

SPARSHOLT COLLEGE HAMPSHIRE
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
CURRICULUM, EMPLOYERS & MARKET REQUIREMENTS COMMITTEE
held on 19 MAY 2020
via videoconference

PRESENT S Duckering (C); T Floyd (E); T Jackson (P); N Moody (E); S Morgan (E);
J Porter (St).

In attendance: J Chapman, Marketing Manager (mins 92 to 99)
S Grant, Deputy Principal – Corporate
S Hermiston, Director of Information & Funding (to minute 74)
C James, Assistant Principal HE (to minute 89)
J Milburn, Deputy Principal – Curriculum & Principal Designate
M Serridge, Headteacher, Harroway Way Community School
S Willson, Clerk to the Corporation

ATTENDANCE

47. The Committee Chair welcomed Neil Moody to his first meeting since his appointment to the Board of Governors.
48. The Committee welcomed M Serridge to the meeting as a guest and noted his role as head teacher of Harrow Way Community School, a secondary school in the catchment area of Andover College.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

MINUTES

50. **Resolved** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

MATTERS ARISING

Innovation South Virtual Campus (minute 8)

51. The Principal noted that, as reported to the Board of Governors, it had been decided to proceed with delivering the project on the basis of the EM3 LEP funding already in place due to a lack of response from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to the project's bid for European Social Fund (ESF) funds.
52. There were no other matters arising not covered by items on the agenda.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Access and Participation

53. The Committee had received the report of the Assistant Principal – HE and Director of Funding & Information on progress with planning delivery of the Access and Participation

Plan (APP) 2020-21 to 2024-25 and progress against the 2019-20 (Office for Fair Access (OFFA) agreement.

54. The Assistant Principal noted that it was anticipated that the planned spend on access and participation in 2019-20 would be reduced due to Covid-19 lockdown leading to the cancellation of many planned activities between March and July, despite activities being moved online where possible. However, the Office for Students (OfS) had indicated that they would accept the reallocation of spend from access activities to support the success and progression of current students.
55. The Deputy Principal Corporate confirmed that, wherever possible under the circumstances, this was being arranged in the interests of the students with, for example, additional mental health support being provided by the Wellbeing team.
56. The Committee noted nonetheless that the Board should be aware that there was a risk of a potential underspend in 2019-20 which would need to be explained in the annual monitoring return to the OfS.
57. The Assistance Principal – HE explained that monitoring had begun against the 2020-21 targets to ensure that progress is starting to be made and that, with the exception of the POLAR4 male target, enrolments in 2019-20 and applications for 2020-21 indicated that 2020-21 targets looked achievable.
58. The Committee noted that HE management were seeking to better understand lower recruitment of male POLAR4 quintile 1&2 (compared to quintiles 3,4&5) and what could be done to address this. Underrepresented males were one of the OfS's priority target groups.
59. The Deputy Principal – Corporate explained consideration was being given to a direct recruitment campaign targeted at potential male students in the locations already identified. This included seeking to raise the aspirations of school pupils.
60. S Duckering confirmed that attracting males from lower socio-economic groups to HE was a challenge for the wider sector and endorsed the College's approach.
61. It was noted that there was limited data available at this point to report on success rate targets for 2020-21 and no data yet available to analysis in relation to progression rate targets.
62. The Assistant Principal – HE explained that additional budget had been included for the 2020-21 academic year (1.5 FTE) to cover extra resources to promote access activities, to provide mental health support and progression guidance, and to provide enhanced monitoring of target groups.
63. The Assistant Principal – HE also highlighted the positive impact of relocating the disability support team to be nearer the HE teaching team in terms of raised visibility and proactivity.
64. The Committee noted the progress report, the actions completed to date towards meeting the APP targets and the key next steps.

CURRICULUM INTENT

Curriculum Contribution

65. The Committee had received the report of the Director of Funding & Information Management on the overall findings of the FE and HE curriculum contribution model.

The analysis was provided to the Committee to inform its consideration of the proposed curriculum plan and was also due to be presented to the Resources Committee in relation to the effective planning and efficient management of resources.

