

<b>Meeting/Committee</b>	<b>Quality &amp; Standards Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 5pm (via Google Meet)

## 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, introductions and apologies for absence

### Attendees:

Jennifer Worsdale	Chair
Heather Barnett	
Katie Curtis	
Katie Asgari	
Veronica McCoy	
Carol Stanfield	
Shirley Collier	
Jason Austin	

### In attendance:

Tracey Mace-Akroyd	Deputy Principal/CEO
Maxine Bagshaw	Director of Governance
Cheryl Martin	Assistant Principal
Claire Godfrey	Assistant Principal
Dan Stanbra	Director Adult Education & Contracts
Andrew Birch	Head of Higher Education
Laura Reid	Head of Student Services – Safeguarding & Student Support
Keith Sanderson	Interim Campus Manager at North Notts campus
Dave Cosgrove	Head of Business Intelligence and Performance

### Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Donna Clifford and Rebecca Blackburn.

## 3 Minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021

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

AGREED: To approve the minutes of the meeting held 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

There were no matters arising.

#### **4 Actions Progress Report**

Committee were happy to note the content of the update provided. In relation to line 5, the Chair indicated that what she had actually requested was a comparison of pass rates with the actual qualification boards rather than other colleges or this colleges prior year position. She indicated that there may not be a significant difference, even though the RNN pass rate is low, as generally she believes that the sector pass rates are low too.

#### **5 Higher Education (Self-Evaluation Document) 2020/21**

The Head of Higher Education introduced the full document and the cover report and key matters highlighted were:

- This is a review of the prior academic year
- Summary includes key strengths and areas for development
- Action plan is broken down in to key sections

One committee member made an observation in relation to the fact that BAME student achievements are lower when compared to peers, and they asked whether this was connected with language barriers or is this just one factor amongst a mix of influences. It was explained that there are a number of BAME parameters and that it is not always the fact that English is a second language is the issues. Anecdotal staff feedback has made a link with the use of grammar etc. College does collect country of origin data, however this is not necessarily linked. In relation to the point made in the report he explained that this was feedback from a HE coach as an observation. A challenge from the committee was that if the issue is linguistic ability rather than ethnicity then this needs to be tracked and an assessment made in terms of how quickly the college can provide English support, as this is within the role and remit of every education provider. A challenge from the committee was that this should be unpicked and investigated further. Staff suggested that this could be done as part of or a top up to ESOL, but that it would require student buy in. A suggestion made was that this perceived challenge and disparity is an issue of improving study skills support. Committee requested that there be some further analysis undertaken to assess whether there is a hidden issue about English as a second language and, if so, how quickly this can be addressed by increasing English language support (Head of Higher Education, March 2022).

In relation to BAME students, committee were given some examples of the support in place, which includes:

- A coach working closely with BAME and polar quintile two students,
- Additional study skill sessions,
- Targeted interventions,
- One to one work with students,
- Proof reading,
- Academic writing skills,
- Library information.

Committee were reminded that the retention rate is 98% which is a positive position. Staff confirmed that they would further explore English support qualifications, however it was noted that each student has to have a GCSE English qualification as an entry criteria. A challenge from the committee was in terms of what can be done that is 'special' to get them up to a level playing field. Staff advised that ESOL is one of the core strengths of the adult offer and it was felt that the team, lead by the Director of Adult Education and Contracts, could work to support the BAME gap through the AEB offer.

One committee member noted the intention to introduce short courses and asked for more detail regarding how students will be recruited and this initiative marketed. Head of Higher Education indicated that the group is now looking at a March 2022 start and is working with the business development team on this and particularly employer links. Aim is to recruit through employers to support the upskilling of the workforce e.g. robotics, digital skills etc. However he expressed the view that recruitment is and will be a challenge.

One member of the committee asked how aggressive the group is in terms of using the TEF gold accreditation to recruit. Committee felt that, as this recognises the support provided and the additionality at RNN, it should be exploited more. Head of Higher Education indicated that OfS are limiting how this can be used this academic year in new marketing and promotion, as the TEF awarding process is being reviewed. That said, it is something that is discussed with students. Alongside this, the college is using the NSS satisfaction data as this is really positive when compared to others.

