Minutes
Meeting of the SEG Standards Committee
Governor Meetings

Date   11/03/2025

Time   14:30 - 16:30

Location   Southport College; Conference Room

Governors Present   Michelle Brabner - Principal – (Ex-Officio Member)
                                  Kevin Burke (Independent Member)
                                  Catherine Louise Durr (Staff Governor)
                                  *Roderic Gillespie (Committee Chair - Independent Member)
                                  Anita Holt (Associate Member)
                                  *Kashfa Kalim (Independent Member)
                                  Elaine Small (Independent Member)
                                  Katy Robinson (Associate Member)

Invited Attendees   Mark Burrows (Deputy Principal)
                                  Lisa Farnhill (Dir. Governance and Compliance)
                                  Vickie Hayes (Head of Student Support and Inclusion)
                                  Shaun Hindle (Dir. Curriculum, Apprenticeships and Skills)
                                  Stephen Musa (Vice Principal Curriculum and Support)

Apologies   Susannah Porter (Independent Member)
                                  Tracey Wood (Independent Member)

* Indicates attendance via video conferencing facilities.

1 - Welcome And Apologies for Absence

The meeting commenced with a welcome from the Chair, who acknowledged the presence of all attendees, both in person and online, with it confirmed those attending virtually could hear and be heard.

Apologies for absence were detailed and accepted for Tracy Wood and Susannah Porter.

The Director of Governance and Compliance provided an update on the appointment of Student Governors, advising the Committee that the appointment process had concluded the previous day following the closing of the votes on Friday. The Committee were informed the students had not been invited to attend this meeting as their induction process had just begun, with the Chair and Deputy Principal having agreed it would be unfair to involve them in the meeting immediately without proper preparation and induction. The Committee acknowledged the importance of student representation at Board level, highlighting their valuable input, agreeing there was a need for adequate preparation before participation in meetings.

Item 1: Noted

2 - Declaration Of Interests

The Chair invited members to declare any interests related to the agenda items. Standing interests were noted, including the Dir. Governance and Compliance being the DPO, and Katy Robinson as a

member of the Southport Learning Trust and Ofsted inspector, with the publication of the DfE performance tables having been recently released and reviewed by Katy as part of her role within the Southport Learning Trust. In reflecting on the agenda, members confirmed there was no need for Katy to withdraw for any of the agenda items.

Item 2: Noted

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3 - Minutes / Matters Arising

The Director of Governance and Compliance presented the minutes from the previous meeting held on 26th November 2024. Members confirmed that the minutes were accurate and highlighted several matters arising, confirming there were no additional matters or actioned that had not been captured within item 4.

The committee approved the minutes without further comments.

Item 2: Approved – Members approved the minutes of the meeting held on 26th November 2024.

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4 - Follow up from the Previous Meeting – Impact and Actions

The Director of Governance and Compliance provided an update on the impact and actions from the previous meeting.

Key points included ongoing work on AI policies, approval of the self-assessment report, and updates on employer activities, with the details of the third tier only due in the summer. The Committee noted the importance of embedding T level placement policies and providing induction support similar to apprenticeships, which had been implemented following the suggestion at the last meeting.

It was noted that examples of policies and support documents related to AI were still to be shared, however, the College had continued to research and share good practice with a range of sources and had since developed their own policy and roadmap, with a focus on ensuring data security and fair use. The committee discussed the importance of training managers and ensuring that policies were effectively implemented.

Members noted the self-assessment report had been approved at the December Corporation meeting, and the Committee acknowledged the need for continuous improvement and monitoring of policies.

Item 4: Noted – The Committee acknowledged and accepted the update and assurances.

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5 - CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

The Director of Governance and Compliance confirmed that there were no sections within the minutes from the meeting on 26th November that needed to be held as confidential. Additionally, there were no items on the current agenda that required confidentiality and presentation without the presence of staff. The committee agreed that transparency was essential and that there was no need to exclude staff or students from any discussions or minutes.

Item 4: Resolver – The Committee resolved to publish the minutes in full and hold the full meeting in the presence of staff governors.

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6 - RISKS MOVEMENTS

The Deputy Principal provided an overview of the risk movements since the last meeting. The Committee was informed there had been two reviews of the risk register, with increases to the risks rating for policy management and curriculum planning delivery, impacted by internal and external factors.

Details of external factors, including funding uncertainty and changes in policy direction were outlined. The Committee discussed the importance of monitoring these risks and implementing mitigations where possible, acknowledging the difficulties presented by the pace of updates. The Committee acknowledged the complexity of the current situation and endorsed the approach of the SLT which was to keep these risks under review, whilst remaining in a position of influence through networking and remaining connected to sources of information.

