

## THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SKILLS AGENDA WORKING PARTY HELD ON Tuesday 20 February 2024 at 15.00 at Collyer's

**Present:** Rebecca Adams (Director of Progression), Rob Hussey (VP Curriculum), Andrea John (VP Pastoral), Sally Kent (Adult Education & Skills Manager), Paul Mittendorfer, Helen Smith, Bev Valley

**In attendance:** Russha Sellings (Clerk)

**In the Chair:** Helen Smith

#### 1. Welcome / Introductions / Declaration of Interests

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting where all members were present.

There were no declarations of interest with respect of items on the agenda.

#### 2. Minutes and Actions from the last meeting

*Papers: Minutes and actions 7 November 2023, updated mapping document (tabled)*

The minutes of the last meeting were approved without amendment.

The items for action were discussed with reference to the new statutory guidance.

#### 3. Meeting the Skills Needs

*Paper: New statutory guidance (link)*

a) New [Meeting Skills Needs statutory guidance](#) issued Dec 2023  
(replaces 'Review how well the education or training provided meets local needs' guidance and Accountability Agreements guidance 2022)

##### Refine/complete mapping exercise (VPs)

There was a focus on the refinement of the mapping process that had been started by the VPs. The document was tabled at the meeting and now included a grading of the skills requirements as requested by Governors. Some further work was required adding evidence to the right hand column: 'How the skill might be addressed at Collyer's in the future or possible collaboration with other providers'.

**(Action: VP Curriculum/VP Pastoral/Director of Progression/Adult Ed & Skills Manager)**

The VP (Curriculum) referred to the areas where the College would need to collaborate with other providers and the VP (Pastoral) said this was most likely to be Brinsbury and Chichester colleges. In reference to the Land LSIP sector which was out of scope of the exercise as previously agreed, the VP (Pastoral) and VP (Curriculum) agreed that this should now be included to provide a complete map of the skills coverage. Any gaps related to Agriculture and Viticulture will be discussed within liaison meetings with other more appropriate providers (e.g. Brinsbury).

The Chair agreed with the approach, in particular, for the Construction LSIP sector where it was only possible to support soft skills. Reference was made to the requirements in the new statutory guidance, including point 29 relating to routes to learning including core subjects at L2 and this was discussed in the context of Adult Education provision.

##### Adult Education development opportunities

The Adult Education Manager provided an update. Data was shared at the meeting on English and Maths functional skills and Digital including L1. It was confirmed for background purposes that WSCC was currently a non-devolved area although it was anticipated this may change by 2030.

The Chair enquired about Digital courses and the Adult Education Manager responded that it was challenging to get a cohort together unless the course was fully funded. Members heard of the issues with funding where there is currently an insufficient funding allocation from the ESFA to run free L1 and L2 courses, although there had been an SDF2 Digital Skills course run the previous year with a small amount of funding from the LSIP that covered teaching costs only. The ESFA funding was linked to enrolments YoY but the College could not run a deficit to offer a new course. More enquiries for entry level English courses were being received for refugees, especially since the closure of Aspire locally. Funding allocations will change in the next academic year and the VP (Curriculum) planned to meet the College's Territorial Lead to discuss future developments.

The Chair drew members' attention to point 26 of the guidance in terms of prioritisation of delivery of certain programmes. It was confirmed that the College did not run skills bootcamps, largely as they relied heavily on work experience and there were a number of non-FE providers advertising these courses online. The programme could in part be met through alignment with L3 Adult Education courses such as Health & Social Care. The VP (Curriculum) added that course design would be explored through the route of College level ERBs.

#### 16-19 development opportunities

Members discussed opportunities more generally via enrichment, careers development and progression programme. The VP (Pastoral) suggested that development targets within the College QIP and the Progression Directorate QIP should be referenced as improvement aims in the new accountability statement.