A number of further questions were raised in relation to the report provided, these were:

- What does 'aggressive marketing' mean
- How worried should the board be about student numbers
- There is a reference to the need to 'enhance scholarly activity' and they questioned whether there was a shortfall in this area.

In relation to the last question the Head of Higher Education indicated that this appears to be more of a challenge in an FE setting. Staff teach on FE and HE programmes and owing to the FE curriculum calendar demands, they do not produce research journal entries and academic papers generally and there is more of an ad hoc approach taken with employers about specialist skills updating. He confirmed that staff are encouraged to participate and deliver in FE and HE conferences but that this does not have as high profile as scholarly activity in universities. It was confirmed that there are CPD industry days which are scheduled throughout the academic year. In addition, there is access to CPD by validating universities during Wednesday afternoon time. This is complimented by the investment made by the Group in google teaching, training and resources.

One member of the committee asked what the marketing strategic plan is for HE. It was confirmed that there is a draft in place but it was acknowledged that there is more that can be done and the college is not yet where it wants to be. A new Marketing Director is joining shortly and additional resource is being invested in the department. It was confirmed that there is a specific HE plan in place and it was agreed to share this at the next meeting (Head of Higher Education, March 2022).

A challenge from one member of the committee was that they would like to see all initiatives evident in one strategy which will then link to the people plan. A challenge was to ensure that staff are able to perform in the market. In terms of quality of provision, quality of access and participation one member of the committee asked whether the college is still at the same position as when it applied and successfully obtained TEF gold. Head of Higher Education confirmed that the quality is still high and that TEF used NSS data as a base which has always been positive. What the students get at RNN is a very positive experience. Group is seeing an increasing number of firsts and 2:1's with an increase in terms of higher achievement, this is in most areas. He expressed the view that the majority of provision and delivery is solid and of a high quality.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the update provided
- b) To recommend that the board approve the HE SED 2020/21 as presented.

## **6 HE Update**

It was acknowledged that information provided had been incorporated in to discussions in the earlier agenda item and therefore committee were happy to simply note the content of the report provided.

(Andy Birch left the meeting at 5.30pm)

## **7 Business Performance Reviews and Deep Dives**

The Deputy CEO and Assistant Principal drew governors' attention to the detailed reports and a number of key matters were highlighted:

- College has continued with the deep dives which started two years ago. There have had to be some adaptations because of covid, to include online provision and learning.
- Full return to face to face teaching has allowed the deep dive process to restart in earnest.
- A risk-based approach was taken, with phase one being the areas identified as 'at risk'. Phases two and three commenced in October which included a more holistic approach to the reviews and were broad ranging.
- The deep dives identify areas of strength and development which are pretty consistent across the different campuses.
- College has introduced mandatory sharing of good practice and the requirement for cross campus discussions.
- The assessments have all been quality assured and moderated.

One member of the committee asked how the college will monitor improvements: the who and the how? It was explained that deep dives are carried out in collaboration with the quality team and curriculum leads. There is full discussion and then an action plan generated. This includes mandatory sharing of practice. QA team undertake reviews every 3-4 weeks and they RAG rate the action plan. If progress is not evidenced then the position can be escalated to APs or the Deputy CEO, however in the vast majority of instances there is no need to escalate. Any RAG rated areas are placed on the campus QIP to ensure there is continued focus. Group uses the quality team and also other curriculum teams to support.

A challenge from one member of the committee was that they would like to see a KPI in relation to this, particularly the timeliness of addressing any areas for improvement. They felt that it would then be possible to monitor at dashboard level. Deputy CEO indicated that staff and curriculum teams are now much more confident to develop their own action plans and take the initiative, which includes linking with other curriculum areas.

(Keith Sanderson joined the meeting at 5.40pm)

A question and challenge from one member of the committee was whether or not the language used is correct i.e. has the college got it all right and it's a job done rather than being on a journey. It was explained that, in the context of the report, the words used are those provided by internal auditors when they undertook a review last year. The Group is not saying that all teaching and learning is good, instead what is being stated is that there are robust systems and processes for quality assurance in place, which include the deep dives.

