

Minutes SEG Corporation Meeting

Governor Meetings

Date	01/04/2025
Time	16:45 - 19:00 (16:45 arrival for a 17:00 start)
Location	Conference Room - Southport College (Morningson Road, Southport, Merseyside, PR9 0TT)
Members Present:	<p>Paul Walker (Corporation Chair)</p> <p>Laura Bell (Independent Governor)</p> <p>Michelle Brabner (Principal) (up to and incl. item 14.3.1)</p> <p>Margaret Boneham (Independent Governor)</p> <p>Kevin Burke (Independent Governor)</p> <p>*Colin Davies (attending via videoconference facilities)</p> <p>Catherine Durr (Staff Governor) (up to item 12)</p> <p>*Roderic Gillespie (Independent Governor) (attending via videoconference facilities)</p> <p>Diane Hutchinson (Independent Governor)</p> <p>*Kashfa Kalim (Independent Governor) (attending via videoconference facilities)</p> <p>Mo Kundi (Independent Governor)</p> <p>Claire Moffat-Lonsdale (Independent Governor)</p> <p>*Tracey Wood (Independent Governor) (attending via videoconference facilities)</p>
Members Apologies:	<p>Alex Barton (Independent Governor)</p> <p>David Mutori (Independent Governor)</p> <p>Susannah Porter (Independent Governor)</p> <p>Elaine Small (Independent Governor)</p>
Members Absent:	<p>Tom Rowe (Staff Governor)</p> <p>Cameron Lunt (Student Governor)</p>
In Attendance:	<p>Paris Bonwick (Vice Principal Business Services) (up to item 12)</p> <p>Mark Burrows (Deputy Principal) (up to item 12)</p> <p>Lisa Farnhill (Dir. Governance and Compliance) (excl. item 14.3.3)</p> <p>Vickie Hayes (Head of Student Support and Inclusion) (up to item 12)</p> <p>Stephen Musa (Vice Principal Curriculum and Support) (up to item 12)</p> <p>Paula Smith (Dir. Finance) (up to item 12)</p>

Agenda

1 - Training on AI followed by Welcome & Apologies for Absence

The meeting began with a welcome from the Chair, thanking those in person and online for joining the meeting and allowing for a prompt start. Apologies were noted for those unable to attend due to illness and other personal

reasons. The Chair welcomed new members, including Colin Davies, joining online, and Luke Collier, the new student governor, who was supported by Vickie Hayes as the Student Governor Mentor.

The Chair informed the Corporation that the AI training by Deputy Principal Mark Burrows, due to take place ahead of the meeting, had been postponed due to the Ofsted Monitoring Visit. The monitoring visit was briefly discussed, highlighting the importance of maintaining regular operations throughout the visit. The Corporation was assured that staff felt confident due to extensive preparations and progress in all areas since the last visit. The Principal advised members that feedback from the visit would be communicated promptly.

In light of the Monitoring Visit, the Principal asked that staff are permitted to leave once their items are delivered, with it noted that the Staff Governor would need to leave at 6.25pm to teach, and the Student Governor needed to leave at 6pm. The Corporation agreed to manage the agenda timings to allow for this.

ITEM 1: Approved – The apologies detailed were accepted by the Corporation.

2 - Declaration of Interests

Standing interest were noted. It was confirmed that the Chair and Vice Chair would not vote on their own reappointment, and staff and students would withdraw for Part B of the meeting. Members were advised the Principal and Director of Governance and Compliance would withdraw when their pay or performance was reviewed under Part B. No further conflicts of interest were declared by the members in relation to items on the agenda.

Item 2: Noted

3 - Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the meeting held on 17th December 2024 were presented for approval. The Chair asked if there were any observations or queries regarding the minutes. With no point of inaccuracy raised, members agreed with the minutes, and they were approved without any amendments.

Item 3: Approved – The minutes of the meeting of the full Corporation held on 17th December 2024, were approved.

4 - Meeting Impact and Matters Arising

The Chair invited the Dir Governance and Compliance to review the actions resulting from matters arising from previous meetings. Members were advised by the Vice Principal Business Services that the OfS had confirmed the returns previously requested were no longer required.

