

**Minutes of the Standards Committee Meeting held onsite\*  
Innovation Centre  
Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022 at 3pm**

\*NB – although onsite, as per the I&A, remote access is permitted and is indicated where members are listed as present

- Present:** Roderic Gillespie (Committee Chair)  
Mark Aberdein (Independent Governor) (\*remote access)  
Heather Austin (Student Governor)  
Michelle Brabner (Principal)  
Catherine Durr (Staff Governor)  
Susannah Porter (Independent Governor)
- In Attendance:** Paris Bonwick (Asst. Principal MIS and Apprenticeships)  
Mark Burrows (Vice Principal)  
Lisa Farnhill (Clerk to the Corporation)  
Stephen Musa (Asst. Principal Student Experience and Welfare)  
Victoria Wickington (Assistant Principal Teaching, Learning and Quality)
- Apologies:** Katy Robinson (Independent Governor)  
Anita Holt (Associate Governor)
- Absent:** None

Minute No.	Minutes	Action
<b>S.23.44</b>	<p><b>ITEM 1: OPEN AND WELCOME</b> The Committee Chair opened the meeting, welcoming everyone to his first meeting, with brief introductions given. Paper authors were thanked for their time in preparing information for discussion with the VP Curriculum and Performance asking for the permission of the Chair to table an additional policy update under item 12, relating to admissions criteria. Permission was granted.</p> <p><b><u>Item 1 – Resolved:</u></b> <i>Members resolved to accept the presentation of the tabled policy</i></p>	
<b>S.23.45</b>	<p><b>ITEM 2: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> The Clerk detailed the apologies of Katy Robinson and Anita Holt. These were accepted by the Committee, who noted that if possible, Anita may join virtually later in the meeting.</p> <p><b><u>Item 2 – Resolved:</u></b> <i>Members resolved to accept the apologies detailed.</i></p>	
<b>S.23.46</b>	<p><b>ITEM 3: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> Standing interests were noted, including details of an update to the standing interests for Susannah Porter. It was confirmed there were no interests to declare in relation to any agenda items.</p> <p><b><u>Item 3 – Noted:</u></b> <i>The Committee resolved to note the standing declarations.</i></p>	

Minute No.	Minutes	Action
S.23.47	<p><b>ITEM 4: MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF 6<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2022</b>  Members were given the opportunity to raise any points of inaccuracy from minutes of the last meeting.  The Chair invited members to raise any additional matters not included under item 5 or elsewhere in the agenda, with none raised, the minutes were approved.</p> <p><b><i>Item 4 - Approved: The Committee resolved to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2022.</i></b></p>	
S.23.48	<p><b>ITEM 5: MATTERS ARISING / ACTIONS SUMMARY</b>  The Clerk summarised the report, informing the Committee that the member of staff responsible for student engagement had changed, with the request to invite Committee members to focus groups now transferred to the AP Student Experience and Welfare.</p> <p>Members noted that the dashboards reviewed at the last meeting were now live and operationally active, and would be used to support reporting, however, would not be accessible by governors. It was explained that this was due to needing a Southport device and VPN to access the dashboards which were on the College the server. Members agreed the KPI score card, being more high level, was a more suitable and strategic alternative.</p> <p>In relation to improvements in student feedback and the representation of student voice at governor level, it was clarified that the operational level detail of the questions and format were reviewed with the student voice link governor. Members noted sector benchmarking was incorporated into the new format, with internal comparisons to be provided from the second round of surveys using the new questions.</p> <p>The VP and Committee Chair, thanked the Clerk for her help and support in preparing for the meeting and providing context to the actions and matters arising.</p> <p><b><i>Item 5 - Resolved: The Committee noted the update.</i></b></p>	
S.23.49	<p><b>ITEM 6: CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS</b>  No items within the minutes or on the agenda were considered to be confidential.</p> <p><b><i>Item 6 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to approve the minutes for publication. The Committee confirmed they did not need any items on the agenda to be reviewed confidentially.</i></b></p>	
S.23.50	<p><b>ITEM 7 CURRICULUM REPORT</b></p> <p>The Vice Principal summarised progress in key areas of the curriculum, detailing new processes and impact of those detailed earlier in the year.</p> <p>Members were informed the paper intended to provide the Committee with a high-level summary of progress around quality of education for all areas with evidence based expectations of end of year results.</p>	

Members were assured the impact and effectiveness of interventions is continually assessed, with an overview of attendance, retention and achievement data summarised. Members noted the lower retention rates at KGV, asking how the data compared to the previous year, and were reminded of the impact of moving to two-year qualifications, preventing accurate comparisons to be drawn, with most Southport courses being one year.