A question and challenge was that there appear to be a lot of development areas and governors asked how these are monitored and particularly what will governors see next. It was explained that the performance reviews and the business reviews are much broader than the deep dives which focus on teaching and learning. Deep dives are the work of the quality and curriculum teams and they monitor the Ofsted EIF view of provision.

In relation to business reviews, it was explained that there is a new model for this year and that this includes focussed curriculum performance reviews by campus which are undertaken by Senior Leaders (SLT) responsible for provision types alongside curriculum managers. The evidence and impact on performance from curriculum performance reviews is then analysed by SLT and informs the business review meetings. Business performance review meetings are undertaken by the Exec team with Senior Leaders (SLT) responsible for campus and provision type performance. Business performance review meetings are more focused on strategic conversations and the report identifies the key things discussed. The second cycle of business reviews will revisit progress of actions identified for the issues from meeting cycle 1 and all actions identified will be tracked review by review. In addition, areas for improvement and progress monitoring is through the Group QIP and the SAR.

Committee asked whether there was merit in staff linking with a governor on how future reports and tracking could be developed so that there is a clear way of assessing movement from meeting to meeting. It was agreed that the committee Chair, the Deputy CEO and the Director of Governance would meet to discuss options (January 2022).

Committee indicated that it was possible to start to see some consistent key themes arising within each of the reports which could be better captured and discussed in one place and examples given were marketing and student numbers e.g. HE short courses and how successful the college is likely to be in relation to this initiative.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## **8 Apprenticeship Update**

In the absence of the Head of Apprenticeships the committee were invited to take the report as read. Key matters highlighted by the Deputy CEO were:

- Page 4 – this is something that the apprenticeship task and finish group looked at in detail. In order for the college to hit strategic targets the college needs 480 of 727 expected leavers to achieve. Target is 66% and if achieved would be higher than the pre-covid position. To get to 70% the college would need 509 out of the 727 to achieve.
- Rollovers will now only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. This is critically important to get the improvements required. The focus has to be the delivery of the offer within the agreed timeframes.

In considering the report a challenge from the committee was that it is difficult for governors to see the 'big picture' as there is so much detail. There is a note in the report that 'predictions' are not yet on the system and governors asked when they will be entered and whether this will give sufficient time to influence the outcomes and improvements. Deputy CEO and Head of Business Intelligence and Performance provided assurance that there are monthly updates to the tracker and that this includes an impact on predictions. Committee were advised that by yearend 2020/21 the predicted outcomes for apprenticeship provision

delivered by RNN Group (excluding subcontractor) were within 0.5% accuracy which should give some comfort. A challenge from the committee was that, if this is a leading indicator, data needs to be on the system as early as possible.

Committee were given assurance that there are regular meetings including fortnightly reviews which take place. These are on the basis of apprentices enrolled line by line and any at risk are identified. These reviews have shown that the apprentices who have not been as successful, or not been able to complete in a timely way, are those where there have been staffing issues. Now that the college has new staff in place these learners are being prioritised for focus activities i.e. those who are further behind than they should be.

A restated challenge from the committee was that any monitoring system should give a heads up with enough time to intervene. It was explained that, where the college has been slow, it is where there were/are staff challenges i.e. not enough people to go out and assess. Committee were given assurance that the team will have spoken to every single apprentice and employer by the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022 and thereafter it will be possible to give month by month predictions and tracking.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## **9 Adult Education and Contracts (including subcontracted) Report**

The Director of Adult Education and Contracts drew committees' attention to the detailed report provided and key matters highlighted were:

- Provision overall is considered to be good and this is contributed to by the fact that learners are overall enjoying their experience and the satisfaction rates are high.
- Where there are aspects to improve, the position will be resolved quickly.
- 20/21 position was up by 1% on previous data and college continues to drive forward with this this year.
- Areas to improve from the last year include:
  - a) English and Maths achievement
  - b) High needs achievement
  - c) Level 4 learner achievement
- 21/22 monitoring is taking place regarding level 4 and high needs learners
- Retention remains positive, data overall is positive and 19+ provision is 97.4%
- No significant gaps identified. Deep dives and learning walks have not identified any consistent issues.
- That said, college is starting to see tracking of personal development activities as an area to enhance. There needs to be more consistency in the monitoring of impact and actions have been agreed in this area.
- Primary area of concern is financial and the link to reputation should there be underperformance. Committee were advised that monthly reports go to the executive and to the ESFA and FE Commissioner team.
- Disappointing start to the year but at R05 the college has started to really make up the gap.
- Position now is £2.92 million and the college is on track to achieve £5.1 million but is having to do a lot of work to drive this forward.
- Curriculum offer has had to be reviewed and new areas considered to respond to local needs. Team are working with marketing in relation to this.
- Subcontracting is on track to realise financial outputs.