The Director of Progression said the College's Careers programme was now very strong achieving 100% in 6/8 of the Gatsby benchmarks in the most recent Compass Evaluation (100% in 5 or more benchmarks is considered to be outstanding by the Careers & Enterprise Company). There was a wider discussion on further enhancements needed for the college to achieve 100% in the remaining 2 benchmarks. The Director of Progression suggested that we will need to make a strategic decision about the level of priority given to achieving Benchmark 8 due to the challenging requirement for almost all students to have a 1-1 meeting with a careers advisor qualified to at least L6. Currently all students can make an appointment if they choose to and the college Careers Advisor (who is qualified to L7), initiates appointments with priority students (e.g. L2 Learners, Leavers, students with SEND). However, we do not have the capacity currently to ensure that every student in the college is seen by the Careers Advisor, although all students receive 1-1 progression advice from their Tutors and via the Tutorial Programme. The cost of bringing in a larger team for a few weeks of intensive interviewing to provide Careers Adviser coverage to all students would be almost the same as employing another qualified member of staff on a year round basis.

The Director of Progression explained that Benchmark 7 requires almost all students to have 2 'meaningful engagements' with apprenticeships providers. Although there are opportunities for all students to access these via talks at Careers fairs not all students commit to the specified two talks where they may wish to explore HE routes instead. These targets would continue to develop and alternatives were being considered. It was understood in terms of offering apprenticeships that HE was the route for 70% of students. The Director of Progression also said there was a limited number of apprenticeship options and what was available was often very oversubscribed, especially for degree apprenticeships. Members queried the ability to track progression to apprenticeships and the Director of Progression was looking at this more closely. The Adult Education Manager said it was possible with smaller numbers to evidence progression to employment with specific courses.

There was a cross over between enrichment and Adult Education for example a new carbon literacy course in planning. This would link to the Construction LSIP sector and Horsham District Council (HDC) expressed interest in a subsidised option.

#### Employer Engagement Administrator employer links (VPs)

Members heard that the person who took up the Employer Engagement role had resigned shortly after taking post. This provided an opportunity to review the role with a possibility of teaming up the Work Experience Co-ordinator with a faculty link.

A decision about purchase of the new database for employers is imminent. The VP (Curriculum) said this could be met by LSIF funding to be spent before the end of March. The plan was for a common platform for contacts covering ERBs, WEX, alumni and fundraising.

#### College ERB suggested employer suggested list (VPs)

Members were directed to the last page of the mapping document for a list of proposed College level ERBs. The Director of Progression said these were identified due to the close working relationship with the College's Careers team. There was a question about overlap with subject ERBs. The VP (Pastoral) thought where there may be instances, there was still a degree of separation especially for larger companies with multiple departments.

Later it was discussed that the VP (Curriculum) planned to draft a letter to the College ERB contacts arranging breakfast introductory meetings. The Chair would assist with the drafting of the letter.  
**(Action: Chair/VP Curriculum)**

The Chair suggested information on employability be added to the Accountability Agreement. This aspect had evolved over time and was under the remit of the progression elements of the Tutorial Programme for all students. There was a related discussion about SEND students with a view to ensuring an equitable offering and the VP (Pastoral) was confident this was the case as those with EHCPs had 1:1 careers support and guidance and all activity was recorded in MyProgress.

#### b) Plan and timings for the Annual Accountability Agreement due by 30 June 2024:

The working party considered the new guidance and timings for the drafting of Part 2 of the Accountability Agreement. The broad areas were included in the guidance and as and context was still important for SFCs. The Chair emphasises the need for the review to be concise with a small number objectives for the year ahead.

#### c) Engagement planning e.g. FE Sussex, LA, other providers

It was considered important to factor into the timings liaison with other providers. The VP (Curriculum) said this could be done in conjunction with FE Sussex and there was an action to arrange a meeting with Janet Clark (CEO FE Sussex) before the Easter break. **(Action: VP Curriculum/Director of Progression)**

The Clerk referred to the approval deadline by the Governing Body which was prior to the final meeting of the year (30 June). It had been discussed with the Chair of the Governing Body submitting it to the summer term Q&C Committee meeting and copying all Governors for comment and later for approval by written resolution. The Clerk suggested working backwards from this date to allow time for the working party to review the document. The drafting would be a joint approach between staff members on the working party. **(Action: VP Curriculum/VP Pastoral/Director of Progression/Adult Ed & Skills Manager)**

#### **4. AOB**

None to record.

#### **5. Date of Next Meeting**

The working party agreed to put a date in the diary for the next meeting: **Monday 20 May 2024 15.00**.  
At this meeting the first draft of the Accountability Agreement (Part 2) would be reviewed prior to being finalised and shared with the Q&C Committee and copied to all Governors.

The meeting closed at 16.43

Chair .....

Date .....

RRS 28-02-24