

**SPARSHOLT COLLEGE HAMPSHIRE**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**CURRICULUM, EMPLOYERS & MARKET REQUIREMENTS COMMITTEE**  
**held on 23 MAY 2019**

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

In attendance: J Chapman, Marketing Manager (mins xx to yy)  
S Grant, Deputy Principal – Corporate  
S Hermiston, Director of Funding & Information Management (48 to 73)  
C James, Assistant Principal - HE (mins 48 to 77)  
J Milburn, Deputy Principal - Curriculum  
S Willson, Clerk to the Corporation

**APOLOGIES AND MEMBERSHIP**

48. Apologies were received from E Hunter and S Morgan.
49. It was noted that A Neal had stepped down from the Committee and that S Eden, formerly a co-opted member, had been appointed a member of the Board of Governors and his membership of the Committee, as a governor, confirmed.

**DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

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

**MINUTES**

51. **Resolved** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**MATTERS ARISING**

Local Enterprise Partnerships (minutes 4 and 11/19)

52. The Principal noted that the publication of the EM3 LEP's 2019-20 Delivery Plan was imminent and would include reference to the Animal Health and Welfare Research Centre.
53. The Deputy Principal – Corporate confirmed that the update of the Employer Engagement Strategy to be presented to the Committee in the Autumn would include reference to the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan, which would also be brought to the Committee for information, and that the College was already engaged in bids informed by the LEP's spending plans in relation to digital skills and brokerage. The Deputy Principal – Corporate also reported that the College had taken on the leadership of the consortium of colleges to develop online adult learning offers and consent had been given to re-submit the bid.
54. A Member gave examples of various industry-related activities with LEPs in other regions and it was noted that College management actively considered relevant opportunities from LEPs in the surrounding areas, such as Solent, Dorset and Thames Valley.

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

### Curriculum (minute 23/19)

55. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum reported the outcome of the College’s funding bid for the Taking Teaching Further programme, noting that part of the bid had been successful and that the funds awarded would support the recruitment, appointment and staff development of a new lecturer within the field of construction, digital or early years education.
56. There were no other matters arising not covered by items on the agenda.

### **CURRICULUM INTENT**

#### Curriculum Contribution

57. The Committee had received the report of the Director of Funding and Information Management on the curriculum contribution. The analysis had been scrutinised by the Resources Committee in relation to the effective planning and efficient management of resources and was provided to the Committee to inform its consideration of the proposed curriculum plan.
58. The Committee Chair noted that strategic options for the curriculum offer at both campuses had also been discussed with the SLT at the Governors’ Seminar. Members discussed the contribution analysis, seeking further information about how management used the data.
59. The Principal emphasised that the data was useful in informing decisions about the strategic direction of travel to ensure financial sustainability but that decisions had to take into account the wider impact of removing courses which could lead to a decline in enrolments or an increase in overhead costs in other areas. Where there were changes to industry skills demands identified and/or long-term quality performance concerns, specific actions were taken, including course closure or introducing alternative, relevant offers, such as apprenticeships.
60. It was noted that the contribution analysis was one part of the increased clarity and modernisation of the curriculum management which also included increased focus on staff utilisation and improvements to the transparency and rigour of timetabling processes. While restructures over recent years had led to a lean organisation, management was seeking to ensure more parity of resourcing between some areas.
61. The Committee welcomed the evidence of management interrogating the contribution of curriculum areas and endorsed the processes being undertaken to inform the direction and delivery of the College’s curriculum.

#### Curriculum Plan

62. The Committee had received the 3 Year Curriculum plan, including an overview of the landscape and rationale of the College offer and a summary of planned changes for each key sub-sector of provision (14-16, 16-19, adult, apprenticeships (all ages) and higher education).
63. The Principal drew the Committee’s attention to a number of new developments in 2019-20, including a commitment to review the 14-16 offer to ascertain as to whether this could be revised to make it more attractive to school heads and exploring opportunities to develop supported internships as a progression route for SEND learners. There were also initiatives underway working with Test Valley Borough Council to stimulate greater collaboration and opportunities for students with providers in the construction sector