It was noted that the AI training had been developed and planned for delivery, however, postponed due to the Monitoring Visit, and would be rescheduled.

The Principal suggested this could be circulated as a pre-recorded presentation or delivered during the upcoming Governor Development Day on 15th May. Questions were raised about the accessibility and impact of pre-recorded materials and their effectiveness compared to live training sessions. The Principal addressed these concerns, confirming the pre-recorded materials would be comprehensive and interactive, offering an outline of what the training would cover, including the uses, practical application, and governance. Members expressed a preference for face-to-face delivery, with the Dir. Governance and Compliance agreeing to look at how this could be built into the agenda for the 15th May.

The Chair clarified the origin of the AI training, confirming this had been provided in response to requests from governors across the Committee's, highlighting the swift action from the SLT in response to these requests.

Item 4: Resolved – The Committee resolved to accept the update, asking that the deferred training is embedded into the Governor Development Day.

Task: The Dir. Governor and Compliance to review the Governor Development Day agenda to encompass the deferred training.

5 - Confidential Business

The Chair confirmed that there would be a Part B of the meeting to discuss confidential business without the presence of staff and students. It was noted that the Part B minutes from the 17th December meeting had been highlighted for redaction, with these suggested redactions agreed by the Corporation. Members noted the need for staff to leave promptly, with it agreed Governance matters and confidential business would be addressed after 6:00pm, to minimise disruption, enabling all those who needed to leave, to leave together.

Item 5: Resolved – The Committee resolved to approve the suggested redactions and noted the need for Part B to be held without the presence of staff and student governors.

6 - Chair's Report

The Chair provided a verbal update on the work undertaken in his capacity as Chair, since the last meeting. The Chair informed the Board of his attendance at the annual strategic review with the ESFA (now Department for Education) and the Further Education Commissioner's Office. He explained this meeting was a routine accountability check, and the second he had attended. The Chair advised the Corporation that he felt assured by the meeting, with the limited questions and high-level overview indicating the DfE and FEC team members had no concerns.

The Chair also shared experiences from attending the open evening, recommending governors to visit and observe the engagement of students and staff at one of these events. The Chair emphasised the importance of attending College events to gain a deeper insight into the environment and culture of the College, with it confirmed these were accessible without appointment, however, governors were encouraged to advise the SLT of their intention to attend should they want a tour. Additionally, the Chair advised of the ongoing regular meetings with the Principal and Director of Governance and Compliance, as well as participation in Remuneration and Resources Committee meetings and the half yearly review of the Dir. Governance and Compliance, thanking the Vice Chair for her support in this.

Item 6: Resolved – The Committee resolved to accept the update.

7 - Principal's Report

The Principal presented an update on key college matters since the last meeting. The overview drew attention to funding updates, including confirmation of a 3.8% increase in the base rate for 16-19 funding for the 2025-2026 academic year, with details of the Condition Improvement Fund awards having been announced earlier in the day, with the College allocation being £858,000 for capital projects and condition work on buildings.

The Principal detailed the impact of national funding cuts to adult learning budgets and the protective measures taken by the combined authority to mitigate against the impact, with members advised that there would be prudence in delivery, as over delivery was now unlikely to be funded. Questions were raised about the impact of funding cuts and the measures taken to mitigate these effects. The Principal provided detailed explanations and reassurances.

Members were advised details had still not been released regarding the in-year grant, reminding the Corporation that college's had been warned against using this for pay awards, due to this being a one off payment. In response to questions, the Principal informed the Board that further details regarding the amount and any conditions attached to the funding were now expected in May.

The Principal advised the Board of a full review of the Ofsted consultation proposals to the Standards Committee, included in her report for the benefit of the wider Corporation. The details were summarised, outlining the increased number of judgement areas, and confirming the removal of overall effectiveness grades. Having assured the Corporation of the College's response to the consultation, members were encouraged to also participate and provide their feedback into the consultation process.

In summarising the proposed changes, attention was drawn to the value of inclusion in the new framework. Members confirmed this had been reflected in a number of cascades and communications seen by Governors. Members asked if the example within the Principal's report was an analysis of how the College is currently performing against the proposed measures, with the Principal advising that this was a centrally created example provided by the DfE.

In response to questions about whether the College had self-assessed against the proposed measures, members noted this had not yet been done, due to this framework remaining a draft for consultation, however, would be once the framework is finalised.

The Principal summarised key in-college activity, which included positive feedback from those who attended the Pastoral Support Governor Learning Walk Day, Open Events and the Apprenticeship Conference, which was described as successful, with the Compete branding launched, and a range of successful activities.

To conclude, the Principal drew members attention to progress made against the action points in the strategic improvement plan, noting that there were no significant areas of concern, with some actions having developed and evolved throughout the year.

In response to questions about the receipt of in college communications like SEGWay, the Principal advised members that these were circulated to all staff, therefore Governors could see these using their College email address, suggesting an auto forward would help governors receive these to an address they access more frequently. The Dir. Governance and Compliance advised these could be found in the Governors folders in Microsoft Teams. Members were assured a half termly reminder including the link to be sent out alongside the reminder to log training activities.

Item 7: Resolved – The Committee resolved to accept the update.

Task: Governors are encouraged to individually respond to the OFSTED consultation.

Task: Dir. Governance and Compliance to circulate a half termly link to the SEGWay and other internal communications.

8 - Capital Projects Update

The Vice Principal Business Services summarised the progress of capital projects within the budgetary control of the Corporation.

Members noted the LSIP project had now concluded, with members having been invited to the opening of the new Eco Hub, which was located in the Goods Inwards building.

Members noted T Level projects were now nearing completion, with final invoices being processed. Members were assured by the oversight of the Resources Committee, who had been updated regularly, particularly in relation to the previously reported delays and issues relating to quality. In response to questions, members were assured that the spend remained within budget. Members noted that the issues relating to duct work on the first floor had been resolved, and funds previously held back from the contractor had been released. Members were assured that any subsequent issues would be addressed through the use of the warranty.

Members asked about student feedback regarding the new facilities, and were advised they had not been a survey specifically looking at this, however, anecdotal evidence indicated positive feedback from students regarding the new facilities, particularly the dedicated spaces for carpentry and joinery. The eco hub experience was highlighted, with students gaining awareness of new technologies, with 94 student shaving experienced this with their tutors already. Members emphasised the importance of providing facilities that match or beat industry standards and the positive impact on student engagement, with questions asked relating to how these facilities compared to other local colleges.

Item 8: Noted

9 - Resources Committee Update

The Committee Chair provided an update on the work of the Resources Committee from their meetings on 28th January and 18th March. The Committee Chair advised the Corporation that they had reviewed and recommended for approval two HR policies: the Sexual Harassment Duty Policy and the Menopause Policy. The Committee advised the Corporation of concerns raised and discussed regarding apprenticeship and Test and Learn income.

The Corporation noted the Committee had also approved an updated financial forecast, included as essential information for all members, whilst outlining the positive approach to the introduction of a new finance system.

The Committee highlighted their review of HR data and staff utilisation, as well as the progress against the Employer Engagement strategy, improved enrolment and attrition rates, commending the work of the marketing and school liaison teams.

Estates reporting was summarised, including the decision to withdraw the application for the decarbonisation grant, whilst assuring the Corporation of work to review lettings, redraft the Sustainability Strategy and improve the utilisation of land.

The summary concluded with staff thanked for their clear, well-evidenced reports, that supported the effectiveness of the Committee.

9.1 - HR Policies

The Principal presented two HR policies for approval on behalf of the Director of HR. The Sexual Harassment Duty Policy and the Menopause Policy, confirming they had been reviewed and recommended for approval by the Resources Committee. The Principal highlighted the importance of these policies in addressing staff welfare and ensuring a supportive work environment.

Questions were raised regarding the confidential HR phone line for reporting sexual harassment and the training offered to staff. The Principal confirmed that a full training plan would be rolled out for both policies, using external expert guidance from the legal firm that provided the draft policies to ensure the sexual harassment duty was fully met. Members outlined approaches used in their organisation, agreeing that awareness and understanding was key to successful implementation. Initially, a post meeting action for follow up was noted to address the question regarding phone line use, however, the Dir. HR emailed ahead of the meeting closing to confirm the phone line was not yet live, awaiting the policy approval, agreeing to provide statistics on its use in future reports to the Resources Committee.

