

Minutes of the Standards Committee meeting held on 7th May 2019 at 5pm

GOVERNORS PRESENT: Mary Mamik, Chair
Martin Sim
Mark Williams
Jane Hawksford
Steve Sutton (joining by conference call)
Jen Hope, Committee co-optee

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Maxine Bagshaw, Clerk to the Corporation
Louise Knott, Vice Principal Communications Engagement and Student Experience
Sue Martin, Interim VP: C&Q
Diane Booth – Head of Quality and Performance
Jane Fishwick (until 5.40)
Geoff Spencer (until 5.40)

ACTION by whom	DATE by when

19.28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair reminded Governors/co-optees present to declare any interests that they may have on matters to be discussed. Standing declarations were noted.

19.29 WELCOME, INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Nikki Slack (staff observer) Andrea Morrissey (Committee Co-optee) and Paul Rana.

Jane Fishwick and Geoff Spencer were welcomed to the meeting. It was explained that Geoff Spencer has provided a lot of intensive support in the construction area and Jayne Fishwick has undertaken a significant review of the work undertaken by VBSS. It was noted that Geoff Spencer is externally appointed to the College and has been engaged through the AoC.

19.30 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28TH FEBRUARY 2019

The minutes were reviewed and it was agreed that they were an accurate record of discussions.

AGREED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28th February

Signed:  Chair

Date: 13.6.19

2019.

There were no matters arising.

19.31 ACTION PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee were happy to note the content of the update provided. They specifically considered the excerpt from the Board minutes dated 3rd April 2019 when an update was given regarding apprenticeship provision MLPs. It was confirmed that more narrative is being developed regarding the case studies. The self-assessment report for apprenticeship provision is still a 4. ESFA are planning to audit withdrawals that have taken place over the last two years and this process will also lead to agreement regarding the QAR. It is expected that the overall difference will be 1%. A question and challenge from the Committee was to include a best case and worst case scenario alongside the data.

One member of the Committee questioned whether all executive meetings are minuted and regularly include discussion regarding apprenticeship provision. Assurance was given that meetings are minuted and that apprenticeship provision is a focus, particularly emerging issues.

19.32 APPRENTICESHIPS

The Chair, in opening discussions, confirmed that the written reports have been noted and that Governors will have an opportunity to link questions as part of the discussions.

Jane Fishwick and Geoff Spencer provided presentations to the Committee.

1) Construction

Geoff Spencer drew the Committee's attention to a number of matters:

Previous position summary;

- Significant number of overdue reviews dating back to 2017 (in excess of 540)
- Review process was poor with no evidence of target setting
- Lack of adequate progress monitoring on OneFile, significant number of learners behind target
- Lack of accurate recording of 'off the job' training in OneFile
- Information held on the system was inaccurate, particularly on enrolments
- Attendance issues, particularly in English and maths
- Retention issues – the retention figure for 18/19 is 67% and 19/20 is currently 74.4% due to early withdrawals

Current position summary – 374 learners:

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

- Overdue reviews reduced to a manageable level (144) but progress hampered by staff shortages
- New review process following staff development sessions based on target setting and progress in place
- Learners ahead or on target in frameworks 152; learners behind target 79
- Learners ahead or on target in standards 101; learners behind target 37
- Increase in the recording of OTJT has improved the picture but more still needs to be done
- Information audit has addressed many of the inaccuracies relating to the enrolments
- Learner focus groups now leading to improvements in TLA
- Attendance is currently +90% for continuing learners.

In terms of the overdue reviews, he confirmed that staff worked hard to take care of over 400 in a 4-5 week period. He described staffing, particularly regarding assessors, as still an issue and a challenge. He provided the committee with assurance that staff training has been provided regarding target setting and he confirmed that staff are 'buying in' to the review process. He confirmed that he continues to sample and check the system to ensure that the improvements made to date are maintained and continue.

He confirmed that there are now more students at or ahead of targets rather than behind. He explained that he personally carried out an information audit to check and test the data. Attendance has now improved and is in line with the College. He has worked hard to ensure that there is more and improved communication with employers. There are some historic recruitment issues that are a legacy.

