

**SPARSHOLT COLLEGE HAMPSHIRE**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**CURRICULUM, EMPLOYERS & MARKET REQUIREMENTS COMMITTEE**  
**held on 1 NOVEMBER 2018**

**<sup>1</sup>PRESENT** S Eden (C); T Floyd (E); T Jackson (P); A Neal (E); S Ward (E).

In attendance: J Chapman, Marketing Manager (mins 115 to 132)  
S Grant, Deputy Principal - Corporate  
J Milburn, Deputy Principal - Curriculum  
S Willson, Clerk to the Corporation

**APOLOGIES & MEMBERSHIP**

101. Apologies were received from E Hunter and S Morgan.
102. The Committee Chair noted that it was the last meeting of the Committee attended by S Ward prior to completion of his final term of office as a governor and thanked him for his contribution to the Committee's work.

**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

103. There were no interests to be declared in matters to be discussed at this meeting.

**MINUTES**

104. **Resolved** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2018 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**MATTERS ARISING**

Curriculum (minute 55, 58, 60/18)

105. The Principal reported that the first year of the new technical qualifications had generally been implemented well, with the exception of one area which had been reported to the Board and would be covered in the Self-Assessment Review for 2017-18.
106. Updating the Committee on the availability of new T-Levels, the Principal noted that it had now been reported to the Board that the first round of T-Level launches had been completed and therefore the digital T-Level was not available to the College. There were indications that the introduction of new land-based T-Levels might be brought forward to 2020.
107. Following discussion at the previous meeting, the Deputy Principal Curriculum also reported that Andover College had been represented at an event at Tidworth Camp (Wiltshire) to explain opportunities for provision of English and Maths and skills to support employment.
108. The Committed noted that the College had now launched a National Zoo Academy, bringing together under one brand its unique provision of zoo-related education, and that this together with provision to military families were two of the key strategic marketing priorities covered by the reports to the Committee.

---

<sup>1</sup> (C) = Co-opted; (E) = External; (P) = Principal; (S) = Staff; (St) = Student

### Marketing (68-70/18)

109. The Principal updated the Committee on the plans for a “STEM” day in June 2019 for secondary school children, showcasing developments in land-based technology. This was in place of the College holding a “Countryside Day” public event in 2019. Responding to a Member’s question about the involvement of employers, the Principal explained that the aim was to devise a range of engaging activities for the large number of pupils attending, including demonstrations of technology in use in the sector, and that consideration was also being given to involving companies which employed apprentices.

### **COMMITTEE BUSINESS PLAN**

110. The Committee had received the report of the Clerk setting out the Committee’s forward business plan for 2018-19.

111. The Committee Chair reflected on the significance of matters covered by the remit of the Committee to the financial sustainability of the College, with some matters also relating closely to other committee’s work (such as curriculum contribution analysis). The Principal expanded on this, highlighting the focus of the Committee on identifying and delivering the needs of learners through the curriculum planning and reporting processes.

112. The Deputy Principal – Corporate explained some additional analysis being undertaken by management on 19+ enrolments which had not been available for this meeting and proposed bringing a separate report to the next meeting.

113. The Committee discussed a Member’s suggestion that the Committee plan a session looking at the local economy, for example through the LEP’s strategic economic plan, and possibly other external information, such as the Government’s consultation on the future of food, farming and the environment, as context for its business. The Principal explained that there might be additional information forthcoming from work the EM3 LEP was undertaking on skills strategy and the Deputy Principal – Corporate noted that information about employers’ needs would be part of the planned reports on the ESF Project and Employers’ Strategy. It was also noted that University Centre Sparsholt’s TEF Gold assessment had highlighted the employability skills being provided. It was agreed that a “training” session might be a future option for a Governors’ Seminar, with the option of inviting the Co-opted Member.

114. **Resolved** – that the Committee’s forward business plan for 2018-19 be approved, with the addition of a report on 19+ enrolments in the Spring term.

### **CURRICLUM RECRUITMENT**

115. The Committee had received the report of the Deputy Principal – Curriculum and Deputy Principal – Corporate on enrolment trends across Further Education, Apprenticeships and Higher Education in relation to the curriculum offer.

116. Members discussed the analysis, seeking further information about the actions taken by management and the reasons behind some of the data.

117. Asked about changes to this year’s recruitment at Andover College, the Deputy Principal – Curriculum explained that the College had successfully piloted “in school” interviews and had also facilitated tutor/teacher “swaps” between the College and local schools. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum also explained that local pupils who did not select Andover College tended to do so for reasons such as friendship groups or subject choice,

although the College also continued to work to further build its reputation as reflected in the Marketing Strategy and wider discussions at the Board about property matters. When promoting the College further afield, management was aware that geography was a key factor for students and kept travel needs and bus routes under constant review. Other factors impacting recruitment included lower achievement and progression in some areas, which would be examined in detail by the Quality & Standards Committee, and national decline in areas such as Sport.

