

Meeting/Committee	Quality & Standards Committee
Date of meeting	12 th May 2021

1 Declarations of Interest and Eligibility

The Chair reminded everyone present to declare any interests that they may have on matters to be discussed. no specific declarations were made and standing declarations were noted.

2 Welcome, introduction and apologies for absence

Attendees:

Jennifer Worsdale	Chair
Veronica Bruce-McCoy	
Mirella Barnes	
Katie Curtis	
Jason Austin	
Heather Barnett	

In attendance:

Monika Rodzos	Governor
Janet Pryke	Governor
Tracey Mace-Akroyd	Deputy Principal/CEO
Maxine Bagshaw	Interim Director of Governance
Kate Noble	Executive Director of Finance
Claire Godfrey	Assistant Principal
Cheryl Martin	Assistant Principal
Andrew Birch	Head of Higher Education
Rebecca Blackburn	Assistant Principal: Apprenticeships, High Level Skills & Innovation
Sally Steadman	Director of Learner Recruitment & Marketing
Rebecca Ahmed	English and Maths Curriculum Innovation Manager

Apologies for absence

Catherine Burn (Governor), Angela Bates (Assistant Principal) and Lindsay Littlewood (Staff Governor)

3 Minutes of the Q&S Committee meeting held on 10th March 2021

The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions.

Resolved: The minutes of the meeting held 10th March 2021 were a true and accurate record.

There were no matters arising.

4 Actions Progress Report

The interim Director of Governance presented the updated tracking document and particularly highlighted:

- Line 1 – complaints report would be presented as an update at the next meeting
- Line 3 - interim Director of Governance to check that all Governors have received a copy of the KCSIE document
- Line 7 – report on leavers destinations has been deferred to the next meeting

All other matters highlighted are either complete or on the agenda for discussion.

5 HE Report

The Head of Higher Education drew the committees attention to his detailed written report and the key matters that he drew out at the meeting included:

- HE provision is now following DfE guidance in relation to covid measures,
- College has allowed a large number of students to return to site, specifically those who need to undertake practicals and also third year students. All are following the required safety measures.
- College has been able to respond really well to digital poverty with £35k paid out of the hardship fund, together with provision of devices.
- College has been able to effectively offer online learning and will, going forward, continue with a blended approach.
- Exam season is due to start and this is now a focus.
- There is quite a complex process in place for determining outcomes i.e. the model in relation to this. All students are aware of the method of calculation.
- There are positive retention rates, both cumulatively and in year.
- Minority group data shows:
 - a) Disability retention is really strong and is higher than the whole population,
 - b) Polar quintile 1 is strong,
 - c) BME and polar quintile 2 are below expectations and the college is supporting to improve.
- Access and Participation Plan has been completed and the college is awaiting approval. This will allow the college to charge a higher rate of fees.

RESOLVE: to note the content of the report provided.

(Andrew Birch left the meeting at 5.05pm)

6 SAR and WBL Audit Reports

The Executive Director of Finance confirmed that the college has commissioned some internal audit reports during the year which are particularly relevant for this committee. The detail of the reports were considered and a summary provided.

- 1) SAR – it was confirmed that there were no issues identified at audit and it was found that there is a robust framework in place.

- 2) Work based learning – particular focus of the audit was the apprenticeship enrolment process. Key points noted were:
- This is an area where the college was aware there were some issues which is why the audit was requested.
 - Testing found that there were some teething issues in relation to enrolment, although fundamentally the processes in place work.
 - College has now done some internal work, particularly in relation to provision and recording of off the job hours and also ensuring all contracts are signed.

College is planning for +22% of off the job training which gives capacity and will ensure that the regulatory requirement of 20% is achieved. She confirmed that new processes have been rolled out and are working well and that now it is a matter of embedding the systems and processes and ensuring compliance.

RESOLVED: to note the content of the reports provided.

7 JTL Contract

The Executive Director of Finance introduced this item and presented the written report. She indicated that, initially the college had been looking to subcontract with JTL to ensure that an identified group of 100+ learners were able to complete the work required in relation to assessments. The response from JTL was that they do not have current capacity and a different approach has been suggested. Committee were advised that the company has had a reorganisation and they have indicated that they have to focus on day release before they are able to support the colleges backlog. It appears that Rotherham College and North Notts College independently have a contract in place, this is not something that the group was aware of until recent discussions. College is taking legal advice on the heads of terms and it appears to be an umbrella agreement which is not actually active.

