

## TRAFFORD &amp; STOCKPORT COLLEGE GROUP

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Higher Education Curriculum & Quality Committee  
held on Thursday 6 March 2025, at 10.30am via Microsoft Teams**

<b>Present:</b>	Emily McIntosh	(Chair)
	Olivia Bussey	
	Fatema Desai	
	Sarah Drake	
	Graham Luccock	(Vice Chair)
	James Scott	(Chief Executive Officer)
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Rebecca Clare	(Corporation Secretary)
	Carmen Gonzalez-Eslava	(Group Principal)
	Danielle Houghton	(Vice Principal Apprenticeships and Adult Skills)
	Andrea Ormisher	(Head of Higher Education, Quality and Standards)
	Cameron Sewell	(Student Representative)
	David Hillier	(Consultant)
	Yvonne Riley	(Assistant Corporation Secretary)

**Minute No.****HEC&Q/01/25 Apologies for Absence and Welcome**

The Corporation Secretary (CS) reported that apologies for absence had been received from co-opted members Nurun Nahar and Claire Stocks.

A welcome was extended to Cameron Sewell the HE student representative on the Committee.

A welcome was also extended to the David Hillier (Consultant) who was attending the meeting in relation to the Draft Access and Participation Plan 2026/2027 to be considered at agenda item 7.

**HEC&Q/02/25 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of either direct or indirect interest in any of the meeting's business items

**HEC&Q/03/25 Minutes of the Higher Education Curriculum & Quality Committee Meeting held on 18 November 2024**

**The minutes of the meeting were approved and accepted as a correct account of the meeting's proceedings.**

**HEC&Q/04/25 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

Members were referred to the previously circulated Action Proforma and information on progress against actions from previous meetings of the Committee.

It was noted that the majority of the actions had been closed.

The following additional updates were provided:

**Minute No.****Action: Corporation Secretary****38/24 HE Quality Calendar 2024/2025**

It was noted that the link visit and tour of the campus had been cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances and would be rescheduled in the Autumn Term in conjunction with the schedule of meetings for 2025/2026.

**39/24 Student Engagement Update**

In relation to an action arising from the previous meeting (21/24) and the request to include the size of focus groups and engagement with hard-to-reach groups in future reports, it was confirmed that focus group activity had not yet concluded but that the matter would be discussed during consideration of the Access and Participation Plan and the Student Engagement Update.

**07/24 Higher Education and Standards Report – including the Quality Improvement Plan – Progress Update 2023-2024**

In relation to the announcement that apprenticeships would count as UCAS points in the future. It was noted that it had previously been reported that the initial proposal had been to cap the points at a pass level, regardless of whether a student had achieved a merit or distinction, and that this had led to some concerns being raised.

**HE36/24 HE Performance Update**

A member asked for an update in relation to the January 2025 enrolment and the 20 starts targeted in 4Cast against Construction, Engineering and Computing and it was confirmed that 16 had been enrolled across the three areas.

**There were no further matters arising from the minutes.**

**HEC&Q/05/25****Data Management Action Plan and Internal Audit Report – Higher Education Student Data**

The Group Principal (GP) provided members with a verbal update on the ongoing actions relating to HE data compliance.

The GP advised of the significant work has been undertaken to correct the issues identified in the report. It was confirmed that the team has been strengthened internally by reallocating resources in the MIS team. The GP advised that the reallocation had provided the necessary expertise and resources to ensure that similar issues do not arise again. The GP confirmed that Office for Students (OfS) were aware of the matter and that a further internal audit had been scheduled to take place in August 2025.

A member raised a question in relation to the identified errors in order to better understand the lessons learned and the mitigation plans in place. The GP explained that the errors related to the processing and inputting of student enrolment data, particularly the recording of qualifications on entry, which sometimes had implications for funding allocation. It was noted that significant improvements had been made and that training for staff inputting the information and strengthening internal resources were part of the mitigation efforts. The GP confirmed that OfS had not recommended any sanctions.

The member raised a further question in respect of the oversight of the action plan and the Corporation Secretary (CS) confirmed that the internal audit report and action plan were regularly monitored by the Audit Committee to ensure progress and compliance. It

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was also confirmed that the Chair of the Audit Committee and Chief Finance and Operations Officer (CFOO) had reported at previous HE Curriculum and Quality Committee meetings to provide oversight and scrutiny of the action plan.