The Chair presented questions as circulated by email by a member unable to attend, with comments and queries relating to the risk on the impact of staff absences on curriculum delivery and student achievement, as well as tracking policy changes such as the removal of English GCSE requirements for adult apprenticeships. These risks were noted for further consideration as the meeting progressed as they linked to additional detail contained within the reports presented.

The Chair asked all members to be mindful of the risks related to their Terms of Reference as they worked through the meeting, in order to flag any proposed updates to the scoring and mitigations at the end.

Item 6: noted

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7 - Quality of Education Report

The Deputy Principal presented the Quality of Education Report, starting with positive news about the international collaboration with Bergen Community College. Members were reminded partnership focused on green skills and curriculum delivery, with plans for a visit from a US delegation in June. The Committee was pleased with the recognition and progress in this area.

The Deputy Principal also highlighted the refurbishment of the restaurant, which had been modernised to enhance the student experience. The Committee confirmed they had seen the promotion of it through social media, commending the marketing teams work on highlighting the facilities availability and refurbishment. Members discussed the profitability of the restaurant and considered the need to balance commercial activities and teaching and learning, noting the importance of maintaining high standards while ensuring financial viability.

Members were provided with an outline of how it is currently used, including initiatives to support year 10 food technology students. Following a discussion about costings and profit, members asked about how this compared to other college restaurants and were given details of alternative

structures and initiatives considered. This included enhancing the community offer by utilising food waste to provide meals to those in need against more commercial proposals with examples of how other FE Colleges operate given. In considering the impact of the restaurant location, members commended the college's approach to support and work with local restaurants rather than present as competition. Members asked if the college had looked at full cost recovery options, with examples of cupcake making and decorating being given. The Principal confirmed these had been considered, however, the costs were beyond the scope of what is considered affordable or value for money for customers and therefore not viable to run, with it proposed that courses elsewhere offered as full cost recovery included some subsidisation.

The Deputy Principal provided updates on various initiatives, including a focus on visitor economy and customer service training with a detailed overview of improvements to the apprenticeship programme. This included details of a rebrand, launch of an app and activities during apprenticeship week, which had focused on resilience, and was considered a success with positive feedback.

The Committee was given an overview of the ongoing challenges with the use of one file and pro monitor systems, emphasising the need for consistent training and support for staff. Members asked about usability, alternatives and sanctions, with members outlining their experience of the system and alternatives. Members asked about the ability to check for plagiarism within OneFile and discussed the other systems used by the college and clarified the differences uses as well as engagement levels with the other systems. Members discussed the benefits of employer access to OneFile, concluding support and training were integral to it being successfully fully implemented by all staff, apprentices and employers. The committee acknowledged the progress made and the ongoing efforts to improve the quality of education through the correct use of the available software.

Members were assured by the external review of the apprenticeship provision carried out by a member of the FEC's Team. They were informed that it identified many areas of good practice and swift actions to address recommended actions to further improve the offer.

Associate Governor Katy Robinson was thanked for visiting and looking at the GCSE English and Maths provision. Progress by January was acknowledged, however, it was noted this remained below where the college hoped to be at this point.

Training and support for staff was outlined, with a question asked about measuring the impact of the professional development strategy on teaching quality. The Deputy Principal indicated it was difficult to measure at this stage, with learning walks and the deep dive process.

Ahead of concluding the item, members were given an overview of the progress towards preparation for a support and monitoring visit from Ofsted, as well as an outline of the proposed changes to the framework.

Members asked about the format and potential outcomes of a monitoring visit, and the level of support required by governors. Members were assured by details of the SLT's preparations and commended the way in which they intended to ensure staff were supported throughout.

In reviewing the proposed changes to the Ofsted Framework, members were advised of ongoing concerns over processes for Quality Assurance within the proposal. Positives included separating attendance from behaviour and attitudes, as well as the focus on SEND provision, with members asking if the College had the opportunity to be a part of the pilot. The Principal advised that the wording in the pilot information indicated those rated as RI would not be considered suitable.

Members highlighted the lack of detail and methodology in the proposed framework, and discussed how the proposed reforms do not seem to have addressed wellbeing and the underlying the reason for the review, relaying details of similar discussions held within their own networks.

An outline of the focus for governors during a pilot was provided by a member, with the Committee indicating they had no concerns from the detail presented, feeling confident of their knowledge and oversight of the areas outlined.

The item closed with an outline of national policy updates and progress against the Strategic Improvement Plan, with the Deputy Principal agreeing to contact the member unable to attend to clarify the questions sent by email. Members expressed concern over the pace of national policy changes, noting the impact of in-year changes for adult apprentices, with the requirement to sit English and maths GCSE's now a complex issue, with the decision being that of the employer. Members discussed the impact on outcomes data along with other key funding and qualification reforms, with the implications on the college considered at length. Members were assured by the involvement of the Principal and Deputy Principal in relevant forums to ensure that they were aware of and could influence the updates.

Item 7: Resolved – The Committee resolved to note the update and accepted the assurances relating to progress made and support for areas that continue to require additional intervention.

<u>**TASK:**</u> The Deputy Principal will contact Tracey Wood to clarify questions circulated by email.

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8 - Draft Accountability Statement/ Curriculum Planning Document for 2025/26

The Committee discussed the first draft of the Accountability Statement and Curriculum Planning Document for 2025/26. Members were advised the draft was presented for consultation and comments ahead of finalisation and presentation for approval.

The Committee asked about the format and use of the document, and in gaining a better understanding of how it is formed and used, members were advised finalisation may be delayed due to the pace of external changes. Members acknowledged the impact of uncertainty in the landscape, with significant policy changes made and proposed in recent weeks, many lacking the necessary detail to action and implement. The Committee endorsed the decision to allow the pace of change to stabilise and update the document only once the necessary detail to implement recent changes is provided. Members discussed how the funding cuts and pace of policy changes may impact on the Board's risk appetite in relation to curriculum reforms.

Members noted the requirement for approval by the full Corporation ahead of submission by the 30th of June 2025. The discussion included considerations on how the new curriculum plan addresses local labour market skills gaps and the impact of funding cuts.

Ahead of concluding, members discussed AI, being given and outline of progress in creating an AI roadmap and supporting policy to ensure compliant use. Staff and student training and support for those who were considered less IT literate was outlined, with members proposing governors would benefit from more details on the availability, opportunities, benefits and risk and compliance matters. The Deputy Principal suggested he could provide some additional information, with it agreed the training plan would be reviewed to see if this could be incorporated into a pre meeting session.

Item 8: Resolved – The Committee resolved to note the update and recommended the draft is presented to the Corporation for information only on 1st April 2025. The Committee agreed to review the final draft and recommend this to the Corporation for approval ahead of the submission deadline of 30th June 2025.

<u>TASK:</u> Final draft to be circulated by email and decision to be made by the Principal and Committee Chair with the advice of the Dir. Governance and Compliance relating to the most appropriate timing and format for full Corporation approval.
<u>TASK:</u> The Deputy Principal will consider relevant resources or training for governors on the College's use of AI and how it is governed.
<u>TASK:</u> Dir. Governance and Compliance to review training schedule and see if this can be delivered ahead of the April 1st Governor meeting.

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9 - Student Perspectives

The Committee received an update on student perspectives, focusing on personal development, behaviour, and attitudes. The discussion included feedback from student representatives and updates on complaints as well as details of recent events and attendance data.

The Committee members were informed of the success of the apprenticeships conference, as well as the launch of a personal development app for apprentices, and improvements to the estate to make key student areas, such as the wellbeing hub, Clouds, and KGV reception and Link more modern, usable and welcoming.

Attendance including feeder school attendance and achievement data was reviewed in detail. Members agreed that the exploration of attendance trends between schools and colleges was a valuable exercise, however, suggested cause and effect for the included data was inferred, noting the attendance data for the selected schools was whole school, and not reflective of the attendance of the students that have since progressed onto SEG colleges. It was agreed more complete data was necessary from all schools to provide accurate analysis, with a member offering to see if through their role, they could improve attendance data sharing.

The Committee highlighted the importance of supporting disadvantaged and care-experienced students, noting that data for SEG highlights how disadvantaged learners often outperform their peers, evidencing the strength of the available support.

Members were assured by details of how student feedback is used to shape initiatives, including attendance, with behaviour, classroom management and support as well as enjoyment of the lessons considered to have a positive effect on attendance.

Concerns over increasing levels of need in relation to food bank provisions was discussed at length. Members informed the Committee that this aligned with their experience in the local community, with details of additional sources of support for students to access provisions outside of College shared with the SLT. The Committee noted that these services also supported students looking to find volunteering opportunities.

In response to an outline of the themes of the student feedback, members asked about the process for collation and responding to feedback, seeking assurances that all students in all types of provisions were represented in the data, with further questions asked around analysis of the data.

The Committee noted that the cost of food in the College canteen regularly featured within feedback, with a meeting scheduled with the provider to review the offer.

Ahead of concluding the Committee was given a summary of complaints data. Members asked about the source of complaints, being advised that the majority were from parents however noted students also raise complaints directly. Members were informed student complaints tended to be more misunderstandings, or a need for clarification, usually managed more informally by progress tutors.

