

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EDUCATION &  
STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON  
MONDAY 19 MARCH 2018 AT 4.30 PM  
IN THE BOARDROOM AT STAFFORD COLLEGE**

Present: Lesley Rollason (Chair), Francis Tunney, Jeremy Pert, Rowena Blencowe, Alan Aston, David O'Neill, Lynsey Shearsmith, Karen Dobson

In attendance: Lesley Morrey (Director of Student Engagement & Partnerships), Carol Thomas (Director of Curriculum & Performance), John Prescott (Clerk), Joy Smith (Deputy Clerk), Gareth Hughes (Schools Liaison Co-ordinator – for agenda item 18.1.1 only)

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**18.1.1 Schools Liaison at NSCG**

Gareth Hughes, Schools Liaison Co-ordinator, gave a presentation on the breadth and range schools liaison activities currently being undertaken both in the NULC area and Stafford area.

Members noted the remit of schools liaison ranging from delivering talks in college and in school, providing mock interviews for pupils to organising large college open events.

In addition to the standard offer, there are also many bespoke activities and workshops arranged for local schools with whom the college traditionally works and also some of those who have their own sixth form but who see the benefit for their students from such activities. Curriculum liaison is also growing with subject experts going out to schools offering such things as revision sessions etc.

The recent national apprenticeship week activities with the big yellow bus have been very successful in terms of accessing schools and speaking to potential students. Gareth commented that getting into Stafford schools has been a particular challenge and we are offering different types of support activities as a way in to these organisations. It is pleasing to note that they are starting to see that we are there to support them, rather than sell our courses, and this approach is being favourably received.

Taster sessions are being really successful as they are complementing what the schools are trying to do, particularly at a time of the year when revision is heavily on the agenda. We are also offering some tasters during the Easter break at NULC.

Gareth confirmed that the aim of the Schools Liaison Team is to continually increase our work with schools, work with more students, increase the standard core activities and add to the bespoke activities we offer.

Gareth outlined some of the actions taken when applications from identified schools dip: we go in and talk, listen and usually get a result. He added that social media is also having a significant impact and students are happy to come in/apply of their own volition rather than waiting for the school to prompt them.

Alan raised the perception that some parents still have that at a school sixth form there is more structure, more chasing up etc and colleges are far more relaxed. It was confirmed that follow up surveys are carried out when students do not come, however, it was acknowledged that schools with sixth forms are currently in crisis over their low numbers and are using any means possible to retain their students. Lesley Morrey commented that when parents do come in to college they are generally extremely impressed by what we have and what we offer.

Rowena commented that the Futures Programme offered by the Sixth Form College would have almost certainly attracted more students last year.

Lesley Rollason added that Gareth recently organised a STEM carousel visit at a local Stafford primary school which had been a huge success in raising the College's profile amongst the community.

Gareth was thanked for his very informative talk and left the meeting at this stage.

#### 18.1.2 **Apologies for Absence**

No apologies were received.

Rowena Blencowe was welcomed to her first meeting of the Education and Standards Committee and everyone introduced themselves.

#### 18.1.3 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 18.1.4 **Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 November 2017**

Approved as a true record of the meeting.

#### 18.1.5 **Matters Arising**

##### 17.5.7 – Categories of Abuse

Lesley clarified that this query had related to students who come along to college who have already been identified as “at risk”. If any of them have another new vulnerability which they disclose while they are here we record it although it is recognised that “abuse” used in our categorisation is a misleading term. When we combine the two College reports we will look at a different way of recording this information.

It was also agreed that the colours used in the papers should be changed to assist any member with colour blindness, and this will also apply to Corporation papers.

Lesley Morrey confirmed that nothing has been heard yet about the College's transitional funding bid.

### 17.5.9c – Data Protection Legislation

John explained that the legislation changes at the end of May and, although the new legislation is not massively different from the existing legislation with which we are currently compliant, there are some additional requirements that the College is working on. A GDPR Group has been established and a complete audit is now being carried out in order to ensure that we identify all data we capture, how long we keep it and what we keep it for.

Once the Group has completed its work the Policy will be revised and presented to the Corporation for approval.

### 18.1.6 **NSCG Learner Data Report**

Carol introduced her latest report and explained that where required we split information into the two sites but we also show a merged picture too.

Members noted the whole college expected end year data showing retention, past and predicted achievements (based on last year's outcomes and the current retention). Carol advised that last year NULC's overall achievement was 94% and Stafford's was 84.2%, giving a merged 87%. Based on the current data we are predicting 92% across the Group this year which will be a fantastic achievement.

The new text messaging system where the parents of students who are absent are automatically contacted is proving extremely successful. Overall retention is high across the Group, showing a particular improvement at the Stafford site.

Members noted the starts which we will amend to show the clear information for year one and year two. Carol advised that the decrease in A Levels at NULC was offset by the introduction of the new A Levels at Stafford. Members noted the areas down in recruitment which are primarily Hair and Beauty, Catering, and Subcontracting provision. Carol explained that we are picking up some Francesco's students as the subcontracting work with them is being managed to a conclusion.