- and to enhance the electrical installation, carpentry and brick curriculum offers. The Principal also highlighted the introduction of a qualification in Game Design, capitalising on investment in the Virtual Reality room at Andover College, as an example of forward-looking curriculum development.
64. It was noted that the College had adopted all the Apprenticeship Standards available which mapped to the curriculum offer but that the apprenticeship sector was still experiencing volatility because the Standards, although developed by industry, were not always seen as meeting the needs of employers and to due challenges experienced in recruiting workers, who were aged 24 and over, to the new Standards.
  65. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum noted that plans for the FE curriculum took into account the new Ofsted Education Inspection Framework measures to ensure that that there were appropriate levels of progression in place for each learning area.
  66. The HE Strategy Group reviewed gaps and opportunities for the HE curriculum and the Assistant Principal – HE explained the introduction of new Level 4 provision in Sport at Andover College and that the content had been designed to provide clear progression routes.
  67. Responding to a Member’s question about the criteria for developing new subject areas, the Deputy Principal – Corporate explained that, where there was interest from learners and demands for skills in a new area, the College would seek to develop an appropriate and viable offer and to link this to either the Sparsholt College or Andover College core curriculum.
  68. The Committee noted that the College had responded well to changes in AEB (Adult) funding arrangements, improving income levels and increasing student numbers by adding to distance/online learning packages and managing a mixed funding economy.
  69. It was also noted that the College would be putting considerable effort into developing expertise in delivering vocational qualifications (T levels and apprenticeships) which were examination based. The new workflow required in the delivery of synoptic assessments, end point assessments, 45 industrial placements and 20% off the job training had been challenging for staff and required support to establish new ways of working to stabilise the offer.
  70. Asked to expand further on these challenges and the impact on the wellbeing of staff, the Deputy Principal – Curriculum summarised the changes to the student experience and to teaching demands in preparing students to succeed in the new assessments and confirmed that management was aware of the pressures and was supporting the staff involved.
  71. Responding to a Member’s question about the College’s level of preparedness for T Levels, the Deputy Principal – Curriculum explained ways in which the College was actively preparing should its expressions of interest to provide several T Levels from 2021 be successful.
  72. The Principal informed the Committee about a forthcoming meeting with Ecotricity with regard to the anaerobic digester and education building project, as the project linked to aspirations to develop new curriculum offers related to renewable energy, and noted that the outcome would be reported to the Resources Committee and the Board.
  73. **Resolved** – that the scope and ambition of the 3 Year Curriculum Plan was appropriate to maintain a strong land-based offer in FE and HE at Sparsholt College and a broad Tertiary

offer at Andover College and was fit for purpose to deliver the College’s strategic ambitions, particularly in relation to student progression, future employability, professional development of the employed and to meeting the needs of employees.

## **CURRICULUM IMPACT**

### HE Graduate Outcomes

74. The Committee had received an interim report from the Assistant Principal – Higher Education on HE graduate outcomes (student destinations) for 2017-18.
75. The Committee noted that the advent of the Office for Students (OfS) had resulted in a change to the collecting and reporting of student destinations, with the College now obliged to use an OfS nominated supplier (HESA, the OfS designated Data Body) and the deferment of the collection point until 15 months after graduation. Destinations were now known as Student Outcomes. Consequently, survey data was not yet available for the 2018 graduating cohort and, instead, a summary of continuation and progression of 2018 completers had been provided to the Committee.
76. It was noted that the longer collection point was likely to lead to a deterioration in University Centre Sparsholt’s Student Outcomes data because of the significant proportion of students who start on a Foundation degree and then top up to a BSc. Graduation from Foundation degrees would be the trigger point for the survey which would then take place about 3 months after completion of their BSc which allowed very little time to establish themselves in employment. This would also be an issue for other land-based providers. Additionally, although nearly all vet nursing graduates found employment, the profession was not recognised as a “highly skilled job” in relation to Student Outcomes data. The Committee agreed that these factors presented a risk to the College in how its HE provision was reported and perceived.
77. The Committee noted the interim data and that a more detailed report on employment and student outcomes for each 2017-18 graduating cohort would be available to following year.

### FE Student Destinations

78. The Committee had received the report of the Deputy Principal – Curriculum on FE student destinations for 2017-18, including final data, comparisons with DfE data for leavers July 2015 and recent cases studies of a range of learners.
79. The Committee commended the target of over 90% “known” destinations being exceeded and the mostly positive data. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum explained that, while 94% of full-time 16-18-year-old FE students had known destinations, for all other ESFA 19+ funded qualifications and apprentices 85% of destinations were known. This had been investigated and appeared to result mainly students on part-time dog grooming qualifications not having been surveyed. This would be rectified in future years.
80. It was clarified that the destinations included progression within courses and onto higher level courses, as well as to higher education and employment. The College also undertook more detailed analysis of destinations analysis to inform the annual Self Assessment Report.

81. The Committee welcomed the continued monitoring of students' destinations as helping to assess the College's success in supporting young people to take qualifications which offered them the best opportunity to continue in education, employment or training.
82. Asked about any curriculum areas which were particularly challenging in terms of achieving positive destinations, the Deputy Principal – Curriculum explained that performing arts students could find it hard to progress to being employed as professionals because of intense competition in the sector and that finding relevant work experience was a challenge. The College sought to help the students find alternative progression routes where appropriate.
83. It was noted that the latest Department for Education data (2015-16 academic year, published in January 2019), whilst portraying the College favourably both locally and in comparison to other land-based providers, was of limited value given that the data was almost entirely from tertiary qualifications and the bulk of the College's qualifications were land-based.

