

SPARSHOLT COLLEGE HAMPSHIRE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CURRICULUM, EMPLOYERS & MARKET REQUIREMENTS COMMITTEE
held on 26 May 2016

¹PRESENT Dr S Eden (C) (minutes 31-62); Mr R Fawcett (E) (minutes 31-62);
Mr T Jackson (P); Mr S Morgan (E); Mr S Ward (E).

In attendance: Mrs S Grant, Vice Principal - Corporate
Mr M Simmons, Deputy Principal
Mrs S Willson, Clerk to the Corporation

APOLOGIES

31. Apologies were received from Miss E Freshwater-Blizzard.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

MINUTES

33. **Resolved** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

Marketing – International Strategy (ref minute 28/16)

34. The Deputy Principal provided an update on marketing initiatives in Sweden and Norway to attract HE applicants which had resulted in a number of prospective students visiting the College. A progress report on the International Strategy would follow to the Resources Committee.

Employer Engagement (ref minute 25/16)

35. The Vice Principal – Corporate reported that the EM3 LEP was supportive of the need for research into the land-based labour market to better understand student destinations data but that there was not yet funding in place.

HEALTHCHECK REPORT

36. The Committee discussed matters in the Healthcheck report 2016/04 not covered on the agenda, including an update on HE enrolments in relation to the growth target for 2015/16 and applications for 2016/17. It was noted that the national demographic dip in 16 years olds would be likely to have a knock-on effect on HE numbers in the following years.

37. **Resolved** – that College management consider adding comparisons with sector trend information into future Healthcheck reports to provide more context to the College's performance data.

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

CURRICULUM PLAN

38. The Committee had received the report of the Deputy Principal on the Curriculum Plan for 2016/17 to 2018/19 which set out the current curriculum offer map and an overview of the direction of the curriculum over three years.
39. The strategy for the curriculum was to maintain a strong land-based FE and HE offer at Sparsholt and a broad Tertiary offer at Andover, to meet the needs of local learners. Within this strategy, the Committee discussed how the College could differentiate and/or package its offer.
40. College management regularly reviewed areas of decline and whether these could be regenerated, balancing resourcing and income constraints as well as supporting areas of growth. Recruitment trends, financial viability, employer needs and contribution analysis were all taken into account at regular SLT curriculum meetings. Management also considered the wider education offer, including apprenticeships.
41. The Committee recognised the challenging financial and competitive education environment and discussed the extent to which areas of decline were within the control of the College, noting that in some cases enrolments were affected by both a reducing market and increased competition. It was suggested that a future meeting of CEMR might look specifically at some of the areas of risk over the next three to five years.
42. Within the strategy, it was also noted that the overall offer would be complemented by the addition of some new lines of learning, such as Digital Futures at Andover and Plant & Sustainable Energy at Sparsholt, as and when it became appropriate to introduce these.
43. **Resolved** – that the scope and ambition of the Curriculum Plan for 2016/17 to 2018/19 be endorsed and reported to the Board of Governors as a fit-for-purpose working document to deliver the College’s strategic ambitions.

STUDENT DESTINATIONS

44. The Committee had received the report of the Deputy Principal and Vice Principal – Curriculum providing an update on the analysis of leaver destinations.
45. Destination measures provided comparable information on the success of colleges in helping their young people take qualification that offered them the best opportunities to continue in education, employment or training.
46. Ofsted looked at how effectively this data was monitored and used to improve provision and members sought clarification on how and what judgements College management made as a result of collecting the destinations data. The Deputy Principal explained that the data provided evidence to confirm whether learners had stayed in education as long as was appropriate for their particular skills needs and had progressed to higher levels of study, apprenticeships or employment. National data for 2013/14 would shortly be released by Government which would provide some external context.
47. The Committee agreed that good progress had been made in establishing a destinations baseline for learners completing in June 2015 and welcomed the plans for ensuring that future data collection continued to be increasingly reflective of the long-term destinations of leavers. A report of destinations for learners completing in June 2016 would follow to CEMR in Spring 2017.