**There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Internal Audit Report in respect of HE Student Data be received and noted.**

**HEC&Q/06/25 Draft Higher Education and Skills Strategy 2024/2030**

The Vice Principal Apprenticeships and Adult Skills (VPAAS) referred members to the previously circulated report and draft Higher Education and Skills Strategy (HESS) 2024/2030.

The VPAAS reported that the new HESS had provided the opportunity to re-evaluate the Group's HE provision and to consider new ways to engage the Group's market through differentiated delivery models and diversification of the product portfolio. It was noted that the HESS had been aligned with the Group's Strategic Plan.

The six strategic objectives within the Higher Education and Skills Strategy, which align to the six overarching TSCG priorities were as follows:

1. Providing a curriculum that delivers the skills our economy needs – locally, regionally and nationally.
2. Positioning TSCG as the employer of choice for the further education workforce.
3. Delivering an exceptional student experience.
4. Ensuring financial stability and sustainability
5. Driving innovation in technology, facilities and skills delivery.
6. Providing civic leadership to positively influence our communities

The strategic objectives and the Group's strategic priority they link to are as follows:

- Shape our local community through an employer aligned and inclusive curriculum (SP1)
- Positioning TSCG's University Centre as the employer of choice for the Higher Education workforce (SP2)
- Transform student experience and outcomes (SP3)
- Maximise recruitment opportunities (SP4)
- Innovative curriculum delivery models, supported by outstanding digital and physical learning environments (SP5)
- Support Collaborative arrangements (SP6)

The VPAAS provided the following summary in relation to the key strategic objectives:

- Local community alignment is key. The curriculum should be tailored to meet the needs of local employers and provide progression pathways to ensure that students are gaining the skills that will help them thrive in both regional and national job markets.
- Position TSCG University Centre as the top choice for HE professionals by fostering growth, collaboration, and inclusivity, recognising staff achievements, and implementing a strategic workforce planning to attract and retain talent aligned with TSCG's 2030 vision.

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- The transformation of the student experience at Level 4+ should emphasise the blend of vocational workplace ready skills with higher level academic outcomes. Students should be prepared for both employment and potential further study.
- Recruitment efforts must highlight the value of FE-based Level 4+ qualifications as employer-driven, local, accessible, inclusive and cost-effective, with clear routes to higher education and career advancement.
- Innovative delivery models (blended learning, use of technology, work-based learning) should ensure flexibility for part-time students, adult learners, and those balancing work and study.
- Collaborative arrangements with employers, universities, and community organisations will ensure the relevance of the curriculum and provide students with meaningful opportunities for both study and employment.

It was highlighted that a draft of HESS had been considered by the HE Curriculum & Quality Committee meeting in November 2024 and that an overview of the Strategy had also been presented to governors at the recent Governor Strategic Development Day held on 5 March.

The VPAAS confirmed that some minor typographical amendments had been made following feedback from a member.

Further amendments included:

- Change in name of the Strategy to the Higher Education and Skills Strategy to align with the Further Education Skills Strategy.
- The VPAAS highlighted that following feedback from the HE Curriculum and Quality Committee in November they were looking to replace UCSC with University Centre: Trafford and Stockport College Group. It was noted that Marketing had consulted with curriculum colleagues on a rebrand to align with sector guides and employment-based qualifications. The VPAAS reported that before the proposed new branding can be finalised, TSCG would need to consult with the DfE/OfS on the new name.

**Action: Vice Principal Apprenticeships and Adult Skills**

**The VPAAS highlighted discussion at the Governor Strategic Development Day in relation to the inclusion of Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) in the HESS which the VPAAS undertook to review.**

Next steps and timeline included:

- Confirm rebranding of the University Centre.
- Overview of the Strategy to be presented to Governors at the Governor Strategic Development Day.
- Final approval of the Strategy by the Board of Corporation March 2025.
- HESS launch event in summer term with key stakeholders.
- HESS action plan to be brought to HE Curriculum & Quality Committee's June meeting, which will underpin how TSCG are going to achieve this ambitious plan.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- The Chair welcomed the alignment of the strategy with the overall TSCG Strategic Plan and the community values ethos.

**Action: Vice Principal Apprenticeships and Adult Skills**

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- **The Chair noted the ambition to move from TEF bronze to silver and enquired as to whether the tertiary education system should be referenced given the potential shift and its relevance to local, regional, and national ambitions.**

**Action: Vice Principal Apprenticeships and Adult Skills**

- **A member noted a minor typographical detail on page 15 of the Strategy and the VPAAS undertook to amend 'Trafford College Group' to include Stockport.**

Proposed name change to University Centre: Trafford and Stockport College Group  
In relation to the proposed change in name of the University Centre, the Chair welcomed discussion, given that the Access and Participation Plan focuses on both Trafford and Stockport.