Committee were advised that the initial proposal made to JTL was in relation to electrical apprentices where there are circa 120 learners who require an assessment. JTL have indicated that they are ringfencing their own activity and their focus at the minute is their own apprentices.

Phase 2 of the initial discussions with JTL included RNN providing day release theory and some new apprenticeship starts being enrolled with JTL rather than the college.

Proposal currently on the table is that:

- 30 apprenticeship starts with JTL from September 2021,
- RNN to offer day release in relation to theory, and then
- They will honour the original agreement regarding the college backlog of assessments with this being ringfenced to the North Notts campus.

She explained that, in effect, the proposal is to enter in to phase 2 of the initial discussions first and explained that this is needed so that the college can then take advantage of their support to complete the required assessments once there is capacity.

Committee considered the table which summarises the financial implications and it was explained that, in terms of income, this is levy money which comes to the college and that the JTL costs identified are for 136 apprentices.

A question from one member of the committee was in terms of ringfencing the contract to the North Notts campus and the impact that this will have on students. Committee were advised that the college has looked at student numbers and, particularly consideration of new starts, and that the reality is that the college does not have the staff or facilities needed at the Rotherham campus. College is being realistic and it is confident that it can offer provision at North Notts now. Starts will be a small base.

In relation to the 30 apprentices proposed to be enrolled with JTL it was explained that they will be new starts and that these learners will just come to college on day release. It is believed that this will allow the college to build its relationships back and ensure the right level of quality provision.

When considering the proposal, a question was exactly when 'year 1' is? It was explained that provision is from now and that income is starting to come through however no costs have yet been incurred. There will be no extra costs this year, however these will be built in to the budget for 2021/22.

In discussion the committee acknowledged that the proposal will help to progress those learners who are out of funding in any event. Committee were satisfied that there is a clear rationale in place for subcontracting with the focus being on the quality of experience for the learner and the employer and, on this basis, they were happy to recommend that the Board approve the contract as presented.

Resolved: to recommend that the Board approve the proposal that the college enter in to a contract with JTL as presented and summarised.

(Kate Noble left the meeting at 5.20pm)

8 Curriculum planning

The Assistant Principal introduced this item and key matters brought to the committees attention were:

- The curriculum planning process is now coming to an end,
- Staff are currently completing second phase intent meetings to review what was set out and agreed at phase one,
- College is looking to plan some ESFA growth next year of circa +250 and is currently reviewing achievability in relation to this,
- AEB growth has been reviewed and the feeling is that the college has not been ambitious enough and therefore staff have been asked to look how to deliver more,
- Aim is to close intent meetings this week and then pass over to the finance team who will build the budget,
- Staff are now starting to consider timetabling,
- There is still more work to do in relation to AEB growth and this is a focus.

One member of the committee asked how flexible the college will be in the future and whether it will be able to respond to new initiatives. Committee were given assurance that senior staff are pushing the curriculum managers to think 'outside the box' and be flexible, an example given was the high number of adults on the skills guarantee. College is also looking at different delivery models e.g. weekends, evenings, blocks etc however this does come with its challenges in terms of workshop availability, staff contracts, staff skills etc. College is also looking at additional bids and an example given was in relation to digital skills.

A challenge from the committee was that the colleges 16-18 target this year was missed by several hundred and therefore they questioned how confident the college can be in terms of growth. Committee were advised that the Executive Director Finance has challenged quite hard in relation to this and staff will review again against the level of acceptances, all the while being mindful of the impact of lagged funding. It was explained that it was the progression numbers that were lower than anticipated last year and that the college is this year taking a cautious approach in relation to this. Committee were given assurance that the curriculum plan is created from the bottom up and therefore there is an opportunity to listen to staff involved in delivery, whilst all the while being realistic.

Committee cross referenced with a report later on the agenda in relation to learner recruitment for 21/22 and it was noted that applications are much improved which does give optimism for growth.

Resolved: to note the content of the report provided.

9 Value Added – Progress Measures

The Assistant Principal introduced her detailed report and key matters brought to the committees attention were:

- There is no published data for this year or prior year,
- College will be able to report on MIDES later in the year,
- The report presented today focuses on the colleges own internal data.
- College data is for all learners and not just the smaller cohorts reported nationally.
- Progression boards have identified some areas of risk for the college, including 16-18 retention. It was explained that there are students who are choosing not to return and also a high number going in to employment. Because of this, it is believed that predicted achievement will be below target and also below national rates.
- Explanation was given on how RNN measures progress and it was confirmed that this is monitored through the progress boards.
- Current prediction is that 56% will hit their targets. This is a decline of 18% on the prior year. College is also expecting higher grades to be lower.
- Progress in relation to knowledge, skills and behaviour is better than the achievement position. This is measured three times in the year and is currently showing that 76% are making good progress against the wider skills.