- In terms of quality, there are no concerns regarding achievements but attendance is an issue with one subcontractor. To really unpick this an audit has been undertaken and the team are pleased to see improvements already starting. This subcontractor actually has positive attendance monitoring processes in place and the indications are of green shoots.
- College is on track to maintain high subcontracted quality provision and this is not considered to be a risk. College is actively looking at other subcontracting options and there will be a report back on this at the next meeting (**Director Adult Education & Contracts, March 2022**).

When considering the data provided, one member of the committee noted that there were 226 High Needs learners last year and that there was a 10% drop in achievement which needs better explanation. The DCEO advised that this had been explained in the High Needs report in the autumn term. Staff advised that the progress of these individuals has been significant in terms of knowledge, skills and behaviours but that it is not always possible for them to achieve the qualification during the pandemic. It was confirmed that the college is looking to explore other progression routes.

In considering numbers and the financial targets, the committee asked how the college will improve the in year position. Director Adult Education and Contracts advised that the team are exploring a number of options but that the position is not yet confirmed. An observation made was that a lot of colleges are struggling to spend allocations. Committee were advised that staffing is a challenge/risk in a number of areas, an example given was at Dearne Valley campus, however assurance was given that the senior team are working to overcome.

A question from one governor was why English and Maths keeps appearing as a concern/issue. Deputy CEO confirmed that she would pick this up as part of the risk report later on the agenda.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## **10 16-18 Study Programmes Update**

The Assistant Principal introduced this item and drew committees' attention to the detailed report and key matters highlighted were:

- As at 10<sup>th</sup> January 2021, retention was 2% higher than at the same point in the prior year.
- Team have done a lot of analysis regarding withdrawals. Key withdrawals are at the Rotherham campus and examples given were in relation to plumbing and health.
- Learning walks are still taking place.
- Attendance continues to decline with a -0.8% decline overall.
- Vocational attendance is doing better than Maths and English. Committee were given assurance that there are lots of actions being taken.

Challenge from the committee was that in terms of the various 16-18 study programme statistics it would be useful to have three year trend data so that a longer term picture can be considered, as the last two years have been quite unusual.

One member of the committee asked if there are any financial risks associated with conditions of funding in this area. Staff advised that there were not. Specifically in relation to English and Maths college is seeing better attendance for the face to face sessions rather than the digital and therefore models of

delivery will be changed and implemented in February, particularly for those students who aren't engaging. College is looking at a range of new initiatives and these will sit alongside the changes to the delivery model, with everything being relaunched.

Challenge from the committee was that they would like to better see how everything is linked together to that the loop can be closed. This was linked to the earlier suggestion regarding content of reports. It was agreed that any governor suggestions would be provided by email to the committee Chair/Director of Governance in terms of reporting structure, reporting pattern etc. One suggestion made was to introduce a mechanism for discussing the big/critical issues at each meeting, perhaps through the introduction of a Deputy CEO's report.

Reflecting on information provided, an observation made was that reports tend to focus on areas that require improvements and therefore they don't always articulate what the college is doing really well.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## **11 Risk Report**

The Deputy CEO introduced this item and confirmed that the key risk areas include:

- Apprenticeship provision.
- Using assessment points effectively. An example is whether learners are ready to move on to practical skills and what is needed to demonstrate progress.
- Staffing and performance – sports and public services is a reduced risk as is now NNC campus as a whole.
- English and Maths – learners were given the choice between functional skills and GCSEs, with the outcome being that there is a stronger preference for GCSEs. This led to a need to recruit more staff for GCSE mathematics which has been challenging. There are also a number of staff with long covid.
- College has reviewed any barriers with students and one issue raised is the size of some large class groups. College is now looking at how to tackle this.
- College continues to work with staff regarding pedagogy and support has continued in terms of planning and delivering face to face sessions.
- Online one hour digital session for English and Maths is where the poor attendance has been.
- All learners will have time made up but in a more flexible attendance/delivery way.
- Last year English functional skills saw better achievement rates but there has been more reluctance to engage with online Maths sessions.