In discussing the benefits of the policy, members reflected on incidents and experiences, along with the detrimental impact of the normalisation of inappropriate language. The Principal advised this had been highlighted in a report by Ofsted report, with anecdotal evidence given of how this is replicated in the workplace, agreeing that schools and colleges had a place to educate prevent this normalisation. Members thanked the team for their work in this, offering their support and endorsing the proactive approach being taken by the College. It was suggested that a culture of openness and support would encourage people to come forward. Members asked if the policy applied to students, with it confirmed there was a separate policy already in place for students, with training and awareness embedded into induction.

The HR Link Governor advised the Corporation a link visit was planned, with the implementation of the policies, including training and the telephone line use to be discussed.

The Dir. Governance and Compliance outlined the recommended updates to the policy following Union feedback, confirming these had been presented verbally to the Committee and were a part of the recommended approval as outlined in the executive cover.

Item 9.1: Approved – The Corporation approved the Sexual Harassment Policy (staff) and the Menopause Policy.

Task: Dir. HR to embed data on sexual harassment reporting into the HR reports of the Resources Committee.

9.2 - Updated Financial Forecast

The Corporation noted the Committee had approved an updated financial forecast, drawing attention to concerns over apprenticeship and Test and Learn income. Members noted the Committee's discussions relating to the need for careful financial planning and monitoring to mitigate potential risks, particularly in the current climate with funding uncertainty and frequent changes.

The Committee assured the Corporation that the updated forecast aimed to provide a realistic outlook on the college's financial position and ensure sustainable growth. With no questions or comments, the update was noted.

Item 9.2: Noted – The Corporation noted the update and assurances of the Committee over the College's financial position.

10 - Audit Committee Update

The Committee Chair summarised the work of the Audit Committee from their meeting on 6th March, describing it as productive, with gratitude expressed to Standards Committee member, Kevin Burke for joining the Committee.

The Committee Chair confirmed that the Committee had reviewed and had approved the IT Disaster Recovery Plan and updates to the Privacy Statements and recommended for approval the updated Health and Safety Policy and the Fraud Policy. The Chair emphasised the importance of these policies in ensuring compliance and safeguarding the College's operations.

The Committee Chair informed the Corporation that they had received and been satisfied by reassurances relating to Health and Safety, GDPR, Fraud, and the Risk Register, however, had expressed concern about the ongoing issues with the website's non-compliance with accessibility requirements, with the Committee having considered the need for the risk register to be updated relating to this. The Vice Principal Business Services provided an update to the Corporation on the progress made in updating the websites accessibility and adding in the statement.

In concluding the update, the Committee Chair informed the Corporation that the performance of the external audit service had been reviewed, with the tendering process for the internal audit service now progressing.

10.1 - Health and Safety Policy

The Corporation was asked to accept the recommendation of the Audit Committee and approve the updated Health and Safety Policy. With no further comments or questions, the Board accepted the recommendation of the Committee and approved the policy.

Item 10.1: Approved – The Corporation approved the Health and Safety Policy.

10.2 - Fraud Policy

The Corporation was asked to accept the recommendation of the Audit Committee and approve the updated Fraud Policy. The Chair emphasised the improved reporting and robust measures to prevent and address fraudulent activities, ensuring the integrity of the College's financial operations.

With no further comments or questions, the Board accepted the recommendation of the Committee and approved the policy.

Item 10.1: Approved – The Corporation approved the Fraud Prevention Policy.

11 - Standards Committee Update

The Committee Chair provided the Corporation with a comprehensive overview of the work undertaken at the Standards Committee meeting on 11th March, providing assurances of the work to improve standards and enhance student experience. Attention was drawn to the extensive work done to improve the apprenticeship program, whilst highlighting the ongoing issues with the roll out of the use of OneFile, with assurances over the training and support provided.

Members were advised the Quality of Education report from the Deputy Principal and the first draft of the Accountability Statement had been circulated, with the approval process for the Accountability Statement outlined. The Chair confirmed that there were no items presented for approval at this meeting, with the Malpractice Policy, inclusive of AI, being reviewed and further updated ahead of approval.

The Committee Chair informed the Corporation that progress in GCSE English and maths programs were below target, highlighting the impact of different cohorts and work done to anticipate likely intakes ahead of the year commencing.

The Committee advised the Corporation of their focus on student experience, with the review of the student perspectives report having highlighted external accolades and awards, whilst summarising feedback, which evidenced good engagement, however, documented concerns over increased food bank use and canteen costs which would be reviewed, with actions also noted to review the analysis of attendance data.

The Committee Chair confirmed the final destinations data was still to be presented, with an update provided, noting data collation was no longer outsourced, being collected by the College to improve accuracy and reduce the level of unknowns.

The Corporation was advised of the detailed review by the Committee of the proposed changes to the Ofsted Framework, with Committee members having shared information and insights received through their own contacts and networks.

In concluding, The Corporation was assured that safeguarding support remained a strength of the College, with the data having been reviewed and discussed in detail, with AI having also been discussed, and the meeting having concluded in a review of risks.

Item 11: Noted

12 - Governance Committee Update

The Committee Chair provided the Board with an overview of the purpose and focus of the Committee, along with a summary the work undertaken during their meeting on 11th February. Members noted this included work to ensure successful and proactive succession planning for Corporation membership. In response to a question about maximum membership, the Dir. Governance and Compliance provided details of research around Board size and provided a summary of the current determination and the process for amending the instruments and Articles to enable changes.

The Chair highlighted discussions regarding mandatory training, with improvements to the Safeguarding training outlined, then offered a summary of the recommendations made by the Committee.

12.1 - Member reappointment (Paul Walker and Laura Bell)

The Corporation approved the Committee's recommendation to reappoint Paul Walker and Laura Bel, with the valuable contributions of both members and their continued commitment to the Corporation's objectives emphasised. It was clarified that this would be the second four-year term for both members, to run from the end date of the previous term for each, with a continuation in their occupied roles.

Item 12.1: Approved – The Corporation resolved to accept the recommendation of the Committee, reappointing Paul Walker as an independent governor for a term of four years from 1st April 2025, to continue as Chair until January 2027, and Laura Bell as an independent governor for a term of four years from 12th May 2025, continuing as Vice Chair until January 2027.

12.2 - Member appointment (Andrew Bridson and Mike Naden)

The Dir. Governance and Compliance provided the Corporation with an outline of the application process, and recommendation made by the interview panel, as endorsed by the Governance Committee by Written Resolution. The Corporation received an overview of the skills and experience of Andrew Bridson and Mike Naden, agreeing to appoint each as an independent member for a term of four years. The Dir. Governance and Compliance suggested this should be with effect from 1st May 2025. It was confirmed this was to allow for the relevant checks, including DBS application, to be completed ahead of appointment.

The Chair, as a Panel Member, highlighted how the expertise and experience of the applicants supported the work of the Corporation, addressing the skills lost by terms that have ended recently, or are due to end later this year.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the recommendation was for Andy Bridson to be appointed to the Audit Committee, and Mike Naden to the Resources Committee.

Item 12.2: Approved – The Corporation resolved to accept the recommendation of the Committee, appointing Andrew Bridson as an independent governor and member of the Audit Committee and Mike Naden, as an independent governor and member of the Resources Committee, each for a term of four years from 1st May 2025.

12.3 - Governor Engagement Strategy

The Dir. Governance and Compliance summarised the strategy, confirming this replaced the Link Governor Scheme, as a more comprehensive approach, which encompassed all of the activity that happened outside of formal meetings of the Board. The changes made as a result of Committee feedback, including the removal of the link protocol, softening of language and addition of responsibilities was detailed. It was explained how the Strategy intended to both recognise the breadth of engagement work undertaken, whilst addressing the ERG and Governance SAR concerns relating to limited stakeholder engagement.

The Corporation Chair explained that although stakeholder engagement scores had been the lowest scoring area in the reviews, it had not been low, however, had still been proactively addressed. He confirmed that the Strategy and reporting against it was designed to highlight opportunities for governors engage with the College between meetings, and evidence the impact of the work done to support their understanding of the organisation, resulting in more effective governance. In outlining the carefully chosen wording, with the Committee having agreed to indicate it was an expectation for Governors to attend events, including Learning Walks, rather than this being 'mandatory', the Chair detailed his experiences of the Open Events and Learning Walks, adding that he felt it was a governor's responsibility to ensure these are incorporated into a members annual schedule. In highlighting that advance notice is now provided, the Chair drew attention to where future events had been incorporated into the papers for the meeting, under item 13.

The Principal added that she had seen significant improvements in Governor Engagement over the last few years, reflecting on the impact of the Pandemic on restricting activity, with it having changed and evolved since restrictions had lifted, now being more aligned to the work of the College, with structure through learning walks, open events and awards, and flexibility and insight through the link activity. In discussing the range of activities, members agreed the Learning Walks had been insightful and essential in supporting their understanding of the College.

The Dir. Governance and Compliance outlined the method for feedback, as agreed by the Committee, now a simplified online form, to be completed onsite, with the Executive PA ahead of leaving the College. The Chair reiterated how member comments had been used to shape the questionnaire, acknowledging that the previous mechanism was too long and complex, now making it easier for governors to outline their experience and impact of their visit. Examples of impact were outlined, including data triangulation, sharing good practice or simply allowing staff members to share concerns and issues with them. The Dir. Governance and Compliance advised the Corporation that consideration had been given to the provision of a training session on feedback in the forthcoming Governor Development Day, however, on reflection, it had been agreed that this would not be necessary at this stage, explaining that the Dir. Governance and Compliance would collate and summarise the feedback, with this not being shared directly with staff therefore, the style and content could be the governors own interpretation, and did not need to be standardised.

Attention was drawn to the link areas and allocated governors, with members thanked for their prompt response, noting all areas had been allocated at least one link governor. Colin Davies, Tracey Wood and Kash Kalim offered to be added to relevant areas, which was supported by the Corporation. In response to questions about the areas allocated a link governor in the new strategy, it was clarified these were statutory, plus key business areas or those highlighted as benefitting from additional insight due to its score within the risk register. Members considered the inclusion of marketing, with the purpose discussed, agreeing that this was incorporated into the community aspect, in relation to raising the colleges profile, community engagement and reputational aspects, with the recruitment strategy and enrolment data not incorporated as it had been previously, taken out when the link areas were reduced as this was not considered an at-risk area. It was clarified that governors could visit any areas without being linked, provided visits were organised through the Executive PA and added value.

In summarising, the Chair highlighted the importance of active engagement and participation of governors in College activities, ensuring effective oversight and support for the College's Strategic Objectives. The Corporation agreed to approve the updated Governor Engagement Strategy as recommended by the Committee.

Item 12.3: Approved – The Corporation resolved to accept the recommendation of the Committee, and approved the Governor Engagement Strategy, inclusive of the link areas and associated governors, with Colin Davies to be added to Sustainability and Estates, Tracy Wood to Community Partnerships and Kash

Kalim to any relevant area that needed additional support, to be agreed in collaboration with the Dir. Governance and Compliance.

Task: Dir. Governance and Compliance to review the link areas and suggest appropriate areas for Kash Kalim to be assigned to.

13 - Closing Comments (Part A)

The Chair provided closing comments for Part A of the meeting, reminding members of the next Corporation meeting on Tuesday 2nd July 2025 and the Governor and Governance Development Day on Thursday 15th May. The Chair also drew attention to the list of events that may be of interest to governors, noting that the Executive PA, Emma McNamee, would send out emails and invitations for those events open to governors.

Item 13: Noted

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15 - Closing Comments (Part B)

The Chair provided closing comments for Part B of the meeting, reminding members of the next Corporation Committee meeting on Tuesday 2nd July 2025 and the Strategy Day on Thursday 15th May. The Chair thanked all members for their participation and contributions to the meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.05pm