In terms of the reviews, he provided assurance that the College did and does have contact with learners and that it was just the fact that the formal reviews weren't taking place. He indicated that planning for and the planned review dates were not always appropriate on the system, for example Christmas Day, Boxing Day etc. Assurance was given that there were no safeguarding issues regarding these learners as a consequence of the overdue reviews taking place. A question from the Committee was, whether or not the historical issues were as a result of poor leadership and management, and they questioned whether the changes made are sustainable. Jeff Spencer expressed the view that the faculty needed a change in culture and that this is now taking place which should lead to sustainable improvements.

2) Vision Business

Jane Fishwick drew a number of key matters to the Committee's attention:

- Started with 823 learners in December 2018
- Assessment of the situation, evaluated business and aligned to

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

the College strategy. Subsequent closure of London including a thorough review of all delivery models.

- Additional resource allocated, performance coach, working full time with the team to achieve/withdraw learners as appropriate
- Current position – 70 have completed their apprenticeships, 20 partial achievements, some learners are continuing pending further checks, 126 withdrawals (some back to start date).

In terms of context, she explained that the changes needed sit alongside the fact that in December the whole VBSS team was put at risk of redundancy. This aligns with the college strategy which is a more local focus. The decision was taken therefore to close the London office. There are 156 learners in London and 90 of which need further work in terms of support, however the rest have completed. She explained that there is someone in place for a 3 month period to ensure that these learners conclude. It was confirmed that 3 months is the cut-off.

The Committee were assured that staff are now confident in terms of knowing exactly where students are in relation to progress and targets. It was explained that the executive team now have a much more focused monitoring process in place this is to ensure a regular overview. A challenge from the Committee was to ensure that the improved systems and focus are maintained, they would not wish to see the college 'slip back'.

In general discussion it was acknowledged that the significant issue now for the college is the split between levy and non-levy activity, given that the ESFA are not supporting non-levy growth. Reputationally, this presents a risk as the college will not always be able to deliver what employers want and this has to be carefully managed. It was confirmed that the team are investigating the possibility of using 25% of unspent levy funds with non-levy SMEs.

The Committee were advised that the college now has separate performance monitoring meetings regarding apprenticeship provision in every curriculum area. This ensures regular debate and sufficient focus.

In terms of the college's performance, it was acknowledged that it is possible to compare the position with others both regionally, locally and nationally etc. however there is a need to look at stratifying data rather than just the 'overall' as WNC was one of the colleges with the largest subcontracting arrangements in place and therefore it is hard to compare like for like. A challenge from the Committee is that, whilst the data can be separated out it has to be reported on an overall basis because of the need for the College to be fully accountable. A challenge from the Committee was for staff to work out whether there are any areas likely to hit the 40% threshold and identify and report on these quickly. Assurance was given that all staff understand the need for apprenticeship focus.

Signed : _____ Chair

Date:

The Committee's attention was then drawn to the period 8 information provided; key matters noted were:

- If all remaining continuing apprentices (1224) achieve the best possible, the overall rate will be 67.7% which is 1% below the national rate of 68.7%. A question and challenge from the Committee was in terms of what the worst case position is. They asked the senior team to look at a realistic tolerance level and work on this basis.
- To date 871 apprentices have been withdrawn, 591 (67.9%) from subcontractor provision and 280 (32.1%) from direct delivery.
- At the time of the report, subcontracted apprenticeships equate to 55.4% of the college's apprenticeship provision. Subcontractor provision is negatively impacting the college's data and will continue to do so as the best case overall achievement will be 61% which is 7.4% below the national rate. Assurance was given that staff continue to push subcontractors, however this is difficult given that there are no continuing contracts in future years.
- The best overall achievement for direct provision is currently good (7.4% above the national rate) if all continuing apprentices achieve.
- Subcontractor provision shows that there are 282 apprentices with an expected end date in 18/19 who are continuing past their end date. Assurance was given that staff are doing all that they can to conclude all outstanding aspects. It was confirmed that timely is not the main focus at the minute and that completion and achievement are the focus nationally.

AGREED: to note the content of the reports and presentations provided.

19.33 **AOB**

There were no items of additional business.

19.34 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The Clerk confirmed that the next scheduled meeting was 13th June 2019.

19.35 **CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

It was agreed that confidential items would be reported separately.

Jane Fishwick and Geoff Spencer left the meeting at 5.40pm.

Signed : _____ Chair

Date: