

<b>Meeting/Committee</b>	<b>Quality &amp; Standards Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> March 2023 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:

Jenny Worsdale	Chair
Donna Clifford	
Carol Stanfield	
Veronica McCoy	
Heather Barnett	

### In attendance:

Tracey Mace-Akroyd	Deputy Principal/CEO
Maxine Bagshaw	Director of Governance
Dave Cosgrove	Head of Business Intelligence and Performance
Debra Adams	Director of Campus: DVC
Clare Godfrey	Assistant Principal
Laura Reid	Director of Safeguarding and Student Support
Kelly Beighton	Interim Director of High Level Skills and Innovation
Daniel Stanbra	Director of Adult Education and Contracts, English and maths
Keith Sanderson	Director of Campus: North Notts
Cheryl Martin	Director of Quality and Academic Standards

### Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Katie Asgari, Katie Curtis, Sally Gillborn, Jason Austin and Mel Smith.

## 3 Minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023

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 on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023.

There were no matters arising.

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

The committee were happy to note the content of the update provided. Committee Chair particularly noted that governors had previously requested that data tables be incorporated within the reports, rather than being separate and the reports simply being narrative. It was agreed that the two would be amalgamated in future reports (**All report writers, each meeting**). Committee noted that the requested enrolment information was provided at the bottom of the table.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

#### **5 Safeguarding and Prevent**

The detailed report circulated was noted and a number of key aspects highlighted, including:

- Positive outcomes from the reducing violence against women and girls initiative,
- Safeguarding is effective,
- Prevent action plan is up to date.

In general discussion one governor commented on the number of 'interventions' and asked what success would look like and is there an end point to the interventions. Staff indicated that this very much depends upon the learner and explained that some will have continuing interventions. In terms of success, one outcome would be for a learner to come off a Child Protection Plan. Other success factors would be improved attendance and retention. Challenge from the committee was that they would like to better understand the impact in future reports.

One member of the committee asked for an update in terms of mental health numbers and the trends. It was agreed that it would be helpful to give a little more information in future reports to show actions being taken and impact. Staff advised that mental health is always the highest category of concern and one example given was self-harm.

Governors asked how the organisation knows that what it is doing is effective. Staff indicated that this is through a number of ways, including:

- External partners
- Learner voice
- Local intelligence
- Compliance levels for training
- The college ethos, which is 'we know it can happen here'
- Part of the deep dive processes
- Campus managers also have on site involvement
- Timely referrals to external support
- Specialist expertise e.g. Mind
- Aspire award commendation

Committee were reminded that the welfare team has increased in size to ensure that there is sufficient capacity. Staff advised that, at times, it does feel like the college is underpinning the local NHS service. Challenge from governors was that this does throw up questions in terms of the college's role.

AGREED: to note the content of the report provided.

#### **6 QIP 2022/23**

The Assistant Principal presented the updated document and key matters highlighted were:

- It follows the same format as previously provided.
- Key to the RAG ratings is included at the top of the document so that governors can see where things have moved.
- In relation to the greens, these are where a positive impact is being seen even if not fully achieved yet.

In general discussion, a challenge from one governor was that this document uses RO6 data and other reports use RO7 and therefore it is not always consistent reading from report to report. Staff explained the time taken to compile this document in particular and the various contributions required, which does mean that it takes slightly longer. It was agreed that governors would consider committee meeting dates in 2023/24 to see if there is a way to align with all data provided being the same (**Dir of Governance, 2023**).

When considering the document there were a number of questions and comments, including:

- Retention seems to be declining, is this the case?
- Does recruitment and retention of staff need to be included within the document?
- There are lots of early stage working groups in place and it will be really good to see the outcomes when they come to fruition.

Staff confirmed that, if the committee feels it is appropriate, then staff recruitment and retention can be added back in to the QIP. Deputy CEO indicated that at the last meeting staff were more confident regarding retention, however there have been some changes since then, with some staff resigning and an example given was the curriculum manager for engineering. She explained that the group is now looking at different options for this post as it has simply not been possible to recruit and retain high calibre.

One governor made specific reference to line OF2 and the performance by levels. It was observed that level 3 is RAG rated as green but that there are a number of red and amber aspects within it, and therefore they questioned whether green was correct. Staff explained that the table here is based upon 2021/22 and that staff did identify level 3 as an area to improve. Suggestion made was to add in an extra column for 2022/23 to show the in-year movement/position. There was a difference of opinion on the benefits of this at the meeting and no final position was agreed. Committee were reminded that it would be an in-year view provided in relation to retention and then a yearend view on achievement. All acknowledged that, if the group retains students, then there is a much better chance that they will achieve.