Members highlighted longstanding concerns over apprenticeship outcomes, and were given a detailed overview of actions, including staff training, implementation of new systems and a drive to improve timely reviews, with a 15% improvement since the report had been drafted.

Members were advised of staffing and team stability issues in GCSE maths and English, with the SLT investigating the use of an online system that would track progress and provide individualised pathways based on a learner's strengths and gaps in their knowledge. Members were advised that staffing continued to be a sector-wide issue, therefore introducing this system would safeguard against future disruption to learning.

Members discussed observations, staff support and course recovery intervention. The Committee noted this was positively received by most staff, however, had resulted in some absences, with members highlighting how difficult it must be to initiate staff procedures when faced with absence issues, recruitment challenges and a national supply staff shortage. The VP agreed it was a challenge, with the college committed to supporting staff to re-engage with the support processes. The Principal added that whilst recruitment was challenging, the college had a responsibility to provide students with high quality education, therefore they could not accept any underperformance, with a range of support offered to staff ahead of considering any alternative procedures.

The team were commended for their successful collaboration with local colleges to deliver the on Strategic Development Fund project in relation to green energy and sustainability, with it confirmed this upskilled students on existing courses as well as investing for new courses. A member provided an update on the preparation of new apprenticeships, which were not updated to include EV and hybrid technology, with the College encouraged to become involved with the trailblazing group as they were already ahead in this area. The Committee was assured by the College's approach to develop courses and incorporate programmes of study that deliver what the students and community needs rather than being tied to the qualification frameworks.

The Committee was provided with a summary of progress against the Test and Learn grant funding targets, which was likely to be underdelivered, highlighting internal competition with the AEB offer. Members attention was drawn to the success in this area of the of the ESOL team who were proactive in supporting the community, including refugees.

Progress against the Southport Town Deal bid was highlighted, expected to be the first strand of the deal to complete, delivering customer service training ahead of the completion of other aspects of the bid.

Curriculum planning progress was detailed, highlighting the shift to embed employers into the heart of the planning process, with governors invited to help engage with programmes and links and attend the panel meetings as observers. The value of employer engagement and commitment, particularly in delivering specialist skills was discussed, with specific examples, including in Child Care, where this is already being utilised.

**Members**

Minute No.	Minutes	Action
	<p>Members noted the success of the industry week, which ran over a month and saw 75 events engaging with employers.</p> <p>Members discussed progress with the new statutory requirements following the introduction of the Skills Bill, highlighting the benefit of having a vibrant local economy, with it clarified that the expected standard in inspection was 'Reasonable'. Recent inspection outcomes were detailed, noting the strength of pure FE Colleges in this area.</p> <p>The item concluded with the staff thanked for their hard work and members thanked for their support and challenge of the paper, with feedback on the format and content welcomed. The Clerk agreed to add a question to the post meeting survey asking for feedback on any paper presented.</p>	
	<p><b><i>Item 7 – Resolved:</i></b> <i>The Committee resolved to accept the update noting the invitation to support the curriculum design meetings and to provide continued feedback on the format and content of reports.</i></p>	
S.23.51	<p><b>ITEM 8: REPORTING AGAINST STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES ACTION PLANS</b></p>	
	<p><b>Item 8.1: SO1 - To provide excellent teaching, learning and support</b>  The AP Teaching, Learning and Quality summarised progress against actions to achieve SO1, including the CPD delivered early in the academic year, with plans to introduce twilight sessions where possible.</p> <p>Members noted the approved quality strategy had been implemented, increasing oversight and transparency, resulting in targeted support where learners are not working at the level expected.</p> <p>Members were informed of how staffing challenges had impacted the ability of improvement practitioners to deliver planned activities, with them being utilised to cover during periods of staff absence.</p> <p>Session observation outcomes were scrutinised, noting 24 staff had not yet had observations, with the Committee reassured of how observations were targeted and prioritised based on area performance and experience. Clarity was given around classifying teachers as newly and the support provided for those new to their career, with the period extended where hours were fractional.</p> <p>The item concluded with members reminded that triangulating information was key, highlighting how the observations were only one element, with it considered important to focus on how students change and develop based on their experiences in the classroom, with evidence sought through feedback, observations, outcomes and interactions.</p>	
S.23.52	<p><b>Item 8.2: SO2 - To meet the needs of the community and contribute to the local and national economy by offering a carefully considered diverse range of professional, technical, and academic programmes</b></p>	
	<p>The Vice Principal summarised the tasks completed since the last presentation of the action plan.</p> <p>Members noted areas requiring focus, including sustainability awareness and training.</p>	
S.23.53	<p><b>Item 8.3: SO3 - To facilitate students and apprentices achieving the highest possible outcomes to progress on to ambitious destinations</b></p>	