Members noted the areas across the College where attendance is particularly strong in full time and part time provision, and also those issues regarding students' fitness to study which has been a particular challenge with Access courses at Stafford. Carol explained that the actions taken in order to track and monitor attendance which work successfully at NULC are now being mirrored at Stafford.

Attendance at maths and English continues to be a significant challenge at both sites. It was agreed to add student numbers to the information presented for better clarity. Carol explained the work carried out analyse the data relating to English and maths from which we can see that we do make good progress with a lot of our disadvantaged students, but different types of students bring different issues. It was felt that the current national system relating to maths and English is reinforcing failure and Carol added that the repeated fails have a negative effect mentally on many students.

Members were very pleased to note the latest lesson observation information, with c88% across both sites identified as good to outstanding, using external consultants who work with our team to ensure the most accurate picture is obtained. Lesley Rollason commented on the observation she had taken part in earlier which had been extremely useful in showing how the end results presented to the Committee are dealt with in reality. Carol confirmed that we grade the formal observations and in addition we carry out unannounced walk-throughs which are not graded. We ensure that the staff know that we do not base our assessment of them on that one observation but that a whole raft of things are considered through the TLAR process. Francis commented that the most important outcomes from the process are the development points shared with staff arising from their observation.

Karen Dobson joined the meeting at this stage.

It was requested that progression information be added which will identify the impact from the recommendations and show that the required improvements have been made. Karen added that at the end of the year the Senior Team consider the whole picture, looking at the grades and other supporting information.

The learner voice information for NULC was considered and members noted the key strengths noted. Carol confirmed that those areas identified for development are being addressed. It was felt that there can sometimes be confusion over the terminology used which can result in issues being raised.

Lesley reported that the students' lanyards next year will have the core values printed on to them and she explained the work underway to ensure that the Prevent information is shared with the whole cohort.

Carol confirmed that the new maths hub is proving particularly successful with the first year students.

At Stafford Carol explained some of the main issues arising from the learner voice activities and areas for development were noted.

It was felt that it would be useful to colour code where things have been completed or what is outstanding.

Carol explained the issues with the IT infrastructure and the resulting problems encountered at the start of the year at Stafford.

The student survey results showing the merged data were considered. The lower satisfaction rating about wanting to be here was felt to be particularly disappointing as it fails to correlate with all the other feedback we are picking up, although it was noted that this could be due to timing with pressure building for exams and the amount of work required etc. Carol advised that this data gives us some very useful information so that managers can go into groups to follow up and make in year changes where appropriate.

Lesley Morrey took members through the Safeguarding and Prevent information. Members noted the number of Safeguarding cases recorded at each site and the various categories involved. The drop in those categorised as "child in

need of protection” this year was noted. Lesley added that the new recording mechanisms at Stafford are working well and allowing us to record and categorise more appropriately. There has been one Prevent issue which has been referred to Staffordshire Police. Members noted the number of students in receipt of financial support at both sites along with the information on additional learning support and exam support and the number of students with EHCPs.

Carol referred to the high volume of English and maths students at both sites which presents a continual logistical challenge especially when arranging examination accommodation. Members noted that students at both sites have found the Hegarty maths tool very useful.

Members noted the latest work based learning volumes and current attendance which is 94.9%. John explained that partnership apprenticeship activity has decreased following a managed withdrawal.

Members noted the various activities that took place on the last CP day and those planned for 29 March.

Congratulations were extended to those students who have achieved successes over the past few weeks.

Regarding the Next Steps/Employers Fayre Karen reported her disappointment that none of the local schools invited had come along to what is an extremely useful event for students.

Carol confirmed that we are now looking at how we can use the funding obtained through the Workplace Capacity Building Fund. She added that the introduction of T levels means that we need to fully embrace this and find a way to make it successful.

Members were delighted that the BTEC Centre Quality Review for the merged organisation was very successful and the reviewer had commented that our practice was exemplary. Karen added that we have been shortlisted for the Centre of the Year award.

Members noted the HE attendance information which is on the whole really good across a range of programmes. We are currently looking to join the Office of Students where we will need to meet around 25 conditions of registration resulting in a significant amount of work will in a short period of time and also a significant cost.

#### **18.1.7 Feedback from Members' Attendance at AoC Events**

Lesley Rollason reported that the new AoC Area Director Shane Chowen has indicated that there is no money available for governance events. He is hoping to set up a steering group to look at governance and Lesley has offered to join. She has also offered the College as a venue for anything that might be useful. Members felt that the AoC are not particularly helpful to FE at the moment.

### 18.1.8 **Any Other Business**

#### a. Non-Levy Apprenticeship Tender

Karen provided an update on the latest position and outlined the recent without prejudice meeting with the ESFA where it was apparent that they are keen to find a solution to this matter. Various options were considered at the meeting with one suggestion regarding using a renamed NSCG/Axia Solutions as a channel for our non-levy activity funding, seconding staff and resources to NSCG/Axia as appropriate. The ESFA appeared positive about this, however, the detail does still need to be clarified.

Karen recorded her thanks for the fantastic political support we have received from our MPs over this matter.

### 18.1.9 **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

18 June 2018 at 4.30 pm in TO19/20 at NULC