Higher Education and Skills

Strategic Plan

2016-2019

1.   Introduction

The RNN Group serves a local community of 374,200 people of which 76.7% of the individuals are economically active. The Group operates from 5 main sites, the North Nottinghamshire Campus in Worksop, the Rotherham Campus, Dinnington Campus and the Rawmarsh Road and Shire Oaks Centres which are focused on construction trades. In the area served by the Group economic inactivity is 1.9% above the national average and the average wage is 9.3% lower than the national average for salaried staff and 8.8% lower for hourly paid. Full time employment in the area is higher than the national average with 71.8% of the jobs available being full-time against a national average of 67.7%. The largest employers are within the public sector followed by manufacturing, finance and IT and then distribution.

Levels of academic attainment for the area are all below the national average and individuals with no qualifications are above the national average as detailed below.

Level	Bassetlaw	Rotherham	Great Britain
NVQ 4 equivalent and above	20.4%	23.1%	36.0%
NVQ 3 equivalent	33.5%	48.1%	56.7%
NVQ 2 equivalent	64.6%	69.1%	73.3%
NVQ 1 equivalent	81.4%	83.9%	85.0%
No Qualifications	11.2%	9.9%	8.8%

(Source: Nomis December 2014)

In 2015 the proportion of pupils achieving five GCSEs at A*-C, including English and Mathematics in Rotherham was above the national average at 57.3% but this was a drop on the previous year. This position also masks the issue that pupils in disadvantaged communities are actually gaining fewer passes and there are falling levels of achievement. In North Nottinghamshire the picture is 58% which is again above the national average. Higher Education entry in Bassetlaw and Rotherham is polarised with young people in the least deprived areas being 3 times more likely to access Higher Education than those from the most deprived areas (44% versus 15%).

2.   The Rationale for Higher Education at the RNN Group

In May 2016 the government published the white paper **Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice.** The paper was a key driver for change in the Higher Education sector and key parts of the Group is actively responding to the opportunities and challenges laid out in the document as a way of developing and improving its Higher Education offer. As highlighted above, achievement levels at level 4 and above in the Group's catchment area are below the national average and there are pockets of extremely low participation levels in Higher Education in both Rotherham and Worksop but the opportunities laid out in the white

paper enabled the Group to begin to address these issues. The white paper had 4 key strands which presented the following opportunities:-

Market Reform will see a change in what information is available for potential students to access. The introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) will allow providers access to inflationary increases in tuition fees, dependent upon how an institution's quality of teaching is measured. Degree Apprenticeships will remain under the quality scrutiny of BIS as the development of new Degree Apprenticeships will likely increase significantly due to the Apprenticeship Levy coming into effect June 2017.

New Providers and Maintaining Quality sees the removal of the Privy Council from the Degree Awarding Power's (DAPs) process. The approval powers will now sit under the newly developed Office for Students (OfS) to ensure absolute independence in the process of awarding degrees and university title to UK institutions.

Office for Students (OfS) is a lot closer to being created with the publication of the white paper. The idea of a merged OfS and OFFA with a greater regulatory and student focus on regulatory reform is likely to become a reality. A significant change from HEFCE to OfS is having the Secretary of State designate the bodies that discharge quality and data duties, moving towards greater stability and enshrine co-regulation.

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) will likely strengthen the commitment to the dual funding system (of the OfS and UKRI bodies) by requiring the Secretary of State to consider the balance between the two arms of dual support in a legislative arrangement.

In 2011 the Rotherham Campus made the strategic decision that in the light of the low Higher Education participation rates in Rotherham that there was a need for an extended range of affordable, high quality Higher Education provision available locally. The Campus has used the last four years, taking advantage of the opportunities that were presented by the 2011 white paper *Students at the Heart of the System*, to develop its range of provision, increase student numbers, develop a Higher Education quality system and improve its facilities for the delivery of Higher Education provision. The Campus has also over this period reviewed and developed its links with a range of validating institutions to ensure that the provision best meets the needs of our students and stakeholders. Appendix one details the range of Higher Education programmes currently available across the Group and Appendix 2 details the growth in provision, numerically and financially, over the last 5 years.

