this meeting.

**MINUTES**

3. **Resolved** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**MATTERS ARISING**

Employer engagement (minute 74-75/16)

4. The Vice Principal – Corporate confirmed that the Customer Relationship Management system had been improved through the purchase of a new data and work to validate the data.
5. Asked about the update of the Enterprise M3 LEP's Strategic Economic Plan, the Vice Principal – Corporate confirmed that the College was seeking a meeting with the LEP to input into the planning process. Members discussed the LEP's priorities and the importance of ensuring the needs of the Andover area were recognised.
6. The Vice Principal – Corporate confirmed that College management were also in regular contact with the Solent LEP, as well as being part of a wider network in the south of Hampshire involved in the low carbon economic agenda.

Curriculum development (minute 78/16)

7. Questioned about the development of the curriculum offer in relation to sustainable energy, the Deputy Principal reported that management were still researching options, including the possibility of using the heat bi-product of the anaerobic digester for

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<sup>1</sup> (C) = Co-opted; (E) = External; (P) = Principal; (S) = Staff; (St) = Student

aquaponics and hydroponics and possible partnerships with the University of Portsmouth.

8. The Principal noted the Resources Committee would be provided with an update on the education centre building and funding.
9. Pressed by the Chairman on the timescale for confirming the curriculum offer in renewables, the Principal stressed the need to get the offer right, with the first courses and apprenticeships introduced in 2018/19. An update would follow with the 3 Year Curriculum Plan to the next meeting of the Committee.

#### Higher Education Strategy (minute 83/16)

10. The Deputy Principal reported that the College had submitted the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) 2017 report on 26 January and that the College would be assessed and awarded a rating of Bronze, Silver and Gold.
11. As previously reported, there was an issue about the lack of fit between land-based graduate employment and graduate employment categories recognised in the metrics. The College management had commissioned its own survey of graduate destinations and was aiming for an 80% return.
12. The TEF had been reported in detail to the Quality & Standards Committee but was also relevant to CEMR as it was a reflection of the performance of the HE curriculum offer, as well as the quality of teaching, and a copy of the report would be circulated to all governors for information.

#### **LEARNER DESTINATIONS**

13. The Committee had received the report of the Deputy Principal on leaver destinations for 2016.
14. At headline level, approximately two thirds of destinations had been tracked and, of these, the majority would be considered positive outcomes. There would be further data analysis and telephone with the aim of capturing those whose destinations remained unknown.
15. The destination data for apprentices was very positive, indicating that 99% stayed in employment.
16. Members sought clarity about the data provided from the DfE's performance tables (for the cohort leaving in 2014) and the Deputy Principal noted that some of the figures did not appear to accurately reflect the College's leavers.
17. Members asked that subsequent reports provide a breakdown of the College's data by area of learning and include an analysis of leavers classified as NEET.
18. The Committee recognised the importance of evidencing leaver destinations in order to show the progression of students into education or meaningful employment and that College management were putting processes in place to try to do this as far as possible. Regular monitoring of students' destinations would also help to show whether destinations were changing over years and to inform pre-course advice, curriculum design and the planning of marketing.

#### **APPRENTICESHIP REFORM**

19. The Committee had received the report of the Vice Principal – Corporate on the intended changes to apprenticeship funding, content and management arrangements.

20. It was noted that the College would be advised in March of an apprenticeship allocation which would be available to the College to service the apprenticeships of businesses with a payroll of less than £3m, assuming participating businesses made a contribution of a minimum of 10% of the cost of delivery. It had completed a full due diligence return to the SFA in November to seek consent to deliver apprenticeships in the future.
21. The previously reported income risks associated with subcontractors (potentially electing to apply for direct contracts with the SFA) had reduced at least in the short-term. College management now anticipated retaining most of its current subcontractors for the first 18 months and all had made a return to the SFA confirming this to be their preferred method of delivery.
22. Of the 41 apprenticeships offered by the College, and 14 frameworks offered by the College's associates, it was anticipated that the College would be able to move to deliver 5 of the new standards within 6 months, with the rest to follow as they become available.
23. The reforms had raised a number of issues which would need to inform financial planning, including how subcontractors responded to the reforms, whether the College could retain its co-investment rate and whether the anticipated 19+ apprenticeship growth and large employer investment would provide sufficient compensator if needed. College management would also want to consider applying to be an apprentice assessment organisation for other land base college apprentices, as another income stream.
24. Members discussed the changes, including the ways in which large employers would be likely to deliver or outsource employee training through new apprenticeships in the future, and the anticipated opportunities and risk for the College.
25. The Committee also discussed the impact of the new apprenticeship standards and the requirements for designing new standards.

## **COMMERCIAL**

26. The Committee had received the report of the Vice Principal – Corporate on the outlook for commercial and other income in relation to learner and employer requirements.
27. The College had seen a steady increase in sources of non-funded income in recent years, reflecting an increase in most areas of delivery. The Vice Principal – Corporate reported the aim of evolving the well-established offer of short full courses, focusing on qualifications valued in the market place and reducing marginal profit activity.
28. Recent developments had included new commercial partnerships, such as the Risual Academy, and the partnership with other Hampshire colleges funded through the European Social Fund (ESF) which provided the opportunity to spend time with local businesses to understand their needs and any skills deficits within their workforce which were serving as an obstacle to growth.
29. Responding to a member's question, the Vice Principal – Corporate explained the operation of the College's online shop and the marketing of short courses on the website.

## **MARKETING**

30. The Committee had received the report of the Deputy Principal on in-year marketing metrics and the College's current marketing priorities and activities.
31. While early indications were that applications for 2017/18 were broadly on track, College management had prioritised the need to ensure good speed of customer response. The

challenge for the Marketing team remained the need to focus on all four core areas of the marketing strategy to guard against improvement in one quadrant coming at the expense of another.

32. The Marketing Consultant gave an overview of the focus of marketing for both Sparsholt College and Andover College.
33. Asked about the approach to HE and the how the University Centre Sparsholt brand would be used, the Marketing Consultant explained the differentiation of the HE offer and the use of evidence of the quality of deliver, academic standards, feedback from students and the College’s location to promote HE authentically. This was informed by focus groups held with students about their decision-making in selecting to study at the College.
34. The Marketing Consultant confirmed that there was a strategic objective to raise the profile of the College in the national media through being responsive and making available experts from the College. Marketing messages would also focus on examples of future employment.
35. The Committee welcomed the continued delivery of the marketing strategy and commended the Marketing team for being awarded number one position of UK Colleges at the Edurank Awards 2017 for its profile on Instagram and social media.

#### **HEALTHCHECK REPORT**

36. The Committee noted the most recent Healthcheck report (2017/01).
37. The meeting ended at 12.15 pm.