

<b>Meeting/Committee</b>	<b>Quality &amp; Standards Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> January 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  
Katie Asgari  
Jason Austin  
Donna Clifford  
Carol Stanfield  
Veronica McCoy

Chair

### In attendance:

Tracey Mace-Akroyd	Deputy Principal/CEO
Maxine Bagshaw	Director of Governance
Dave Cosgrove	Head of Business Intelligence and Performance
Debra Adams	Campus Manager DVC
Clare Godfrey	Assistant Principal
Mel Smith	Director of Programmes for Young People
Tanya Gurtsmar	Head of SEND/ALS
Laura Reid	Head of Student Services, Safeguarding and Student Support
Kelly Beighton	Director of High Level Skills and Innovation
Daniel Stanbra	Director of Adult Education and Contracts
Jason Thomas	Group Digital Lead
Lucy Barnwell	Director of Marketing and Learner Recruitment
Cath Mollart	Interim ED: Strategic Planning & Corporate Services
Keith Sanderson	Campus Manager North Notts Campus

### Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Heather Barnett, Cheryl Martin and Katie Curtis.

## 3 Minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022

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 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022.

As a matter arising, one governor noted that on page 3 there was reference to 'full curriculum reviews being undertaken alongside student recruitment numbers' and they asked when a report on this would be available. Deputy CEO advised that staff were currently in the middle of the curriculum planning process and were discussing intent. Challenge from the committee was whether or not this process would include a review of 2022 recruitment i.e. where is the organisation in terms of 2022/23 expectations. One example given was an analysis of whether there has been any negative or positive impact following consolidation and/or movement of provision from one campus to another. Governors all agreed that it was important to analyse 2022 enrolments in terms of actual against the plan and/or predicted. Deputy CEO confirmed that, whilst a formal report has not been prepared, this analysis has informed the curriculum planning process.

In the absence of a formal report, committee asked whether there were any particular implications following this analysis. Deputy CEO indicated that, in the main, implications arise at Rotherham Campus and DVC and in fact there had been a meeting earlier in the day regarding Hair and Beauty. Group has seen that adults have not wanted to travel to DVC and therefore more provision has been put on at RC. One other issue was seen in relation to sport, following the transfer to Retford from Worksop, however, in the main, the area of provision with most impact is Hair and Beauty.

One governor asked whether students identify each of the campuses as a separate college. Staff confirmed that yes, they really do identify with the locality and for many travel is not easy which is why much of the choice is impacted by proximity.

Deputy CEO advised that curriculum planning will be completed much earlier this year which means that the marketing team can properly promote the courses and the venues which will avoid any location surprises for students. She indicated that, for Hair and Beauty it is simply not viable to run two salons at two campuses which are six miles apart with low numbers and that staff are currently looking at the 'best fit' to ensure the offer is right.

Challenge from the committee was that it is important to be able to analyse the impact, both the positives and the negatives, so that staff and governors are aware of these as risks and opportunities when decisions are being made.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

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

The committee were happy to note the content of the update provided.

#### **5 Digital strategy**

Digital lead introduced the written report and he confirmed that the strategy sets out the groups vision and key matters highlighted were:

- Vision is to lead innovation within the community
- Strategy encompasses both staff and students
- Group aims to have google pathways in place which will help to improve everyone's skills. Pilot in relation to this started today.
- Intention is to offer blended delivery in all curriculum areas, this is becoming more and more common
- Organisation continues to focus on a digital future
- Strategy focuses on teaching and learning
- Organisation has been awarded google reference status again

- Most significant risk to success is financial and the organisations ability to invest. Examples of investment required were in relation to AI, VR and augmented.

One governor asked what benefits the organisation derives from 'google reference' status and whether any financial commitment is value for money. Staff advised that there is no specific costs and that it is more about investing widely within the organisation. There is a reputational benefit and it was explained that RNN was the 7<sup>th</sup> FE organisation within the country to obtain this status. In terms of the investment required, staff indicated that the aim is to use digital innovation funding available in the sector to support. Cath Mollart indicated that the team are just in the process of costing a different model for IT, the libraries, AI and VR and will then put forward a proposal and business case as part of the wider strategies.

One governor asked what the group is developing in terms of online digital skills. Staff explained that google is very similar to Microsoft but more collaborative and an example given was in terms of how files are shared. Staff provided assurance that Microsoft is still used so that staff and students still have exposure to this suite of products. Question and challenge from the committee was in terms of how the organisation trains students to go out in to the wider world where google may not be so prevalent. Staff advised that google products are very similar to Microsoft and are interchangeable which means that the knowledge and skills are transferable.

Staff confirmed that whilst google is a preferred system the organisation does still use Microsoft but that staff and students agree that google is more accessible. That said, there is a place for both. Staff indicated that google is the open source platform which is recognised in the sector.

Committee asked for the context for investing in AR and VR. Staff indicated that they have had an opportunity to meet with industry specialists and that this technology would allow students to have an immersive experience i.e. putting them in circumstances they would never experience elsewhere and an example given was the ability to weld in a submarine.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

(Jason Thomas left the meeting at 5.25pm)

## **6 Group Data Summary Table 2022/23**

Committee were happy to note the content of the data table and move straight to questions. One governor asked whether all of the data provided relates to everyone enrolled this year. Staff confirmed that it is and that the information is based upon the RO4 submission, which is the first data point and covers the period September to November 2022. Staff advised that the next data set will be the RO6 submission. In terms of reporting, each data sets is now compared with 3 year trends so that these can be easily seen.

Question and challenge from one governor was that the data doesn't show student numbers at census compared to enrolment. Committee were reminded that the report provided by the Director of Marketing and Learner Recruitment in the autumn term included this data. Director of Marketing and Learner Recruitment indicated that currently applications are tracking higher than the last three years, as are the levels of interest at open days. She confirmed that what is now important is converting these applications and expressions of interest in to enrolments. For future reports it was agreed to track the 2022/23 student numbers throughout the year and then also provide a forward look (Director M&LR, each report). Question from one governor was whether

or not it is possible to compare our student numbers with national, other local/sector organisations and our own group targets. Staff reminded that there have been no national/sector rates published since 2018/19, however it is expected that new rates will come out in February 2023 once all of the recently submitted data has been collated by the ESFA.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## **7 Ofsted Report**

The Deputy CEO introduced this item and explained that the executive summary identifies the areas for improvement. She confirmed that all have been captured within the QIP, as have any other actions communicated in the verbal feedback. One particular point highlighted was in relation to learner numbers and she explained that Ofsted only count up to Level 3, which is why there might be slight differences when compared to numbers provided in other reports.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## **8 Group SAR 2021/22 – Final**

Deputy CEO introduced this item and reminded that the SAR had been updated following inspection to incorporate their findings as part of the evidence base. She explained that all of the changes and edits have been summarised in the cover report and, in the main, relate to apprenticeship provision and adult learners. She asked the committee to endorse the current version and recommend to the board for approval, whilst noting that Ofsted have asked the group to upload before the end of January. Subject to committee endorsement today a draft version will be uploaded pending formal board approval.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the updated document provided, and
- b) Recommend that it be approved by the board.

## **9 QIP 2022/23**

Deputy Principal introduced this item and confirmed that the draft previously seen by the committee has been updated and now includes more specific targets. It includes priorities and recommendations identified during the inspection. In the document provided all objectives have been included and staff are now working to update the impact column. When considering the document, a challenge from one governor was to write out the acronyms more fully so that the document is easier to read.

In relation to apprenticeship provision, one governor observed that the data is not broken down in the same way as other areas and they asked whether this could be done in the future to ensure consistency.

In relation to Maths and English, one governor asked whether there is a need to refer to the standard Level 2 position acknowledging that the document makes reference to high grades. She expressed the view that the organisation needs to focus on level 2 attendance at Maths and English in exams and a suggested target was circa 90%.

One governor observed that there were a number of references to 'culture' within the document and they asked whether it is possible to be more specific about what is wrong and/or what needs to be changed. Challenge from governors was in terms of a need to have confidence that actions will lead to the desired impact.

In relation to attendance strategies, committee asked whether staff know what does and doesn't work. Deputy CEO commented that the 12 days of Christmas initiative didn't lead to the improvements required which was disappointing. In terms of culture, Deputy CEO advised that Ofsted recognised that the organisation 'throws everything it can think of at the problem' but that there is a level of acceptance that attendance will be low. Focus groups have been established to try and really unpick the issues and identify what the attendance barriers are. She indicated that there were a number of culture changes needed including:

- High expectations
- RNN as a first choice provider
- The need for students to work hard as they are lucky to be with the organisation

Deputy CEO confirmed that the organisation is looking to relaunch the high expectations message with all students.