In general discussion committee all agreed that this was really good to hear as there had been a concern that the lack of contact/site activity may have negatively impacted upon the development of wider skills.

Committee were advised that the college is continuing to make withdrawals as many students are moving in to employment. Assurance was given that the college is accurately capturing this, as it clearly demonstrates that provision is effective and equipping them well to move in to the world of work.

(Sally Steadman joined the meeting at 5.35pm)

Committee were advised that the college has seen some huge changes this year and that staff are doing all that they can, and can't do more, to provide support to students. College will know in the next couple of weeks where the yearend position on achievements is likely to be. Given that the next meeting is not scheduled until the 13th June 2021 it was agreed that an update on this would be shared in between meetings. (ACTION: CG, May 2021)

A question and challenge from the committee was whether or not staff have analysed what has worked well so that this can be replicated. Committee was given assurance that analysis has been undertaken and that staff have a very collaborative approach e.g. utilisation of catch up hubs. It was explained that the level of engagement during lockdown was not as high as the college would have hoped for, for some learners, and that there has had to be a decision taken whether to take them off programme and withdraw or offer intensive support on the return to site. College is looking at campus differences to see if some staff can be used for cross college initiatives. College is also looking at performance disparities to better understand why and is focusing on this.

Committee were given assurance that staff are addressing student needs on a case by case basis and that this can mean week by week reviews. CEO made reference to the recent AOC survey on lost learning and this shows that, for 16-18 year olds 72% are behind expectations of between 1 and 4 months. Position for adults is slightly lower at 69%. AOC is nationally looking at catch up options for next year.

In relation to Maths and English committee were advised that staff are working very closely with functional skills students. GCSE students are to be provided with teacher assessed grades however there have been no changes/allowances made for functional skills and therefore these students need extra support. Staff expressed the view that, because of this, the FE sector is being negatively impacted, particularly when compared to schools.

Resolved: to note the content of the report provided.

10 College Performance 2020/21

Assistant Principal introduced this item and explained that trace closes tomorrow and will give the college a full picture in relation to retention and achievement. It was agreed that an update would be circulated to the committee in the week commencing 24th May 2021. (ACTION: CG, May 2021)

There were a number of key summary points provided:

- Position in relation to adults is strong on short term programmes, however they are the same as 16-18 when infilling.
- College is seeing a very small improvement in relation to attendance, this is in some areas more than others.
- Punctuality is strong.
- Functional skills is a risk and a focus. Predicted position is 64% which is 6% below last year. These learners in particular have been really impacted by covid. All agreed that the functional skills predictions were quite concerning. Assurance was given that the college does have a focus on functional skills and that the position is improving but is still not good enough.

One member of the committee asked whether the college is seeing any support from awarding organisations in relation to the functional skills position. Staff advised that they have not found City & Guilds helpful and in fact have started to research other options for next year and are looking at what others offer. A challenge from the committee was to put pressure on City & Guilds to ensure that learners get what they need. It was suggested to use the FE network to see which AO is providing good support. It was explained that the sector generally doesn't feel supported by City & Guilds in relation to centre assessed and teacher assessed grades and that curriculum. Staff are liaising with the exams team on this to try and look at other options.

Committee asked whether college can extend the year to support functional skills learners. It was confirmed that the college does continue to support right up until the last week of the year i.e. right the way up until the end of August. It was confirmed that catch up coaches are also supporting in this area. AOC are looking at a range of options in relation to the catch up of lost learning in September and it could be possible to allow some learners to be completed in the early part of next academic year. This may largely have a Maths and English focus but may cover some vocational areas as well.

Resolved: to note the content of the update provided.

11 Update on Apprenticeships

The Assistant Principal: Apprenticeships, High Level Skills & Innovation presented this report and confirmed that a business review has been completed which gave an opportunity for a thorough look at what the college does now and what it wants to do next. Key summary points provided included:

- There has been a lot of work done to look at the focus of activity,
- There was a significant negative impact as a result of covid and lockdown in 2021, however the college is now seeing activity resume and there are some positives.
- College is very much focused on the quality of education.
- Priorities are functional skills exams and end point assessments. In relation to the latter she indicated that nationally EPAs are under pressure.
- Financially provision will be at breakeven.
- College would like to develop greater scrutiny of apprenticeship activity and the proposal is to develop a subgroup, including governors, which would allow for increased scrutiny, support and strategic discussions. The interim Director of Governance shared an example of subgroup activity at another college and agreed to provide sample terms of reference used to see if these can be adapted.

(Janet Pryke left the meeting at 6pm)

Committee, in considering the data, made reference to the subcontractor retention figure and challenged the percentage given as they did not feel that it was correct. In addition, the construction achievement figure provided is 7.14% and they questioned whether this was correct. Staff advised that it was correct and that it was 'at a point in time'. It was agreed that year on year forecasts would be provided in future reports. **(ACTION RB, 2021/22)** Committee were advised that the percentages change on a daily and weekly basis.

In considering the data, committee indicated that what they would like to know for the next report is:

- What apprenticeship provision does the college currently offer/provide (i.e. the Standards and Frameworks, if any)
- Where the college currently is against plan, and
- Position in relation to timely and out of funded learners.

Staff advised that the timely position will certainly impact upon college data this year.

One member of the committee asked who takes responsibility for these learners i.e. is it the departments and/or the apprenticeship team. A specific question was whether or not the Head of Construction is responsible and accountable for apprenticeship performance. Committee were advised that this is not currently the case but that Heads of department have to work in partnership with other leads.

In terms of the overall position, prediction is between 67%-68% which, given the challenges this year, feels like a reasonable achievement and would be +1% on last year. MLP is expected to be 29% and should be compared with 31% in the prior year and is within the 40% tolerance. Committee were advised that timely is where the college needs to focus as this is still an issue. Staff expressed the view that the college needs to improve the quality of education and will then be able to improve timely. Committee were advised that, whilst not based upon best case predictions, it will still be an improvement on the prior year.

One member of the committee asked whether it is possible to extend the learning period for apprentices. Deputy CEO confirmed that this is possible when the college instigates a break in learning but that there are no other flexibilities. Committee were advised that some learners have had significant work demands because of the pandemic and they have therefore not been able to fulfil the requirements of the apprenticeship and, in these circumstances, it is appropriate to record a break in learning.

Committee discussed the proposal to establish a subgroup and discussed the model used in another college in terms of governor representation, staff to be invited and frequency of meetings. It was agreed that the subgroup, if established, would meet virtually and governors present at the meeting (Mirella Barnes, Heather Barnett, Veronica Bruce-McKoy and Jenny Worsdale indicated that they would be happy to consider joining, subject to receiving more details). Interim Director of Governance confirmed that she would liaise with staff to develop more concrete proposals which would then be circulated to the wider board for governor volunteers.

Resolved: to

- a) Note the content of the report provided, &**
- b) Develop internal proposals further in relation to the establishment of an Apprenticeship Delivery Task and Finish Group.**

12 Learner Recruitment 2021/22

The Director of Marketing and Learner Recruitment introduced her written report and key matters she brought to the committees attention were:

- There is lots of apprenticeship marketing activity taking place and lots more planned with many events,
- College is now working with school cohorts a lot more. Some schools are asking for taster events to fill the gap between now and over the summer.
- College is ramping up activity on a face to face basis but is taking a cautious approach to interviews.
- College is well underway in terms of planning for enrolment and is specifically looking at ways to overcome any concerns regarding attendance on site in September.
- College is really looking at progressing learners but is taking a prudent approach to numbers.
- College has a new system in place called Applicant Manager. It has some built in contact with learners and allows them to book their own sessions and will really help to keep them engaged.
- Schools have an obligation this year to keep students engaged which means that schools are far more receptive now than has been the case in other years.

Resolved: to note the content of the update provided.

13 Update on QIP

The Assistant Principal introduced the detailed document and key points brought to the committees attention were:

- There are 10 priorities within the QIP. One has moved from amber to green and the others have remained the same.
- Most significant risk for the college is construction and this is a red risk in all campus SARs. Retention has dropped and this area accounts for the vast majority of staff who are receiving intervention/support.
- Adult AEB has moved from amber to green and this now allows the college to look to maximise AEB funding.
- College has moved at pace to recruit the Director of Adult Skills, committee were reminded that this is a FEC recommendation.
- College identified that construction provision requires speedy staff intervention and an interim curriculum leader post is out for advert. This will be an additional resource which will get the learners through, with a focus on work based learning and quality of education. This post will not be a manager but will be someone who operates as a coordinator.

Resolved: to note the content of the update provided.