APPRENTICESHIPS

48. The Committee had received an update report of the Vice Principal – Corporate and Apprenticeships Manager on changes to apprenticeships funding, content and management arrangements, with a particular focus on how the levy would operate for businesses with an annual payroll of over £3 million and how the College could apply the apprenticeship levy to deliver training to its own apprenticeships.
49. Affordability for SMEs and apprenticeship opportunities for 16-18 year olds were the primary concerns for the College because of the new requirement for all employers to contribute to the costs of the apprenticeships. Affordability could be a particular risk for very small land based businesses.
50. There were also challenges in continuing to ensure strong foundation skills for wider employability and promote retention if assessment were being carried out outside with the employer. The Principal reported that the National Land Based College would seek to influence apprenticeship standards on behalf of the wider land based market.
51. Responding to a question about Level 4 and 5 apprenticeships, the Vice Principal – Corporate explained that the viability of this offer depended on the type and size of employers with whom the College worked.
52. Work had begun to target employers who were liable to the apprenticeship levy, initially locally and then expanding to a wider geographical area. The College was looking to work with other M3 FE colleges to market apprenticeships, as well as seeking LEP funding and working with Chamber of Commerce members.
53. The Committee noted that the Board had been briefed on the risks at the recent Governors' Seminar. More information about funding and administration was expected from the Government in June in relation to employers with an annual payroll under £3 million.

STRATEGIC PLAN

54. The Committee had received the draft objectives and annual milestones under Priorities 1 and 4 in the College's Strategic Plan 2016-19 as these were most relevant to the Committee's terms of reference.
55. **Resolved** – that the objectives and annual milestones under Priorities 1 and 4 of the College's Strategic Plan be recommended to the Board of Governors.

PERFORMANCE OF THE COMMITTEE IN 2015/16

56. The Committee had received the report of the Clerk which posed a series of questions to prompt members in discussing the Committee's performance over its first year of operation in 2015/16 and to review the Committee's terms of reference.
57. Members agreed that there was now greater clarity about the purpose of the Committee and the second half of the year has seen welcome developments in the content of reports from College management. The new reporting was enabling members to develop a more thorough understanding of the areas covered by the Committee's term of reference and to enhance the focus on these matters by the Board of Governors.
58. Members discussed the ways in which the Committee received information about the needs of business and the perception of the College by employers and agreed this was work in progress.

59. There were no matters identified which needed to be brought forward to the Board for further debate

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN FOR 2016/17

60. **Resolved** – that Mr Morgan be reappointed as Chairman of the Committee for the academic year 2016/17.

EMPLOYMENT ENGAGEMENT

61. The Committee had received the proposed Employer Engagement Strategy, devised by the Vice Principal – Corporate to provide the rationale behind the various strands of College employer engagement, explain the context in which the College operates and give an overview of College activity.
62. The Committee welcomed the development of the Strategy and agreed that, due to the limited time for discussion available, the Strategy be represented at its next meeting.

FUNDING

63. The Committee had received the report of the Vice Principal – Corporate and Director of Funding and Information providing an overview of forthcoming changes to Skills Funding Agency funding rules. A report would also follow to the Resources Committee.
64. The College's employer engagement offer for adult learners and services to business would change considerably as a result in the academic year 2016/17 and even further again in 2017/18. There was an incentive for the College to deliver the majority of workforce development activity under the apprenticeship brand and to get employers to think about apprenticeships as a general workforce development tool. There are were a number of other challenges which required further planning and changes to how the offer is differentiated to adults and employers.
65. The Chair of the Committee agreed that the changes were recognised as a significant risk, as well as an opportunity, and that the Board of Governors should be kept informed of developments.

MARKETING

66. The Committee had received the report of the Marketing Manager and College Marketing Consultant providing an update on marketing activities and key marketing metrics.
67. Members present discussed whether the detail provided in the appendices was useful to report to the Committee and agreed that, when the review of the strategic marketing plan was reported to the Committee in the Autumn, consideration also be given to what form of regular reporting was necessary in order for the Committee to maintain an overview of the marketing strategy, particularly in relation to the perceptions of the College from business and employers.
68. The meeting ended at 12.10 pm.