Committee then made a number of further observations for consideration, including:

- The reference to 'sharing strong teaching, learning and assessment' – all agreed that this was vital
- The reference to 'increasing the percentage of FE internal progression and HE progression' – governors asked whether they are in fact linked or should be two separate aims
- Need to include recruitment and retention within the document – governors observed that it had been in the QIP in 2021/22
- Alongside the reference to 'ensuring the curriculum planning maximises student numbers' governors asked whether a reference to accountability agreements could be included.

Committee then discussed the RAG ratings and Deputy CEO indicated that, as the organisation is setting some really aspirational targets it is envisaged that achieving greens will be a challenge. Committee acknowledged that whilst this might be the case they felt that the current RAG rating continued to be fit for purpose.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## **10 Risk Report**

The Deputy CEO introduced this item and drew governors' attention to the summary of risks and priorities. Key matters highlighted were:

- Internal progression – recent analysis shows that the groups position is lower than some other similar providers
- Ofsted outcome
- English and Maths – Ofsted identified that there was still work to do in terms of sharing starting points and then everyone working to develop.
- Digital – it is important that the group does not fall behind the curve and fall back when compared with other providers
- Apprenticeship provision – remains a huge priority, with consistency required in all areas
- Curriculum planning
- Staff recruitment in hard to fill areas

Committee asked whether the organisation is expecting to see any strikes and/or disruption. Staff advised that currently no notifications have been received and the group is not aware of any planned action.

One governor referred to recent guidance regarding results days for level 2 and 3 vocational qualifications and they asked how the organisation will be able to manage this requirement. Deputy CEO confirmed that there are working parties in place who are

discussing the requirement to share results but at this stage the organisation is not anticipating any problems with meeting the deadline.

Governors asked whether staff retention is a risk. Deputy CEO confirmed that it is, particularly in the hard to recruit areas. In addition, some Hair and Beauty staff are now suggesting that they can earn more working in salons which is one to watch. Staff are hoping that the pay award which is currently out to consultation will help to address this and it was confirmed that in some roles market force supplements are still provided. Governors asked whether retention is always linked to pay. Campus managers indicated that mainly it is and that the driving force seems to be financial. That said, there are a number of staff returns, it being the case that 'the grass is not always greener'. Campus manager at DVC indicated that it is not very often that she sees turnover for longer standing members of staff however there is now some movement which are entirely related to pay increases. Campus manager at North Notts observed that within construction there are a few smaller firms struggling financially and that this may potentially increase the applicant pool.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## **11 Safeguarding and Prevent**

The Head of Student Services, Safeguarding and Student support drew committees' attention to her detailed report and key matters highlighted were:

- Safeguarding is effective and practices embedded
- Learners know the local risks
- Some project funding has been obtained for a number of initiatives
- Safeguarding flow chart circulated which gives staff confidence in terms of the processes
- 5 students on child protection
- 5 students on child in need
- Level of support required for mental health and wellbeing is high
- 824 students supported in the first term. Organisation had additional support staff in term 1 which allowed for increased capacity, this may have led to the higher number.
- Some level 5 training is being completed
- Transfer of information on CPOMs system has worked well, however there was a high first influx from schools
- In terms of the counsellors previously utilised, staff changes have allowed the organisation to look at different options

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## **12 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

Deputy CEO confirmed that the report provided is very much based upon the discussions at the last internal committee meeting which took place in November and that this has been overlaid by a general EDI update. She confirmed that data has been analysed and broken down to ensure that certain areas of provision do not skew the areas of focus required and an example given was ESOL.

Committees attention was drawn to the information provided in relation to long vocational courses and key matters highlighted were:

- Male/female gap is not significant
- LAC learners perform better than their peers. Staff are now analysing what the organisation did really well so that it can learn from that.
- There is an ethnicity gap which is currently being reviewed and analysed.



Committee were advised that there have been two EDI complaints, one of which relates to the estates strategy and one which relates to behaviour. Both have been dealt with. She provided assurance that the organisation is compliant in terms of both plans and actions.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

### **13 Catch up Coaches – Impact Analysis for 2021/22**

In the absence of the Assistant Principal who had prepared the report it was agreed to take it 'as read'. Question and challenge from one governor was in terms of the 'highly effective' wording used and they questioned whether this was right. Specific reference was made to section 5.2 where it was observed that student numbers are not known. There is a reference to 35% but it is not possible to quantify how many students this is. Is it 1, 10, 50, 100 etc. Governor noted that the position in relation to Maths is 11% and suggested that if this is 1 in 10 the investment was not highly effective. In terms of the data at North Notts, the percentages appear to be better but it is still not possible to determine student numbers and therefore the amount invested per student. It was confirmed that the report would be updated to add in the context and would then be recirculated by email. (Assistant Principal, February 2023).