College is now entering in to the curriculum planning process, changes will be made going forward as well as in year 21/22 changes. Challenge from the committee was to have greater clarity regarding what is and isn't working and the monitoring processes associated with this. It was confirmed that these are included within improvement plans and are also a part of Deputy CEO scrutiny. They are also within the group QIP. Committee were given assurance that staff are actively pursuing every option.



Question and challenge from the committee was whether or not staff can access good practice from outside the RNN group. It was confirmed that they can and examples given were:

- AOC Maths managers network
- English and Maths staff active within ETF
- CPD via ETF
- Support from C-learning
- Partnership with Google – in relation to teaching skills and not just online activity
- Basingstoke College and, through this, with Leeds and Bradford colleges
- In house sharing of good practice e.g. staff film themselves teaching and are then encouraged to be self-reflective and participate in peer sharing.

Staff have done a series of assessments and mocks which has allowed the creation of individual plans. Because of covid, the college has seen some unusual gaps and is using catch up funding to support work required in this area. There are thirteen catch up coaches in post to support.

A final challenge from one member of the committee was that staff appear to be very busy but that it is really important to log and measure the 'so what' i.e. the impact of activity.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## **12 Compliments and Complaints**

The Assistant Principal presented her detailed report and a question from one member of the committee was whether or not these are useful leading indicators or whether the college is looking to eradicate complaints. Staff advised that both approaches are considered and acknowledged that sometimes complaints are really useful and lead to improvements. In particular, one or two complaints this year have helped to improve the complaints process itself. All acknowledged that it was a really positive indicator that teaching and learning is not now the top issue.

Challenge from the committee was that it is more important for governors to know the actions taken and the lessons learned. How staff are monitoring the complaints to make the group stronger i.e. the 'so what'.

AGREED: to note the content of the report provided.

## **13 Curriculum Planning – update on how the college will assess whether it (and other providers) are meeting local need**

Committee took the detailed report as read and a challenge was how the curriculum planning process can be considered to be robust if learners are not achieving what they set out to achieve and what employers have said they need.

Staff expressed the view that curriculum planning is wider than just the achievement rates. They provided assurance that it aligns with LMI data. Process involves careful consideration of LMI and employer reviews and also takes in to account the wider curriculum and skills gaps.

Question from the committee was whether or not there is a gap between the robustness of the planning process and the robustness of delivery. Staff advised that the issue for the group is to now get back to the pre covid position which had three year improving trends. Over the last two years, retention and

achievement has dipped, but students have improved so much in terms of social action and personal developments.

Challenge issues again by governors was whether or not there is something to further discuss in terms of enrolment, student numbers and the shortfall.

Staff advised that the curriculum planning process is now looking over a two year period, rather than just one year.

AGREED: to note the content of the report provided.

**14 Safeguarding, Prevent and E&D**

The comprehensive written report was noted and key matters highlighted were:

- Prevent – the risk assessment for the area has changed and the college has responded.
- Raising Awareness of sexual harassment is a real focus for the group.
- 10 minute take overs continue to provide assurance that learners understand risks to their personal safety.
- Numbers receiving safeguarding and welfare support do fluctuate.
- There are 11 child protection plans and 11 child in need.
- Pro monitor has been updated and can now clearly show hotspots and trends.
- College is working with Rotherham Virtual School on a pupil premium pilot and has managed to recruit a champion.

In terms of sexual harassment one member of the group asked whether the focus is on students or staff. It was explained that it is predominantly student issues but that a lot of work has been done to raise staff awareness.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

**15 AOB**

There were no items of additional business.

**16 Date and time of next meeting**

This was confirmed as 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at 5pm.

**The meeting closed at 7pm**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chair

Date \_\_\_\_\_