The HE Student Representative highlighted the difficulty students face in finding reference to the University during application processes, particularly in reference to postgraduate study. The GP highlighted the need for the Group to improve and make clear the Universities branding to ensure visibility, both when applying to, and for further study beyond TSCG.

A member raised a question in relation to the historical context of the branding and the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) advised that Stockport College had a recognised University Centre prior to the merger with Trafford College. The CEO commented that Stockport College had a large number of HE students, especially given its size, while Trafford College had very small numbers of HE students, and that post-merger, the strategy had been to highlight HE in Stockport rather than Trafford, as Trafford already had UA92 (University Academy 92). The CEO advised that the aspiration had been to have University Centre Stockport College recognised for the town of Stockport. It was confirmed that the current name had been officially approved and recognised by the DfE and the CEO reminded the Committee that a change in name would require approval from the DfE and potentially consultation with local stakeholders.

The Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) advised that the proposal to brand the University Centre as 'University Centre: Trafford and Stockport College Group' would allow the flexibility and freedom to grow the offer across both sites under the strapline 'qualifications that work for you'.

A member commented on the need for clear marketing and branding and stressed the importance of making it easy for potential students to search and find the University Centre.

The Chair commented on the geographical location of Stockport and its significance in the context of HE provision, noting that Stockport has traditionally been a cold spot for HE provision, despite its history and that the geographical aspect is interesting and relevant to the discussions about the branding and positioning of the University Centre.

**Minute No.****Action: Board of the Corporation**

- Following due discussion and consideration, it was agreed that the Board of the Corporation would consider further the appetite for rebranding and change of name to the University Centre: Trafford and Stockport College at its next meeting.

**Action: Vice Principal Apprenticeships and Adult Skills**

- In relation to the approval of the HESS, the CEO recommended that the branding University Centre Stockport College on the Strategy should be maintained to reflect the current approved name by the DfE.

**Action: Vice Principal Apprenticeships and Adult Skills/ Chair of the HE Curriculum and Quality Committee**

- The CEO referred to an earlier comment by the Chair and suggested that the concept of tertiary education should also be considered under section 6 on collaborative arrangements in the Strategy. The CEO commented that if the government is moving from 'competition to collaboration' and looking at a tertiary system, it might be beneficial to include a bullet in relation to the support of national developments around a more joined up tertiary education system. The Chair of the HE Curriculum & Quality Committee undertook to support VPAAS with the required update.

There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Draft Higher Education and Skills Strategy 2024/2030 be recommended to the Board of the Corporation for approval.

**HEC&Q/07/25 Draft Access and Participation Plan 2026/2027 for submission in 2025**

The Head of HE Quality and Standards (HHEQS) introduced David Hillier (Consultant). It was advised that the Consultant had been working with the Group since October 2024 to lead the development of the Access and Participation Plan (APP).

The Consultant referred members to the previously circulated report and update on the Draft Access and Participation Plan (APP) 2026/2027. The Consultant clarified that the APP was still in draft form, with seven sections completed and two more to be written.

The seven draft sections of the plan were shared for review (Introduction and Strategic Aim, Risks to the Equality of Opportunity, Objectives, Student Consultation, Evaluation, Provision of Information to Students, and Annex A – Further Information and Analysis).

The Consultant reported that the Group's APP is due to be submitted by the end of July 2025 and approved by the OfS. The APP can positively impact access, participation and success for HE students from underrepresented groups by identifying the current performance gaps, implementing effective interventions to narrow/close those gaps over time and regularly analysing the progress and positive impact interventions are having.

The Consultant highlighted that the current APP contains 12 objectives, and that it was felt that it was too large for an FE college of this size. It was confirmed that the average number of objectives for FE colleges in the current cycle was around 4 to 6.

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The Consultant shared the objectives that have been identified to address risks to the equality of opportunity for student groups at the identified stages in the student life cycle. Each risk to equality of opportunity that the plan addresses has at least one corresponding measurable objective that is timebound and measurable, and those are set in the APP:

- PTP1 – To address the risk to equality of opportunity for full time students from the least represented communities [in higher education] in accessing higher education (TUNDRA quintile 1)
- PTS1 – To eradicate the continuation gap between full time students from the most deprived communities (IMD Quintile 1 and 2) and from the least deprived communities
- PTS2 – To significantly reduce, during the 4-year period of this APP, the completion gap between full time students from the most deprived communities (IMD Quintile 1) and from the least deprived communities
- PTS3 – To significantly reduce (by more than a half), during the 4-year period of this APP, the completion gap between part time students from the most deprived communities (IMD Quintile 1) and from the least deprived communities

It was confirmed that the consultation process included:

- The establishment of a working group comprising of representatives from various teams to draft the APP. It was noted that a number of meetings had taken place to date.
- Two student online surveys: one for current HE students on support for continuation and completion, and another for Level 3 students on accessing HE and potential barriers.

The Consultant advised that, in addition, a meeting had taken place with finance in relation to the requirements around the Fee Investment and Target Spreadsheet to be uploaded alongside the APP.

The Consultant shared the next steps and timeline as follows:

- Receipt of student consultation from surveys and agreement on planned Interventions.
- Completion of the (2) outstanding sections of the APP (Intervention Strategies and Expected Outcomes and Annex B – Further Information that sets out Rationale, Assumptions and Evidence).
- Completion of the Fees, Investment and Target Spreadsheet (FIT) following decisions on planned tuition fees (2026 onwards) and Financial Student Support (Bursaries and Hardship Funds).
- Submission of APP to HE Curriculum and Quality Committee on 5 June with recommendation for Board approval in 2025.
- APP to be submitted to OfS by 31 July 2025.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- The Chair of the Committee commented on the thorough approach and methods adopted to arrive at the current draft and noted that this provided assurances to the Committee.
- The Chair of the Committee welcomed the reduction of objectives from 12 to 4, emphasising the importance of focusing on a manageable number of goals given the size of the HE population at TSCG.

**Minute No.****Action: Head of HE, Quality & Standards/ Consultant**

- **The Chair suggested considering experience gaps, particularly for disabled students accessing support as part of the intervention strategies and highlighted the importance of understanding gaps in experience from specific student groups to inform overall intervention strategies.**
- The Chair welcomed the inclusion of the LSIP (Local Skills Improvement Plan) in the context of the draft access and participation plan, noting its significance in TSCG's offer and the importance of aligning the APP with other parts of the organisation.
- The VPAAS made reference to attendance at the HE conference and highlighted discussions around the application process for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) emphasising the complexity of the process and the need for better support.
- The Higher Education Student Representative (HESR) reported experiences and difficulties encountered during the dyslexia assessment process. It was noted that individuals who were recently diagnosed also found the application process for DSA to be overwhelming. The HESR emphasised that despite the challenges of the process, the support provided at UCSC was excellent and greatly improved the student experience.

The GP highlighted that the Group does not currently provide an internal dyslexia assessment service, and that students suspected of having dyslexia are referred for an external assessment, which can be time consuming. It was reported that providing this service internally could be quicker and beneficial for students, allowing for faster support and improving the student journey

The Consultant commented that there is no proposed formal APP objective targeted at a student group in terms of disability as there is no obvious statistical gap. However, it was noted, that this may change depending on feedback from students and further meetings. The Consultant highlighted the importance of considering student feedback and commented on the Group's ambition and commitment to supporting students with disabilities.

The Chair commented on the student population, noting that TSCG has a smaller number of HE learners, which allows for quicker identification and support of individual student needs in the classroom. This smaller scale is beneficial for picking up on issues that larger providers might struggle with due to the size of their student body.

The Chair highlighted that external stakeholders want to see that the institution knows its student population, understands their needs, and has analysed both data and qualitative aspects including student feedback to inform strategies. It was confirmed that the Committee looked forward to the results of the student surveys.

- In relation to underrepresented groups, a member asked at what point students declare that they have barriers to learning or difficulties. The HHEQS advised that this typically happens during enrolment, where students can indicate their needs on the enrolment form. This information is then picked up by the disability support officer and the inclusion team to ensure appropriate support is provided. The HHEQS



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emphasised the importance of capturing this information as early as possible to start the support process promptly.

The HHEQS reiterated that although no formal objective has been proposed around disabled students, internal intervention strategies focus on improving and enhancing support for students with disabilities.