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

### **14 Adult Education and Subcontracting**

The Director of Adult Education and Contracts introduced his report and key matters highlighted were:

- In terms of the achievement data, the position is good with outstanding characteristics
- Majority of learners are on track
- 3 year positive trend
- Areas which have an ongoing focus include:
  - Capturing learner feedback
  - Female achievement
  - English and Maths achievement
  - Consistently capturing stakeholder feedback
  - Opportunities for personal development
  - Continuing to respond to specific comments made by Ofsted and an example given was embedding academic writing.
  - Attendance remains a focus – position now is 83.4%
- Group is seeing some positive trends in terms of progression, however there are two areas which need to be reviewed as the data is anomalous. It is believed that this is influenced by incomplete progress reviews.
- In terms of finances, the RO5 position was a £112k gap however this has now closed to £90k. Staff are also reviewing some potential data accuracy points and when addressed it is believed that the gap will further reduce.
- In relation to the level of subcontracting, the group continues to seek to reduce in line with the agreed strategy. Position is now 15%, however this could increase to a maximum of 22% if more subcontracted activity is required to achieve the additional growth amount of £689k. Group is exploring all internal opportunities in relation to growth delivery and assurance was provided that staff work hard to mitigate risks in relation to this.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

### **15 Apprenticeship Update**

The Assistant Principal introduced the summary report and it was noted that there is an Apprenticeship Impact Task and Finish Group meeting scheduled for Thursday this week where employers have been invited to give feedback. This sits alongside the very positive last meeting where students attended and provided very candid feedback.

One governor noted that the number of Out Of Funded (OOF) learners has reduced from 404 to 210 and they asked how likely this 210 are to achieve. Assistant Principal explained that of the 210 some are very late in achieving i.e. 2 years whereas some are very recent and therefore it is difficult to quantify. She indicated that there are very different circumstances for each of the apprentices and provided assurance that the position is reviewed every month with priority apprentices identified to clear. Challenge from the committee was that this information needs to be known given the content of the accountability measures.

Committee asked how many apprentices are on breaks in learning. Staff advised that the number is very small.

Staff advised that the group is currently assessed as green on all of the accountability measures however a caveat to this is that the achievement rates are based upon 2022/23 in year predictions. If the achievement rate to be utilised in the calculation is 21/22 then this would be red. Staff confirmed that the organisation is well above where it was at the same point in the prior year and there is confidence that the organisation can demonstrate why there was such a low result last year i.e. the group took the bold decision to clear out a lot of the OOF.

One governor asked what the employer view is of the organisations offer. Assistant Principal advised that the team are currently working closely with employers, particularly in terms of a better understanding of demand. In terms of delivery location, SMEs generally don't tend to have a preference and there have been no learner complaints. Learners were described as generally flexible in terms of where activity is delivered particularly in terms of the wet trades however there is still a little more work to do in relation to engineering. It was confirmed that the aim for September 2023 is to open with a full staff complement and a great learning experience.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## **16 16-18 Study Programme Update**

Committee were happy to take the report provided as read. Committee were then given an update on the simulation terror attack event and it was explained that 170 learners were involved from curriculum areas across the group. This gave students a real life opportunity to work with other services. There was really positive feedback and all had found it really useful. It had confirmed the need for these simulations to take place as a helpful learning tool.

When considering the data provided in the report, a challenge from governors was to use the tables more and not words as this provides much greater clarity. Question and challenge from one governor was that the data is going in the wrong direction and therefore what assurance is there for the board in relation to this. In relation to attendance staff advised that there is a working party analysing the best and worst areas to try and assess why there are differences. This group is also reviewing all potential barriers including financial, buses etc. Staff are working closely with curriculum planning and, wherever possible, a flexible timetable is being introduced. Staff are working hard to understand the dips so that support can be provided. Challenge from the committee was the need to make sure that the organisation doesn't take its 'foot off the gas' following the Ofsted grade good. Staff provided assurance that KPIs have not been lowered and that everyone is still working hard to achieve them. There is



confidence that campus managers really know what to focus on. QIP is the document which identifies the additional focus. Assurance was provided that all staff want to hit the strategic KPIs set.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## **17 High Needs report**

The detailed report was presented and key matters highlighted included:

- Retention is good
- There are slight concerns with attendance in general
- Good progress made in terms of distance travelled for KSBs
- Inspection headline information included – provision is good with some outstanding elements, however these outstanding elements are not yet fully consistent.
- Curriculum planning is a focus and this looks different than other areas. Organisation doesn't use LMI to inform and instead works closely with schools and other colleges so that the offer complements rather than competes.
- There is a big focus on supported internships
- Organisation works with at least six local authorities and therefore it is important to build effective relationships
- Curriculum planning is trying to respond to any skills gaps identified for 2023 and beyond
- Further improvements have been identified so that the provision can get to outstanding

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## **18 T Levels**

The Director of High Level Skills and Innovation presented this report and key matters highlighted were:

- Decision has been made to change the construction route to 'design, surveying and planning for construction' – this will be a better route for high level learners
- Additional T Level areas to be introduced include engineering, animal management and hair and beauty
- T Level capital bid due to be submitted next week

Governors made reference to the target set for applications and asked whether the group was being too optimistic. They asked how things are currently developing. Staff advised that there are currently 17 expressions of interest logged. So far marketing has been generic with the intention to move to more specifics now. T Level pages on the website provide a general background. Next stage is to upload course content on to the website so that this can be marketed and enrolments taken for specific areas. Assurance was given that there are significant marketing plans in place for the year.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## **19 Employer Engagement Report**

In the absence of James Godsell it was agreed to take the report as read with any queries to be emailed in from governors.

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

## **20 HE Update and SED 2021/22**

In relation to the self-evaluation document the CEO confirmed that it had been started by Andy Birch and then completed by Cheryl Martin following his move to another college.

In terms of a general update, key matters highlighted were:

- There are some interim arrangements in place and action following staff movement. Committee were given assurance regarding the cover in place.
- Enrolments are down and staff are working hard to try and address and an example given was the introduction of higher level skills modules.
- There is a significant focus on achievement
- TEF submission is due tomorrow. Committee were advised that the bar in relation to achieving gold has been increased and therefore staff currently believe that silver would be a good outcome.
- Staff structures within the group are being reviewed

Question and challenge from one governor was whether or not the organisation has analysed why enrolment and recruitment is down. Deputy CEO expressed the view that there are a number of influencing factors, including:

- Other universities were/are more aggressive in terms of recruitment and marketing
- RNN has not quite got the curriculum right and can do more in terms of shorter modules

CEO commented that recruitment in to traditional HE provision in FE colleges is quite low and that, whilst RNN is quite competitive in terms of price, there is a need to look at other options rather than a traditional HE offer. He confirmed the intention to include HE growth as a key focus in the accountability statement. Staff confirmed that the organisation hasn't really spoken enough to stakeholders and partners yet and is now doing this to explore alternative options.

AGREED:

- a) To note the content of the update provided
- b) Recommend that the board approve the 2021/22 SED as presented.

## **21 2021/22 Progression Report**

Governors considered the report and there were a number of queries, including:

- Reference to CO1 – what is this?
- Where there is a drop in internal progression is this from the final Level 3 statistics?

Head of Business Intelligence and Performance indicated that applications have been quite steady for the last 2 years, however 2022/23 progression declined to 75%. He confirmed that the team are currently working with Perlos to better understand this. He indicated that if the group had hit its usual 90% progression figure then the 16-18 allocation would have been met. Challenge from governors was to have a really good look at this and learn for this year. Deputy CEO expressed the view that staff could have used the information from progression boards much more effectively and supported transition much earlier. This, sitting alongside effective marketing, would have really helped. Deputy CEO indicated that part and parcel of improving progression is also about raising aspirations and expectations as discussed earlier in the meeting.

One governor asked whether Perlos is gathering data every half term. Staff advised that this is not the case and that it is internal data collected this frequently with destinations data now being gathered from September and then assessed at three points in the year.

Committee asked whether progression reported is within the group. It was confirmed that it is and it was explained that Perlos look at the external progression in a number of ways, one example given was utilisation of WhatsApp.

Committee all agreed that they would wish to see a follow up report on this when all the data is received and analysed (**Head of BI&P, 2023**).

AGREED: to note the content of the update provided.

**22 AOB**

There were no items of additional business.

**23 Date and time of next meeting**

This was confirmed as Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 at 5pm.

Governors specifically requested that the apprenticeship report provided at this meeting give an update on the accountability outcomes (**Assistant Principal, March 2023**)

**24 Confidential minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022**

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

AGREED: to approve the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

There were no matters arising.

**The meeting closed at 6.55pm.**

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

Date \_\_\_\_\_