In September 2015 the removal of the HEFCE Student Number Control enabled the Rotherham Campus to take the opportunity to further extend its Higher Education provision. Building on the strength of the College's level 3 provision the opportunity was taken to maximise the range of qualifications it had on offer and with the support of other partners it began to address the level 4 and above skills gap in Rotherham.

With the merger the good practices developed at the Rotherham and North Notts Colleges will be utilised across the Higher Education provision of the RNN Group to drive increased engagement at all sites.

3. The Group's Mission and Vision for Higher Education

The RNN Group is currently working on developing core values for the group, with the support of all management, support, and academic staff employed by the RNN Group. As of July 2016, the RNN Group's HE Department utilises the core values from Rotherham College:

- Becoming Outstanding;
- Delivering Economic Value;
- Investing in Improvement;
- Increasing Sustainability

We believe the Group has a responsibility to raise the aspiration of individuals within our communities and enable them to shape and develop a better future. An outstanding student experience is at the heart of what we do and we aim to provide a high quality, local, programme of Higher Education that is accessible to all. We see students being at the core of everything we do and we will proactively engage them in enhancing the student experience.

4. Strategic Priorities

The Group has identified the following 5 key priorities to drive forward Higher Education.

Priority 1 – To increase participation in Higher Education and support high levels of student success

- The Group will continue to develop a high quality coherent range of Higher Education provision which builds upon the Group's vocational strengths at level 3
- The Group will develop internal progression routes for students from level 3 to level 6
- The Group will develop its access opportunities and provide high levels of support to all students but will ensure that effective support is in place for widening participation students using the wider information set to identify relevant individuals
- The Group will develop higher level apprenticeships where there is employer demand for the provision
- Review the marketing strategy for Higher Education to raise the awareness of all key stakeholders, in particular, employers and schools, of the Group's Higher Education provision
- The Group will extend its involvement in external Higher Education progression events and will more effectively structure internal progression activities

- The Group will provide high quality information and guidance for potential students
- Employability will be embedded within the curriculum

By 2019 the Group will have a wide range of high quality curriculum delivered by expert staff which enables significant levels of student participation in Higher Education in Rotherham.

Priority 2 – To provide a high quality education experience to meet the needs and aspirations of students, employers and the local community
- The Group will develop its accommodation to enable it provide students with a differentiated Higher Education experience
- The Group will continue to invest in its accommodation to ensure that it reflects industry standards
- Investment will be made as required in IT resources to ensure students have excellent Wi-Fi access and the required technology to effectively participate in their learning activities
- Moodle will be developed to ensure all students have effective access to learning resources and blended learning is embedded in all programmes
- Social networking will be developed to promote a peer support system for staff and students
- Work with key stakeholders such as the Sheffield City Region LEP, RMBC and North Nottinghamshire County Council to develop the Higher Education curriculum and resources
- Engage with employers on the development and delivery of Higher Education programmes
- Further development of social spaces to support a Higher Education experience
- Ensure that all HE resources required are available in the Libraries and are supported with reading lists.

By 2019 there will be a dedicated Higher Education Centre in Rotherham providing a high quality experience for students and there will be a specialist Higher Education area in Worksop/ Retford again offering the same high quality experience.

Priority 3 – Developing the management and governance of Higher Education
- Continue to review the Group's quality code to ensure it meets the regulatory requirements of the QAA and the Group's awarding bodies
- Review and develop the strategic and operational committees to ensure transparency, efficiency and participation from all stakeholders
- Improved guidance for staff on quality assurance and quality enhancement through staff development and clear documentation
- Develop operational management processes for the collection, dissemination and analysis of key data on student recruitment, retention and achievement data

By 2019 the Group will build on the excellent practice identified in its QAA higher education review and further enhance its efficient and effective management and governance system for Higher Education responsive to both internal and external drivers.