The VPAAS highlighted a planned early enrolment date in June in order to identify and support students' needs well in advance to ensure that necessary support is in place before the academic year begins. It was confirmed that early enrolment is part of a broader strategy to improve student retention and support.

- In relation to part time students, the VPAAS reported on sector wide issues and commented that part-time learners are less likely to declare their needs, which can be a challenge when moving to LLE. It was noted that the time it takes to put support in place might be longer than the duration of the modules that they are studying.

**Action: Vice Principal Apprenticeships and Adult Skills**

- **A member raised a point in relation to the success of students that have different needs and whether this is highlighted and marketed to potential students. The VPAAS commented that the Group does not explicitly highlight the success of students with barriers to learning and that this could be considered further.**

The HESR reiterated that the support that had been received from UCSC had been fantastic and life affirming and enabled progression on to a master's degree.

The Consultant emphasised the importance of articulating the positive impact of the smaller institution in the intervention strategy and noted that the interaction between learners and their tutors is a key ingredient to what the university offers, and it should be clearly communicated in a way that is understandable to external audiences such as the OfS and potential applicants. This interaction is seen as a significant benefit that can enhance the student experience and support their success.

The Consultant commented that funding for intervention strategies could be subsidised by additional income, particularly when calculating figures for OfS around intentional small class sizes.

**Action: Head of HE, Quality and Standards/ Consultants**

**It was confirmed that the final draft would be presented to the HE Curriculum and Quality Committee at its next meeting.**

**There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the update on the draft Access and Participation Plan be received and noted.**

**HEC&Q/08/25 HE/Higher Skills Curriculum 2025-2030**

The VPAAS provided an update on the HE/Higher Skills Curriculum 2025-2030 (the duration of the Strategic Plan). The VPAAS explained that HE provision has decreased over the last 3 years, with less than 250 learners currently enrolled. This trend needs to

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be reversed to enable the Group to meet the needs of students and industry and ensure the long-term viability of HE provision at the Group.

The VPAAS confirmed the ambitious planned growth of approximately 100 HE learners in 2025/2026 (draft Curriculum Plan at 332 starts on OfS regulated provision). The VPAAS reported that applications will be reviewed further, and the plan will be risk assessed prior to final sign off.

The VPAAS shared the details of the Curriculum Plan as follows:

- Applications have increased when compared with 2023/2024, but very moderate.
- New curricula offer including: BSC(Hons) Computing, HNC Business 2, HNC photography, HNC Hospitality management and FdSc Assistant Practitioner in Health and Social Care.
- Current applications are above this point last year by 24, which is positive. Coupled with this, there's increased progression to level 5/6 based upon new 2024/2025 courses, however, there's a risk that not all students may wish to progress.
- There are increased marketing opportunities, working on national campaign, rebranding and increased local marketing, including development of alumni and internal level 3 progression.
- There are potential opportunities with College Online and Institute of Technology being explored.

The VPAAS reported shared the next steps and timeline as follows:

- Agree final offer as part of the curriculum planning process by the end of April.
- Continue to promote offer internally and externally through marketing and events.
- Continue to review applications and maximise opportunities for conversion.
- Course viability to be discussed by 31 July 2025.

The GP commented on the ambitious plan for increasing HE student numbers, emphasising the need to manage expectations. It was noted that whilst there is good work being done to develop courses and attract students, that actual growth might be slower than anticipated. The GP highlighted the importance of focusing on maximising courses that recruit well and being realistic about the resources and plans to avoid under delivery.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- A member raised a question in relation to strategies being implemented to keep students engaged between their application and the start of their courses. The VPAAS highlighted several initiatives:
  - Early enrolment opportunity in June.
  - Providing information about support for applications, including DSA
  - Potentially organising a 'preparation for HE' session in July, offering tailored learning around study skills.
  - Potentially utilising alumni to share case studies.
  - Conducting telephone interviews with every HE applicant to discuss the course and provide personalised engagement.
- The HESR commented that many HE students are very open to the idea of alumni discussions and highlighted recent interactions with Level 4 and Level 6 students to discuss their journey and offer advice to highlight the benefits and navigate the transition to HE and beyond.

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- The VPAAS highlighted low Level 3 progression, noting that the average age of an HE student in FE is 28, and commented on ongoing work to create pathways for Level 3 student progression.
- The VPAAS highlighted that marketing brochure aimed at apprenticeships, following an employer enquiry, had resulted in 3 January enrolments. The VPAAS acknowledged that whilst this is a small sample size, it indicates some potential for growth in HE enrolments through better communication and support for apprentices.