In concluding, members thanked the Vice Principal Curriculum and Support for what they described as an excellent and informative report

Item 9 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to accept the assurances provided by the report, with it agreed, if possible, additional more detailed school attendance data would be used to draw comparisons and provide context to the College data.

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10 - Destinations Report 2023/24

The Vice Principal Curriculum and Support summarised the data available for student progression and destinations for 2023/2024, confirming that this was an update, with the final report to be provided in June 2025, due to the number of unknowns still being high.

Members were advised there remained 12% of unknown destinations, with staff actively working to reduce this. Members were reminded that there had been issues in the previous year when this had been outsourced, therefore the process had been brought back in-house, and although requiring significant resources, was providing more accurate data.

Item 9 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to accept the update, agreeing to review the final report in the June meeting.

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11 - Safeguarding Update (September – March)

The Vice Principal Curriculum and Support provided the Committee with an overview of the safeguarding update report.

Members were advised that the number of referrals had increased. It was explained that support had been provided to 633 students, with 1317 separate interventions. Members queried the data, reflecting on this as a high percentage of the student population, seeking clarity that this covered every provision type, with further details and examples of the types of intervention and issues provided. Members asked if the impact on attendance and achievement was monitored and tracked, with it confirmed this was only done for vulnerable groups, for example those who were in receipt of free school meals or looked after.

The discussion considered how the incident in the town in the summer could have also impacted students and increased support needs. It was highlighted how the subsequent trial and documentary were further trigger points for students across the town, noting those not directly affected were still impacted and may have felt a need to seek support. Members discussed the impact of unresolved

trauma as well as the need for effective data sharing at the point of enrolment to ensure support is available.

Members were advised of the additional work done to raise awareness and reduce stigma around mental health, with this considered to have influenced the increase, with more students having been encouraged to seek help, with examples given where specific awareness campaigns resulted in increased disclosures relating to those issues.

The committee discussed the importance of early intervention to prevent more significant and serious concerns in the future, however, acknowledged that this created pressure on the organisations resources. Members were advised that the same support facilities were available to every student on all programmes, however, were advised that for adults and apprentices, this support was unfunded. The Committee noted the plan to appoint a new full-time safeguarding officer to ensure the teams capacity was sufficient to manage the growing number of cases.

Item 11: Resolved – The Committee resolved to accept the assurances provided by the update.

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12 - Policies for approval

The Malpractice Policy, inclusive of AI, was reviewed. Members queried the process for escalating and managing breaches of this policy, indicating a need for the process to be clear and concise to enable staff to follow it. Members discussed this, suggesting implications of breaches to this policy would result in the application of an alternative policy, such as the Positive Behaviour Policy, with members querying if this would also apply to staff. Members insisted there needed to be a clear escalation process for both, with consequences outlined, asking for this to be included.

It was agreed that the draft would be withdrawn for further refinement and to ensure it aligns with or is embedded into Quality Manual. The revised policy will be presented at the next meeting.

Item 12: Deferred – The Committee resolved to accept the assurances provided by the update.

Task: The Policy to be re-presented highlighting the process for escalation, linking to relevant staff and student policies.

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13 - Meeting Reflection

Members reflected on the meeting, noting the comprehensive reports and discussions. Key points included the positive news on apprenticeship attendance and the health and well-being awards. The committee agreed to balance the reporting of positive achievements alongside areas of continued focus for improvement.

13.1. Risks Related To Standards

The Committee considered the information reviewed and discussed whether any risk ratings needed adjustment. The increased awareness and reporting of safeguarding issues were highlighted as an area of concern, with it considered whether this needed to be acknowledged.

On reviewing the detail, and the mitigations, including the appointment of an additional full-time member of staff, it was agreed this did not need adjusting.

Members commented on the need to monitor quality risks closely, however, agreed they did not need to be revised as a result of the information presented.

13.2 - Items To Be Reported To The Board

The Committee discussed and agreed on the items to be reported to the Corporation at its meeting on 1st April 2025. Key achievements and progress were highlighted, including significant improvements in apprenticeship attendance, English and maths performance, and the achievement of awards and international partnership working.

Members agreed the draft Accountability Statement was not yet ready for presenting for approval, but could be include for information, highlighting the potential routes for approval.

Item 13: Approved – The Committee agreed the items to be presented to the Corporation.

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14 - DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND CLOSING COMMENTS

The chair confirmed the date of the next meeting as 17th June 2025 at 2:30pm. Closing comments included acknowledgements of the efforts made by the committee and staff in improving various aspects discussed during the meeting. The chair thanked everyone for their contributions.

The meeting closed at 4.30pm.