Priority 4 – Deliver high quality learning and teaching supported by appropriate scholarship and research

- The Group will develop a bespoke Higher Education learning and teaching observation process
- Provide staff with appropriate opportunities to carry out research and scholarly activity
- External student feedback on learning and teaching will be collected consistently through the full range of tools available e.g. NSS and DLHE
- Internal student feedback on learning and teaching will be collected consistently through a wide variety of activities and will be effectively evaluated and actions implemented to drive improvement
- All forms of externality to report high levels of effectiveness in teaching and learning will include external examiners reports, academic reviews (e.g. QAA and validating bodies) and all other forms of external audit
- Proactively promote the support available from the Independent Learning Service to ensure students have the required skills to succeed.

By 2019 all learning and teaching will be excellent and all staff will engage in appropriate scholarship and research

Priority 5 – Increasing student belonging, satisfaction and engagement

- The Group will implement a Student Involvement Strategy to manage its engagement with students in quality enhancement activities
- The Group will effectively collect, evaluate and respond to student feedback
- The Group will provide clearly defined roles and appropriate training for student representatives, mentors and ambassadors
- The Group will work towards supporting students in developing a student union
- The Group will explore the development of an active alumni association
- The Group will ensure that there are effective structures in place to support student target setting and personal development.

By 2019 there will be a community of students who enjoy and benefit from their experience at the RNN Group they feel a sense of belonging and are actively engaged in the enhancement of the curriculum and the college.

5.   Implementing the Strategy

The attached table outlines the measures that the Group will be put in place to ensure that the strategic priorities are achieved. These will be reviewed annually to ensure that they are still current and relevant and will be updated based on progress.

5.   Implementing the Strategy – Measures 2016

1 To increase participation in Higher Education and support high levels of student success	2. To provide a high quality education experience to meet the needs and aspirations of students, employers and the local community	3 Developing the management and governance of Higher Education	4. Deliver high quality learning and teaching supported by appropriate scholarship and research	5. Increasing student belonging, satisfaction and engagement
Measures	**Measures**	**Measures**	**Measures**	**Measures**
Review the marketing strategy for Higher Education	Work with RMBC and other stakeholders to plan and fund a Higher Education Centre in Rotherham	Review all aspects of the Group's Quality code	Implement a specific Higher Education observation process for learning and teaching	Develop and implement a Student Involvement Strategy for Higher Education
Review the Higher Education curriculum offer and identify key objectives for development for 2017/18 and 2018/19 academic years	Review resources at all course approval panels to ensure appropriate resources are in place for a high quality student experience	Include training in all Higher Education Department meetings to ensure staff are clear of quality assurance and quality enhancement processes	Set up a working group to look at how we develop research and scholarly activity with staff involved in delivery of Higher Education programmes	Develop a system for providing effective feedback to students on issues raised through learner voice activities
Review and develop a wider range of access provision to support progression	Pro-actively seek funding to support the development of vocational areas	Develop effective management information for all key and wider information sets	Develop and deliver a Higher Education toolkit for staff delivering on programmes	Implement a training programme for student representatives
Identify potential non prescribed full cost and SFA funded Higher Education programmes that can be developed to expand the range of Higher Education provision	Identify appropriate social media for the development of a peer support system		Review the Self-Evaluation document for programmes to ensure it is Higher Education focussed	Embed pro-monitor on all full time Higher Education programmes
Develop the role of the Higher Education Student Liaison Officer to work effectively with students in supporting them to progress from level 3	Implement guidelines for the engagement of employers in Higher Education		Work effectively with the third party provider to carry out the DLHE survey	Develop a student forum as the first step on the way to developing a student union
Increase involvement in UCAS events			Pro-actively promote the NSS to students to ensure that at least 50% of programmes have a response on the KIS	
Hold four Higher Education events across the Group and participate in all appropriate school events				

Appendix 1

Higher Education Programmes 2016/17

Course Title	Delivery Academy	Awarding Body	Commenced
Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PgCE) – Pre Service	Business Enterprise	University of Hull	2013/14
Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PgCE) – In Service	Business Enterprise	University of Hull	2013/14
Certificate in Education Pre-Service	Business Enterprise	University of Hull	2013/14
Certificate in Education In-Service	Business Enterprise	University of Hull	2013/14
Bachelor of Arts Education & Professional Development	Business Enterprise	University of Hull	2014/15
Foundation Degree Learning Support	Business Enterprise	University of Hull	2014/15
Bachelor of Arts Entrepreneurship, Enterprise and Innovation **SUBJECT TO APPROVAL**	Business Enterprise	University of Hull	2017/18
Foundation Degree Childhood Studies	Health Sciences and Care	University of Hull	2012/13
Higher National Certificate – Diploma Level 4 Animal Management	Health Sciences and Care	Pearson	2016/17
Higher National Diploma – Diploma Level 5 in Animal Management	Health Sciences and Care	Pearson	2016/17