**There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved the HE/Higher Skills Curriculum 2025-2030 be received and noted.**

**HEC&Q/09/25 HE Performance Update 2024/2025 including Quality Improvement Plan 2024/2025**

The HHEQS provided an update on enrolments, retention and income as part of the HE Performance Update 2024/25 including the Quality Improvement Plan 2024/25. The VPAAS updated members on the progress made to meeting the improvement objectives and targets, specified in the HE QIP 2024/25.

The HHEQS provided the following overview in relation to recruitment and retention:

- Of the 240 students enrolled during 2024/25, 236 were on programme on 1 November, however, there have been 7 withdrawals since then resulting in an in-year retention rate of 97%.

The HHEQS provided the following overview in relation to achievement:

- 33 students are due to achieve in 2024/5, of which 38% are Early Years, 22% Construction and 16% Arts.

The HHEQS reported the following overview in relation to income:

- Adverse variance of £659 000 as of period 5, 31% of budget.

The HHEQS provided an update on the Areas for Improvement in the Quality Improvement Plan 2024/25 as follows:

- The VPAAS reported that the most progress has been made on Area for Improvement (Afl) 1: Curriculum offer, course design and delivery. A broad range of activities are both planned and underway to consolidate, develop and innovate the University Centre offer to meet enrolment targets for 2025/26.
- Outcomes for Students (Afl 2) is positive and on track to exceed achievement targets.
- Evidence of progress in Student Engagement and Representation (Afl 3), evidenced by 80% satisfaction for Student Voice in the midyear survey. Failure to meet the 76% participation target (67% response rate), however, this is an improved position compared to previous years.
- The Access and Participation Plan (APP) renewal is on track and progress has been made in the preparation of a draft student consultation and research; relevant internal stakeholders have participated in its development. Monitoring of performance against current APP is not yet completed (Afl 4).
- Inconsistencies across departments is evident in relation to teaching, learning, assessment and feedback and not every learner that responded to the midyear survey felt that their needs are being met. Attendance is 85%, retention is 97% (Afl

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5). Inconsistencies are also evidenced in the adherence to process and provision of quality as evidenced by positivity scores for Organisation and Management (below target of 80%) in some departments (Afl 6).

- More progress is required to meet targets relating to staffing in higher education, particularly in generating opportunities for HE specific staff development and collaboration (Afl 7).

The HHEQS reported the next Steps and timeline as follows:

- Actions and milestones in the QIP will continue to be addressed and monitored on a monthly basis with Programme Leaders via departmental QIPs. This will inform the next update to the Committee.

The Consultant commented on the monitoring of the 12 current APP objectives as part of the analysis on the current position to support the draft of the APP.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

A member asked a question in relation to the objective to create and implement a Student Engagement Strategy (SES), which was RAG rated RED. The HHEQS advised that the initial strategy was delayed to align with the Group's Strategic Plan and the HE and Higher Skills Strategy (HESS).

**There were no further questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the HE Performance Update 2024/2025 be received and noted.**

**HEC&Q/10/25 HE Regulatory Update**

The VPAAS referred members to the previously circulated report and information in relation to key areas impacting upon the HE provision at Trafford & Stockport College Group, including retention, OfS capital bid update, HE fees competitor analysis and changes to OfS conditions.

A report and short presentation were made by the VPAAS within which the following was highlighted:

**HE Fees and Local Provider Analysis**

- First degrees £8200
- Foundation degrees and HNC/HND £8,000
- HE CERT/DIP £7500
- Part time fees charged at 50%

The VPAAS reported that analysis of local competitors finds that the Group are charging below average for BA and FdA, (FT/PT), and with the exception of one provider, The Group is charging more for HNC/HND.

**OfS Capital Bid and Funding Allocation for 2024/25**

- On track to spend remaining £220,000 by end of March 2025. Spend includes creating extra classroom space with partitions, extra meeting/study space with purchase of 3

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Pods, specialist equipment for Creative Arts and GETECH Lego education to support Digital, Engineering and outreach.

**AOC Updates**

- Proposed changes to certain OfS conditions. OfS to hold meeting with AoC and members on 12 March to provide further clarity.
- Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) launch January 2027.
- Government plans for HE reform expected in summer 2025.
- Growth and Skills Levy under review.
- New condition E6 governing the regulation of Harassment and Sexual Misconduct August 2025.