118. Members noted the variation in recruitment trends by curriculum area at Sparsholt College, discussing some of the underlying factors and noting the challenges which were faced in areas, such as Game and Wildlife, despite the outstanding facilities. Asked if College management analysed recruitment from “feeder schools” at the Sparsholt College campus, in addition to the information reported in relation to Andover College, the Marketing Manager confirmed that a long list of schools covering a wider area were regularly reviewed in order to prioritise communication activities.
119. The Committee noted that the significant reported decline in apprenticeship enrolments was the direct result of the corresponding reduction nationwide in college funding allocations and the College’s ensuing decision to discontinue apprenticeship starts with associates. The Deputy Principal – Corporate explained that the College had sought to increase take-up of apprenticeships by small businesses in order to compensate for the reduction in business from levy-paying employers following changes to apprenticeship funding policy. However, the recent Government decision to reduce the small business contribution from 10% to 5% in 2019, but without an implementation date, introduced the new risk of small businesses holding-off from starting apprentices. This would be kept under review and the College would seek to balance any fall-off with growth of levy business.
120. The Deputy Principal – Corporate also highlighted the anticipated move towards a younger apprenticeships learner profile, as associated delivery ceased, because of the types of apprenticeships the College was able to offer. Growth areas for apprenticeships followed market preferences, for example with an increase in horticulture apprenticeships while full-time horticulture declined.
121. Asked how the contribution of apprenticeships to the financial viability of curriculum areas was measured, the Principal explained that this depended on the tariff and that these tariffs were being reviewed as apprenticeship frameworks were replaced by apprenticeship standards. Tariffs could also be changed mid-way through an apprenticeship, causing additional uncertainty.
122. The Committee discussed the decline in both first year and third year (“top-up”) HE students, although two curriculum areas had seen an overall increase. The decrease of 35 (from 144 to 109) in the number of new HE students was seen as a particular concern. Members discussed the analysis which indicated that the variation between applications and enrolments was a result of the University Centre Sparsholt (UCS) often being an applicant’s “second choice”, despite the recognised teaching excellence on offer. Management were doing further work to understand individual applicant’s needs and personalise communication activities, involving the wider HE team in a more focused way in recruitment and progression, promoting enhanced facilities and offers, and bidding for investment to further differentiate HE facilities. Asked about the growth of Vet Nursing in previous years, the Deputy Principal – Corporate confirmed that there was still an

employment market for Vet Nurses, although there was strong competition for UCS including from regional private providers.

123. The Committee welcomed the detailed analysis undertaken and the evidence that management understood the underlying drivers and were taking relevant actions.

## **MARKETING**

124. The Committee had received the report of the Principal and Marketing Manager on the impact of the Marketing Strategy for 2017-18 and the aims and objectives of the Marketing Strategy for 2018-19.
125. The Committee noted that the previous year's Marketing Strategy appeared to have been successful in raising awareness and increasing enrolments from Year 11 pupils, particularly at Sparsholt College, as well as increase in 19+ enrolments. However, this was countered by fewer internal progressors between FE courses or from FE to UCS, and fewer external applications to UCS. The detailed assessment of the delivery of the 2017-18 Strategy and the transparency of the RAG ratings were welcomed by the Committee.
126. The Principal introduced the 2018-19 Strategy, explaining the evolution from the previous year, with activities for this year already commenced and monitoring during the year monthly by the Principal, Marketing Manager and Assistant Principal – Higher Education.
127. Members discussed the continuing emphasis on Digital Futures and the challenge to translate the interest shown into new enrolments and new provision, reflecting on the widening digital skills requirements of employers.
128. Asked for more information about how the student journey to employment was incorporated within the marketing, in particular how the skills gained were valued by employers, the Principal gave the example of specific student case studies used in promotional material. Endorsements from employers and parents were also used, together with employment statistics for HE graduates.
129. Members also discussed the provision of information and advice in relation to progression, whether this was to HE at the College or to other alternatives, noting the initiatives to extend information on HE options earlier in the student journey and the use of technology, such as reports to parents, to highlight future progression opportunities.
130. Members noted that the matters covered by the Strategy were in line with the themes covered by S Ward's recent report on his Governor Link visit to Marketing.
131. Reviewing the detailed actions, Members sought further information as to how the priority ratings were decided and were assured by the approach being taken by management. Specific areas discussed included the ongoing development of the website and social media activity, and the level of potential value of creating an alumni scheme. Whilst the value of a standard student alumni scheme might be limited, the Deputy Principal – Corporate emphasised the extremely strong networking between the College and businesses who have previously participated in training and apprenticeship teams, supported by a database.
132. The Committee welcomed the emphasis on a "whole College" approach to marketing, including in relation to progression. The Committee endorsed the 2018-19 Strategy as supporting the College's Strategic Plan, noting the objectives and activities were in line with the recruitment and enrolment analysis for FE at Andover College and Sparsholt

College, HE and Apprenticeships, and looked forward to future updates on delivery of the Strategy.

#### **HEALTHCHECK REPORT**

133. The Committee noted the most recent Healthcheck report (2018/06) and that there were no matters relevant to its remit which had not been covered elsewhere in the meeting.
134. The meeting ended at 12.00 pm.