Deputy CEO made the link with the risk report later on the agenda and confirmed that retention is 'holding up' albeit that it has declined. She expressed the view that attendance is the most significant risk. This may mean that, whilst students are being retained, they are not attending and therefore they may not achieve. Committee acknowledged that there were three leading indicators for them to carefully consider. These are attendance, retention and KSB progress.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## **7 Risk Report**

The Deputy CEO introduced this report and explained that it was pulled together from reports created across all campuses and that these are the risks that SLT have all agreed are significant and/or emerging.

When considering the report there were a number of questions and/or observations, including:

- Should the organisation be prioritising 100% employer academies and an example given was over T Level placements.
- Concerns regarding engineering at Rotherham campus as this is a key way of meeting local skills needs

Committee were given assurance that the quality team and the Assistant Principal who has oversight of apprenticeship provision is working closely with the engineering team and are trying hard to mitigate any impact for learners. Curriculum manager has resigned, however the group has not agreed an early release and there is a very clear action plan in place for him to deliver in relation to the curriculum. In addition, staff at North Notts are being shared across both campuses.

New campus manager for Rotherham indicated that he had recently undertaken a 'mystery shopper walkaround' of the provision and that this had solidified views already in place i.e.

- Some team culture to address
- Better clarity regarding responsibilities and roles needed
- A need to address the historic ways of working and make sure that any new staff who join the team are not affected

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## **8 Quality of education reports**

### 1 & 2) – Overall CBL and 16 to 18

Committee were happy to take the report provided as read and move straight in to questions. One governor observed that, on the data report at every level the position is lower than the last two years i.e. attendance and retention, and they asked for a little more information in relation to this. Key matters highlighted were:

- Group has a much more accurate view of the data position this year.
- Whilst there may have been some decline, an additional influencing factor may be that prior year position was inflated.
- Group has seen an influx of withdrawals since January 2023. Some are to do with mental health issues. Staff provided assurance that on every occasion staff are looking at every way to provide support.
- All potential withdrawals have been scrutinised individually.
- There have been some exclusions which have added to the position.
- It is a concern that even in March the group is still losing learners.
- Attendance has increased and this has been influenced by a reduction in retention i.e. the negative attendees have been removed from the current attendance position as they have withdrawn.
- Important to compare the RO4 and RO14 position so that the group can better understand the drop.
- Historically the group knows that it loses learners in January and then after the Easter break.

Deputy CEO indicated that she has recently been meeting with different cohorts of students and is obtaining some really good local intelligence about what the organisation does well and also what it needs to do differently. Meetings so far have taken place at North Notts and Rotherham, with meetings at DVC still to take place. Governors asked whether she had learnt anything that was surprising. She indicated that, yes in terms of marketing, particularly what students look at and when they make their decisions. She provided assurance that the group does have various ways of supporting 'at risk

learners' and an example given was that at DVC there has been some intervention work with nine students identified as potentially NEET.

### 3 & 4) – English and Maths

Governors were reminded that this relates to in year performance for 2022/23, given that staff have previously reported on 21/22 performance.

One governor asked for further information in relation to the emerging risk regarding the MEZO model. Staff advised that the model has both advantages and disadvantages and that this is the first year where there have been no covid restrictions. Significant benefit of the model is that it reduces the impact to learners if staff are off or leave. Staff indicated that they are seeing additional anxieties which are negatively impacting on student confidence when they are asked to move to what they perceive to be larger groups. Staff expressed the view that the model can be 'tweaked' and that there will be a response to learner feedback.

One governor asked why there were fewer November GCSE resit entries. It was explained that in the prior year there was still the impact of CAGs and TAGs and therefore every learner was given an exam opportunity. It was also explained that, in November 2022 lots of students will have gone back to their old schools to resit. This achievement would sit with the schools and not the college.

### 5) HE

Governors were happy to take the report provided as read and move to questions. One governor asked for further information in relation to staff retention in computing. Staff confirmed that the organisation does now have a good compliment of staff in place but that historic challenges did impact on learners and performance. There is someone now within the team who has a PHD which gives greater confidence. In relation to the NSS survey, staff advised that the current response rate is 60% and that the group has never had this before, with further time still available for additional responses as the survey is open until the end of April.

### 6) Apprenticeship provision

Governors were happy to note the content of the report and were pleased to see that the accountability measures were included as requested. Committee asked for an update on the out of funding position (OOF). Assistant Principal indicated that the current figure is around 200 which is a 100% reduction on the same point in the prior year. Staff do however expect to see this rise as a high number of apprentices now move in to the three month end point assessment window. Expectation is that this figure will come down to 90-100 by September. It was confirmed that there are 60 or 70 OOF who have featured within the statistics for a long period of time but assurance was given that the college continues to work with them. There are a few where there are challenges but college continues to try to engage them.

### 7) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Written report was presented and it was explained that it includes strengths and also areas of concern. A focus for the group is care leavers as there is a 7.4% gap. It was explained that, often they have a high number of safeguarding concerns and also mental health challenges and for some college environment is not the right place for them yet. It was explained that there is a cross over between the LAC learners and those also featuring on the safeguarding lists.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## 9 AEB Report

The Director of Adult Education and Contracts presented his detailed written report and apologised for a formatting issue in terms of colours on the QIP. He confirmed that all areas are amber except attendance and curriculum intent. He drew committees' attention to the two red RAG rated areas and particularly Q03 which is in relation to attendance rates for December and January. He confirmed that the group is not currently on track to achieve the 95% attendance target.

One governor commented upon the growth in the SYMCA planned profile and particularly the warehousing hub actions which have been identified as a growth area. They asked what can be done to support the development. Committee were advised that staff have explored three separate potential venues including E Block at the Dinnington site, but that no firm arrangements have been agreed and therefore opportunities continue to be explored. It was explained that because of current financial constraints this development is considered to be a higher risk than others. So far, the group has delivered activity only worth £15k. It was explained that employers really want forklift truck training and to do this the organisation would need facilities available to use. Group is looking at a partnership and also the option of using DVC more. It was confirmed that the long-term ambition is an internal offer. In terms of achieving full allocation, committee were advised that the group is taking mitigating actions in relation to the delivery profile and that this has been discussed in detail by the Finance & Resources Committee. Options being considered for Dinnington include end point assessments, warehousing and alternative provision.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## 10 T Levels and Defunding Implications

The written report provided was noted and key matters highlighted included:

- Staff continue to meet with the AOC link as part of the keeping in touch meetings
- AOC are pleased with progress and consider the group to be on target
- Risk is the student numbers and therefore expectations have been reduced down
- Other risk is defunded qualifications from 2024, particularly some level 3 provision. Committee were given assurance that this has been a focus during curriculum planning.

In terms of defunding, committee asked whether staff have attempted to calculate the likely cost. Staff indicated that the group is looking at alternative options and provided assurance that no one will be enrolled on to a course/level where it is known that this will be defunded. It was explained that there will be a cost if the group does not hit the allocation as there will be clawback. In terms of numbers, 142 was the original position however this has reduced following changes made to pathways. If the group does not hit 142 then there will be clawback.

Challenge from one governor was not to lose sight of options other than T Levels and A Levels and that there should be an opportunity for every learner. She indicated that DfE are currently awaiting awarding organisation proposals and that the full list is expected in July 2023. Committee noted that the plan is to deliver over two sites and asked whether there is a risk of a mismatch. Committee were given assurance that the curriculum teams are working really hard together. Aim is for students to be at their campus of choice but resources can be shared. Following discussions with students it is believed that they will travel on key days to access specialist facilities. It was also confirmed that staff are working very hard to secure all of the work placements required.

Assistant Principal asked whether there is a future opportunity to deliver A Levels which sit alongside AAQ's and TAQ's, given that technical qualifications could be too large for some learners and it could therefore represent a risk to the group. All agreed that this was an opportunity to explore.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## **11 PWC Audit Errors – Impact on Student Outcomes**

Staff provided a verbal update and indicated that PWC concerns have been raised following an audit on 21/22 data. One concern raised was in relation to non-accredited provision i.e. ESOL, with the group incorrectly using the Z code. This meant that learners only attended one of two sessions and therefore were not doing enough hours to warrant the funding received by the group. This raises a concern regarding the use of historic non-accredited aims. Staff provided assurance that there is confidence that it was a genuine error and staff are currently waiting to hear if there is a financial impact.

Committee were advised that there is also a separate issue regarding learning aims which goes beyond this error and that an issue also flagged is in relation to community learning and the use of fee remission. Committee were advised that the organisation is currently looking at an MIS restructure and that part of this will involve creation of a new internal audit team to test data. Challenge from the committee was that the organisation needs to make sure that this doesn't happen again. It was explained that this would be achieved through staff training and also more auditing activity undertaken by the group.

One governor asked whether there had been any impact on students. Staff provided assurance that there hasn't and explained that the impact is purely financial. Question from one governor was in relation to how the organisation will make sure that staff have the right knowledge and skills to be able to complete internal audits. It was explained that the external audits completed have made it really clear what needs to be a focus and that there is a very detailed action plan in place in relation to this. It has been acknowledged that there is more that the MIS team can do to support other staff within the organisation.

Committee asked how the group will check the 2022/23 position. It was explained that the new team will be used for this.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## **12 AOB**

There were no items of additional business for discussion, other than the Deputy CEO inviting governor feedback on the new style reports and the use of the red and amber strategic KPI items to drive the content of the meeting agendas.

## **13 Date and time of next meeting**

This was confirmed as 8<sup>th</sup> May 2023.

**The meeting closed at 6.25pm**

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_