66. The Director of Funding & Information introduced the report, explaining key elements of the methodology for allocating income and expenditure to areas of learning, and summarising the main findings.
67. The Committee noted the management analysis that there were some specific curriculum areas requiring immediate action, as well as an ongoing need for curriculum reform to enable all areas of the curriculum to be delivered efficiently whilst attending to the more exam-focused technical qualifications, without compromising effectiveness or the student experience.
68. In discussion, it was recognised, however, that some areas with neither increased income or class sizes might still be strategically important to the attractiveness of the curriculum offer, for example science A Levels or land-based courses with higher costs related to regulations and safety.
69. The Principal highlighted the challenge for small FE colleges and sixth forms, like Andover College, to be financially sustainable but noted the growing population in the area and the resulting potential for more viable, larger class sizes. Responding to a Member's question about optimum class sizes, the Principal indicated 12-16 per class while noting that classes at the college ranged from around 8 to 25 depending on the course.
70. The Committee recognised the financial significance of the Animal Management and HE curriculum offer and noted that the Board had previously expressed support for the continuing development of the Andover College curriculum.
71. M Serridge agreed that the local demographics in the Andover area were positive, noting the increase in student numbers in the town's secondary schools. All three schools were now rated 'Good' by Ofsted and were oversubscribed. M Serridge cautioned, however, that there was still a tendency for A Level students to elect to travel to larger sixth form colleges elsewhere and that the need to continue to promote the Andover Sixth offer, including those lower down the school than Year 10s and 11s.
72. In response, the Deputy Principal Curriculum pointed to the strategic development of curriculum pathways and the activities being undertaken in conjunction with secondary schools, including with the lower year groups, as well as with local military communities which were newer to the area. The Principal also noted the awareness raising undertaken with schools over a number of years about the high levels of personalised learning and the excellent A Level 'Value Added' achievement levels at Andover Sixth.
73. The Student Governor reported that she had found the contacts from Andover College when she was at school helpful in illustrating A Level routes and that she and other Andover Sixth students welcomed the smaller class sizes and more personalised approach than that offered at larger sixth form colleges.
74. The Committee welcomed the continuing 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

75. 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 and higher education).
76. The Deputy Principal Curriculum had also provided with the report examples of a programme area Curriculum Development Plan and a Curriculum Overview assessment to demonstrate how College management was developing enhanced processes to involve teams in devising and assessing the intent and impact of the curriculum in each area (in line with Ofsted's Common Inspection Framework (CIF)).
77. The Deputy Principal Curriculum introduced the report, highlighting the key drivers informing the development of the curriculum, including responding to student feedback and other stakeholder needs. There followed a detailed and wide-ranging discussion of the developments with Committee members.
78. In relation to T Levels, the Deputy Principal Curriculum confirmed that the College had passed the first level of assessment by the ESFA to deliver four T level pathways from September 2022 (Digital Production, Design and Development, Onsite Construction, Health & Science, Accountancy). Other bids for 2022 were unsuccessful due to not meeting the minimum requirements for numbers of students from 2018-19 end of year data (Education and Childcare). A discussion with the ESFA about this continues because Test Valley Borough Council has identified this as a priority skills gap in the local area. The Deputy Principal Curriculum also noted that the Agriculture, Environmental and Animal Care T Level routes were not due to be delivered until 2023 and could be delayed to 2024 by factors relating to Covid-19.
79. The Deputy Principal Corporate summarised key points in relation to the HE landscape, strategy and development of the HE curriculum, noting that there were sufficient enrolments to commence the new BSc Agriculture in September.
80. Responding to a question about HNC offers in 2020-21, the Assistant Principal – HE explained that the HE strategy to be presented to the Board in July would outline the intention to broaden the HE offer where there were synergies with the College and particularly University Centre Sparsholt's current specialisms.
81. The Committee was also updated on the potential of taking on the future delivery of HE programmes from another FE college which had been reported to the Board in April.
82. The Deputy Principal Corporate drew the Committee's attention to developments in Adult education, explaining how the College was adapting to changes in funding policy and noting risks associated with Covid-19 in relation to delays to apprenticeship completions with many apprentices currently furloughed.
83. The Committee also discussed with management other aspects of the impact of Covid-19 on curriculum development, such as in relation to responding to changes in employment and skills needs and the delivery of the FE and HE curriculum if social distancing measures remained in place in the Autumn.
84. Asked about the College's ability to deliver Adult course in areas outside of its core curriculum (such as mental health), the Deputy Principal Corporate explained that the College worked with a portfolio of sessional trainers across a range of specialisms.
85. The Committee noted that the curriculum continued to evolve in order to align with the introduction of T Levels and the move to new Apprenticeship Standards. It was also observed that the College would be putting considerable effort into delivering expertise

in delivering the exam based vocational qualifications and extending work experience elements of all programmes. The industry placement requirements had been met in 2019-20 but there were additional challenges possible in 2020-21 due to Covid-19, and the required target has also considerably increased.

86. The Committee noted that the College has responded well to changes in AEB (Adult) funding arrangements by adding it is curriculum offer with distance/online learning packages and managing a mixed funding economy.
87. In relation to the 14-16 year old curriculum offer, the Deputy Principal Curriculum explained that this was a challenging area due to school's financial constraints but that the College was keen to establish working groups with schools in the Andover area to further develop the offer at Andover College.
88. **Resolved** – that the scope and ambition of the 3 Year Curriculum Plan 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.
89. The table of 3-year projections of curriculum change for the Andover and Sparsholt campuses would be presented to the Board for information alongside the minutes of the meeting.

HEALTHCHECK REPORT

90. The Committee noted the most recent Healthcheck report (2020/04), including the latest FE and HE applications data.
91. Responding to a query, the Deputy Principal Corporate explained the FE Adult applications information, noting which data covered only the funded element of adult applications. The Committee Chair asked that consideration be given by management to how the data is presented future Healthcheck reports.

MARKETING STRATEGY

92. The Committee had received the termly report of the Principal and Marketing Manager on the delivery of the Marketing Strategy for 2019-20.
93. The Marketing Manager introduced the report with an update on matters discussed at the last meeting, noting that both the College's exhibit at the Chelsea Flower Show and the Sparsholt Futures event had had to be re-planned in virtual and online formats due to the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown.
94. The Marketing Manager reported that the College had been fortunate in having completed open events prior to lockdown and highlighted a number of ways in which other marketing activities had been rapidly adapted in light of Covid-19, explaining that some of the new digital formats and increased video material would be used in future to enhance face-to-face activities and websites. However, it was also recognised that the changes due to Covid-19 presented some risks to the College through, for example, the impact on the zoos and the delay to completion of the Animal Health & Welfare Centre redevelopment.
95. Responding to questions from the Committee in relation to student recruitment, the Marketing Manager provided more information about the approach to distributing material to Year 8s and 9s who would have attended Futures Day, finding alternatives to

reaching Year 10s in schools in place of the Taster Days at Andover College and personalised communications with HE applicants, as well as use of social media.

96. With reference to keeping in touch with Year 10s, M Serridge suggested that some contact/activities from Andover College towards the end of the summer term might be beneficial to help keep school learners motivated.
97. The Principal noted the recruitment data analysis which showed that, while applications to Sparsholt College were significantly exceeding the target, applications to Andover College and to University Centre Sparsholt were both below targets. There was also an uncertain level of risk in relation to the impact of Covid-19 on enrolments. The Principal confirmed that these considerations were informing development of the 2020-21 budget.
98. The Principal also drew the Committee's attention to the progress report on each of the marketing strategy objectives, noting that 14 of the 30 Whole College actions were assessed as 'Green: Fully Achieved' and 13 as 'Amber: On Target'. Of the other actions, the majority of those assessed as 'Amber: With Concerns' related to the impact of Covid-19.
99. The Committee noted the continued progress in delivering the marketing strategy objectives, the level of risk around meeting recruitment targets and the response of the College to adjusting marketing activities as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

COMMITTEE PERFORMANCE

100. The Committee had received the report of the Clerk to the Corporation which provided information to inform the Committee's annual review of its performance and terms of reference.
101. The Committee did not identify any matters of concern in relation to the operations of the Committee during 2019-20.
102. The Committee Chair proposed that the terms of reference be revised to more clearly reflect the remit of the Committee in scrutinising recruitment and enrolments information in relation to monitoring the strategic intent and effectiveness of the curriculum in meeting the needs of students and employers.
103. **Resolved** – that the Committee Chair and Clerk draft revisions to the terms of reference in relation to monitoring recruitment and enrolments to recommend to the Board of Governors for approval.
104. In relation to the 2020-21 business plan to be presented at the next meeting, the Deputy Principal Curriculum reported that the College had received a positive outcome from the recent Matrix Standard (DfE's standard for ensuring the quality of the delivery of high-quality information, advice and guidance) annual 'continuous improvement check' and that a report would follow to the Committee after the next full accreditation assessment in April 2021.
105. The Committee Chair noted that it was last meeting to be attended by the Principal, prior to his retirement, and thanked him for contributing his expert insights and knowledge to the work of the Committee and, in particular, for his stewardship of the marketing strategy.
106. The Committee Chair also thanked the Student Governor, prior to the completion of her enrolment at Andover College, for her time and for sharing her feedback and experiences

with the Committee and relayed to her the good wishes of the Board for her future education and career.

107. The meeting ended at 12.30 pm.