**Next Steps and Timeline:**

- Prioritise and monitor progress on allocated capital projects to ensure timely completion by March 2025.
- Annual Fees for 2026/27 and onwards to be confirmed by April 2025 for the FIT document relating to APP to be completed and funding of interventions properly costed based on fee projections.
- The Higher Education Fees 2026/2027 to be approved at the June Resources Committee meeting.

Further discussion focused on fees analysis fees and whether to increase the fees for foundation degrees and first degrees, as well as potentially lowering the fees for HNCs and HNDs.

The VPAAS advised that increasing the fees for foundation degrees and first degrees by £500 might not significantly impact demand, as many HE students are employer paid and choose TSCG based on relationships rather than fees. It was noted that a brief conversation had taken place with the CFOO in respect of the price elasticity of demand, questioning whether lowering HNC and HND fees would attract more students to offset the fee reduction.

The GP emphasised the importance of staying competitive while considering the context of TSCG's students and communities.

**Action: HE Curriculum & Quality Committee**

In response to a question, the Chair of the Corporation expressed that it was his view that HE fees should remain unchanged but advised that members could send through any feedback that they wished to make to the Corporation Secretary in advance of the Resources Committee.

There were no further questions or comments from members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Higher Regulatory Update be received and noted.

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The HHEQS referred members to the previously circulated report and information in relation to the impact of student engagement activity in 2024/2025.

It was confirmed that the report also provided analysis of the midyear survey results.

The report contained the following supplementary documentation:

- Student Engagement Impact Statement 2024/25 Q2
- Analysis of HE Midyear Survey 2024/25

The report highlighted the following:

- Students received support through 86 financial awards, 161 support interventions, processing 53 mitigating circumstances requests, and ensuring funding for over 95% of students.
- Engagement in student surveys is increasing, with a 67% participation rate in the midyear survey.
- Education and Training students reported high satisfaction levels, scoring consistently high results across all themes and achieving 100% in Organisation and Management.
- Learning perceptions were positive, evidenced by an 83% satisfaction rate in Learning Opportunities, indicating strong recognition of skill development and knowledge acquisition.
- 79% of students expressed positivity about the teaching on their course, with very high satisfaction levels reported by students in Education and Art.
- Opportunities for improvement in academic support were noted, particularly in Construction and Engineering, where 28% and 41% of respondents respectively, agreed that teaching staff have supported their learning and are easy to contact.
- Satisfaction levels are higher in departments with courses validated by university partners and with a greater proportion of female students. Lower satisfaction levels were reported in technical disciplines, which have a higher likelihood of male students sponsored by their employer.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

- The Chair asked about how student feedback is gathered and acted upon, and the communication of these actions. The HHEQS advised that the HE Student Engagement and Enhancement Officer (HESEEO) prepares a student voice feedback report for student representatives, and updates are given at Program Committee meetings twice a year. The Chair stressed the importance of capturing student feedback to assure students of the University's commitment to their input and the university's student centred approach.

The HESR commented that students feel their feedback is listened to and acted upon and noted that students have received positive feedback in terms of the student voice and measures that have changed based on their input.

- The VPAAS provided an update on the NSS survey, highlighting that the response rate is currently at 72%, compared to 46% at the same point last year. The VPAAS commented that this increase is attributed to the efforts of HHEQS and (HESEEO) who have actively engaged with students.

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**There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the Student Engagement update be received and noted.**

**HEC&Q/12/25 Office for Students Risk Register Update**

The VPAAS referred members to the previously circulated reports and an Office for Students (OfS) risk register update.

The key operational risks were confirmed to be:

- Financial Risk against 2024/25 income position
- Delivery of successful student outcomes in line with B3 conditions
- Compliance with CMA guidance around public information for HE

The following changes to risk scores since March 2024 were reported:

- D - Risk has increased from 12 to 16. It was noted that the gap had widened in respect of income for HE, with HE income approximately £500,000 adrift of budget (once staffing savings factored in). A more positive approach to January 2025 enrolment than the previous year but shortfall overall still too great.

It was confirmed that all other risks remain unchanged.

**There were no questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the position in respect of Office for Students (OfS) Risk Register Update be received and noted.**

**HEC&Q/13/25 Any Other Business**

There were no matters raised under any business.

**HEC&Q/14/25 Date of Next Meeting**

It was agreed that the date of the next meeting would be held at 10.30 on 5 June 2025 via MS Teams.

The meeting closed at 12.15pm.