#### **INFORMATION, ADVICE & GUIDANCE**

84. The Committee had received the report of the Deputy Principal – Curriculum with the proposed Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) Policy.
85. The Committee noted that the Matrix Standard awarded in May 2018 had recommended the introduction of a policy to support its articulation of the range of supported offered for the achievement of the Gatsby Benchmarks. The Gatsby Benchmarks, part of the Government's career strategy, were not a statutory framework but, by adopting them, colleges could be confident that they were complying with the careers guidance requirements set out in their funding agreement. The new policy had been drafted in accordance with DfE guidance and preparing students for future employment was also embedded in Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework (EIF).
86. It was also noted that the College had already implemented a Careers Strategy 2018-2020 in line with the Gatsby recommendations and the Deputy Principal – Curriculum confirmed the new policy and the strategy were aligned. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum was the Careers Lead and the Careers Strategy had also been updated to confirm this.
87. Members discussed whether the objectives set out the policy covered responding to sector and employers' needs. It was agreed that, while this was covered under both the policy principles and the role of the Head of Careers, the Deputy Principal – Curriculum would review the wording of objective five and report to the Board.
88. The Deputy Principal – Curriculum reported that the mid period Matrix review meeting had commended the progress achieved by the College and provide examples of recent activities in FE and HE, including working with the Southern Universities Network and the Em3 LEP Enterprise Co-ordinator. It was noted that there would be synergies with the HE Access and Participation Plan, supported by cross-college working.
89. **Resolved** – that the Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance Policy be recommended to the Board of Governors for approval.

#### **STRATEGIC PLAN**

90. The Committee had received from the Principal and Deputy Principals the draft Annual Milestone Objectives and Key Measures for Priority 1 and Priority 4 of the 2019-22 Three

Year Strategic Plan in order to review those objectives which were relevant to the terms of reference of the Committee.

91. Asked about whether a numerical target had been set for HE recruitment (Annual Milestone Objective 11), the Principal confirmed that budgetary targets had been set which informed the two-year financial plan. Numerical targets for the current year were detailed in the Marketing Plan report before the Committee and would be updated for 2019-20.
92. **Resolved** – that the draft Annual Milestone Objectives and Key Measures be recommended to the Board of Governors for approval.

## **MARKETING**

93. The Committee had received the progress report of the Principal and Marketing Manager on the delivery of the Marketing Strategy for 2018-19, including a RAG rating update on each of the strategic priorities and related activities.
94. The Committee discussed the update, noting that the plan had supported improvements in recruitment for 2019-20 and would be consolidated for the following year, with development in key areas highlighted. The report emphasised the benefits delivered by a college-wide strategy which had been bought into by internal stakeholders and focused on Whole College activities, as well as the four strategic quadrants. Asked about the reported differentiation of the A Level offer at Andover College, the Marketing Manager explained the need to further clarify and target messages about the 6<sup>th</sup> Form Academy in order to compete with other A Level providers, while remaining cognisant that some Andover College students enrolled on a mixture of A Level and GFE courses.
95. The Marketing Manager also highlighted the role of the Marketing team in support the HE Access and Participation Plan, clearly defining and capturing the impact of activities, and provided an update on the ‘Sparsholt Futures’ schools’ STEM event planned in June.
96. Asked about progress in delivering the enrolment targets, the Principal confirmed the latest FE application figures for 2019-20, noting that conversion to enrolments was critical.
97. Members commended the report and the evidence of the impact of cross-college marketing activities.

## **HEALTHCHECK REPORT**

98. The Committee noted the most recent Healthcheck report (2019/04) and that there were no matters relevant to its remit which had not been covered elsewhere in the meeting.

## **COMMITTEE PERFORMANCE**

99. The Committee had received the report of the Clerk to the Corporation which posed a series of questions to prompt members in discussing the Committee’s performance over 2018-19 and to review the Committee’s terms of reference.
100. The Committee did not identify any matters of concern in relation to the operations of the Committee during 2018-19.
101. The Clerk highlighted the relevance of the Committee’s business to the new emphasis in Ofsted’s EIF on the ‘Intent’ and ‘Impact’ of the curriculum.
102. **Resolved** – that the Terms of Reference be revised in line with the EIF and recommended to the Board of Governors for approval.

103. Members discussed the membership of the Committee, noting that there was currently a vacancy for a co-opted member and agreeing that it would benefit the Committee to recruit a co-opted member with an understanding of relevant external stakeholders, such as employers and local communities. A number of potential individuals known to Members and management were discussed and it was agreed that the Principal follow up two of these, following consultation with the Chair of Governors (also Chair of the Search Committee), with a view to making a recommendation to the Board.
104. The meeting ended at 12.30 pm.