Course Title	Delivery Academy	Awarding Body	Commenced
Higher National Certificate – Diploma Level 4 in Mechanical Engineering	Engineering and Construction	Pearson	2011/12
/Higher National Diploma – Diploma Level 5 in Mechanical Engineering	Engineering and Construction	Pearson	2011/12
Higher National Certificate – Diploma Level 4 in Electrical & Electronic Engineering	Engineering and Construction	Pearson	2011/12
Higher National Diploma – Diploma Level 5 in Electrical & Electronic Engineering	Engineering and Construction	Pearson	2011/12
Higher National Certificate – Diploma Level 4 in General Engineering - Metallurgy	Engineering and Construction	Pearson	2011/12
Higher National Diploma – Diploma Level 5 in General Engineering	Engineering and Construction	Pearson	2011/12
BEng Integrated Engineering **SUBJECT TO APPROVAL**	Engineering and Construction	University of Hull	2017/18
Higher National Diploma – Diploma Level 4 in Construction and the Built Environment	Engineering and Construction	Pearson	2017/18
BA Theatre Acting and Performance	Digital and Creative Industries	University of Hull	2015/16
BA Fashion	Digital and Creative Industries	University of Hull	2015/16

Course Title	Delivery Academy	Awarding Body	Commenced
BA Media, Moving Image and Photography	Digital and Creative Industries	University of Hull	2015/16
BA Popular Music Performance	Digital and Creative Industries	University of Hull	2015/16
BA Graphic Communication Design	Digital and Creative Industries	Sheffield Hallam University	2015/16
BA Fine and Applied Art	Digital and Creative Industries	University of Hull	2016/17
BSc Computing and Systems Development	Digital and Creative Industries	University of Hull	2016/17
Foundation Degree Computing and Systems Development	Digital and Creative Industries	University of Hull	2015/16
Foundation Degree Games Design and Development	Digital and Creative Industries	University of Hull	2015/16
Higher National Certificate – Diploma Level 4 in Performing Arts - Production – Specialist Make Up	Digital and Creative Industries	Pearson	2014/15
Higher National Diploma – Diploma Level 5 in Performing Arts - Production – Specialist Make Up	Digital and Creative Industries	Pearson	2014/15
Higher National Certificate – Diploma Level 4 in Hair and Beauty Management	Digital and Creative Industries	Pearson	2014/15
Higher National Diploma – Diploma Level 5 in Hair and Beauty Management	Digital and Creative Industries	Pearson	2014/15
Higher National Certificate – Diploma Level 4 in Sport	Digital and Creative Industries	Pearson	2016/17

Course Title	Delivery Academy	Awarding Body	Commenced
Higher National Diploma – Diploma Level 5 in Sport	Digital and Creative Industries	Pearson	2016/17

Appendix 2

Higher Education Growth 2011/12 to 2016/17

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17 Predicted
Student Numbers Rotherham Campus	269	300	312	335	436	384
Student Numbers North Nottinghamshire Campus	43	45	62	63	90	71
Total Student Numbers	312	345	374	398	526	458
HE Fees Rotherham Campus	£184,139	£731,964	£1,107,780	£1,276,672	£1,877,403	£2,040,006
HE Fees North Nottinghamshire Campus	£35,730	£108,107	£111,663	£172,752	£330,400	£189,525
HEFCE Grant Rotherham Campus	£723,413	£522,496	£357,875	£350,958	£352,748	£461,258
HEFCE Grant North Nottinghamshire Campus	£98,948	£59,725	£58,210	£69,516	£55,000	£55,000
Total	£1,042,230	£1,422,292	£1,635,528	£1,869,898	£2,207,803	£2,229,531