14 Safeguarding, Prevent and E&D

In the absence of Angela Bates the Deputy CEO presented the written report and offered to take questions. Key matters noted were:

- All processes and procedures are in place with a high degree of confidence regarding their effectiveness,
- College fully compliant in relation to prevent,
- College has reviewed its position in response to the increased focus by Ofsted and DFE on sexual assault and harassment. College has provided additional training to staff and students but it is not believed that there is a need to change internal systems. Ofsted's approach to

this is not known with any certainty i.e. how they may test this at inspection.

- College has had two sexual allegations regarding time outside of college and all steps required have been taken.

Committee asked for an update in relation to vulnerable learners. Committee were advised that retention is good but attendance is not at target, that said it is in line with other colleges in the sector. Main aim now is to ensure they attend and get them through to the end of the year.

Deputy CEO provided an update on the '10 minute take over activities' and confirmed that training sessions have been provided to really clarify the aim of this initiative and the process. College is very confident that learners do know how to keep themselves safe. There is now much improved clarity regarding the process, types of questions to ask and how to capture the feedback to then be able to use it as evidence.

One member of the committee asked whether resources are readily available, for example in relation to British values. It was confirmed that there is an abundance of resources including online, in college, personal tutors, student portal, local authority resources etc. It was explained that the priority is to remain up to date with the risks in the local area.

Resolved: to note the content of the update provided.

15 Business Review Report Summary (including deep dives)

Deputy CEO introduced this item and key points brought to the committees attention were:

- This report is an overview summary of the deep dives undertaken and the key points arising from the business reviews.
- All learners have experienced online learning and there continues to be a blended approach.
- College has ensured that learners have all continued in learning. Learner feedback is that it was a challenge at first but that it did get easier
- Learners are very respectful on their return to site and there have only been a very small number at Rotherham campus who have had to be spoken to in relation to expectations.
- The deep dives mirror what was found in the business reviews, including:
 - a) Position in relation to construction and engineering,
 - b) Position in relation to classroom activity and apprenticeship provision,
 - c) Staffing issues and staffing skills,
 - d) Low cultural expectations and performance – committee were given assurance that the college has been explicit in terms of culture expectations and that there will be consequences if staff do not engage.
- The deep dive and business review processes really show that the college knows where the risk areas are.

Committee all agreed that they had found this a really useful report and particularly the format, particularly that it gives a clear overview.

Resolved: to note the content of the report provided.

16 Risks

The Deputy CEO presented her report and confirmed that the risks have not significantly changed and include:

- The quality of education and the alignment of the curriculum to the skills that learners need to be successful remains a concern in curriculum areas such as construction, engineering and sectors hit hard by the pandemic (hair & beauty, hospitality, sport and creative arts). Some areas are bouncing back but others are still facing challenges. Committee were given assurance that staff are working very quickly to respond to anything that is identified at this late stage. There are some cultural issues which are being tackled.
- It is crucial that learners remain in learning and receive good support and vocational adjustments such as catch up classes, small group tuition and additional practical sessions so that they achieve their qualifications and personal goals.
- The group must have a clear and accurate view of the progress individuals have made and accurate predicted achievement outcomes including English and Mathematics. The risk is now the amount of time left in the academic year and therefore the college needs to be in a position to support each learner in the right way.
- Ofsted's PMV inspection actions remain a priority and the college is committed to demonstrate improvements in these areas

Committee were advised that the college is taking a very open and honest approach to the known risks and assurance was given that the risk areas are not preventing anyone from pushing on. At inspection, the college will need to demonstrate learners starting points, where learners have got to at that point in time with the support of the college and also the quality of education. Key aspects will be:

- a) Starting points,
- b) Where they are at the point of inspection when compared to starting points, and
- c) What the college has done to enable the progress made.

In considering the report provided committee all agreed that they very much appreciated a 'no surprises' approach.

One member of the committee asked how staff are responding and particularly how the college measures motivation. Deputy CEO confirmed that:

- Staff engagement and motivation does remain a focus,
- There are many opportunities to speak to staff and this does happen all the time,
- College is taking a very honest and open approach,
- All staff are stepping up and could not do more ,
- Staff are very committed to doing the best that they can for students.

The Principal confirmed that he had met with all college staff in small groups to discuss the vision and values and that their overwhelming response was positive. Principal also met with all new starters and again their view of the college is very positive. Committee were advised that all staff are working hard to ensure that they are innovative and supporting learners to achieve their very best.

Committee indicated that, at a point in time, they would find it helpful to see the colleges reward and recognition strategy and policy.

Resolved: to note the content of the update provided.

17 AOB

There were no matters of additional business.

18 Date and time of next meeting

This was confirmed as Wednesday 30th June 2021 at 5pm.

The meeting closed at 6.50pm

Signed _____ Chair

Date _____