Clerk

The AP Student Experience and Welfare highlighted how all actions were on track, with the exception of the Gatsby progress, with seven of the eight benchmarks expected to have been met by the end of the meeting.

Members commended the college's approach and commitment when faced with challenges around recruiting a Level 6 careers advisor, supporting the option to recruit and train a Level 4 advisor. Members discussed the impact of the Pandemic on careers advice, asking the student governor to detail her experience and that of her peers. Members noted her experience, with no careers advice and guidance provided to them in school during the Pandemic, with virtual appointments not provided as an option. The impact of this was that some students now regretted their A Level choice as they were not in line with their career aspirations, with some admitting they would have made different choices with the right support and advice in school. Members noted that the careers advisor appointments at KGV were fully booked and considered the impact on mental health of not having the right advice and support in place at the right time to help young people with their future planning.

Members were assured by the college's commitment to inclusive practice and rounded support for students, with details of how this extended to course design and in particular the impact of assessments, with curriculum design ensuring inclusive and varied assessment methods to reduce the impact of assessment and exam apprehension.

**Item 8 – Resolved:** *The Committee resolved to accept the updates.*

#### **S.23.54 ITEM 9 QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE**

The AP Teaching, Learning and Quality summarised the update, confirming 8 of the 13 actions were on track.

In addition to highlighting progress, attention was drawn to areas not yet on track, with members asking for clarification of staffing structures, being advised the assessors all report into one curriculum manager for clarity of responsibility and to allow staff to focus on their role.

**Item 9 – Resolved:** *The Committee resolved to accept the update.*

#### **ITEM 10: LEARNER VOICE**

##### **S.23.55 Item 10.1: Semester 1 Survey Outcomes**

The Chair invited the AP Teaching, Learning and Quality to summarise the report. Members noted completion rates were lower than hoped for, but were in line with sector averages, asking for clarity around 'targeted learners' and what the previous return rate had been. The Clerk provided completion rates from the last report.

The Committee questioned how the feedback was used, assured by individualised reports to managers to address area specific feedback, with all concerns about safety immediately addressed. Members noted that the number of concerns relating to safety were low, with more males than females having indicated concerns in this area, with this discussed, with actions and context detailed.

Members discussed the value of focus groups, confirming invitations would be sent to Committee members for future meetings. Members highlighted

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	<p>how beneficial previous 'You Said, We Did' response posters to surveys had been.</p> <p>A summary of the lowest and highest scoring areas was provided, noting some low scores around freshers and enrichment were considered to be due to a lack of understanding of what constituted those activities. Members challenged the low benchmarking against what appeared to be reasonable outcomes and were advised this had been as a result of a high number of 'agree' responses however, a low number of 'strongly' agree. The Committee was informed of plans to launch the next survey with more guidance to improve students understanding of what each response means.</p>	
S.23.56	<p><b>Item 10.2: Student Engagement Strategy</b> The AP Teaching, Learning and Quality confirmed there were no recommended updates to the strategy as presented for committee endorsement.</p>	
S.23.57	<p><b>Item 10.3: Complaints Reporting</b> The AP Teaching, Learning and Quality confirmed the report included a more detailed presentation of the 2021/2022 complaints information, alongside a summary of complaints to date for 2022/2023.</p> <p>Following a presentation of the data and college responses to upheld complaints, members reiterated the importance of the information, thanking the AP for the updated report, confirming the level of information now met their needs. Members commented on the increase in number of complaints, suggesting this was not to be seen negatively, instead highlighting that students and parents were comfortable in knowing how to raise concerns and that the college is following due process by ensuring these are logged, responded to and assessed to establish trends and improve. The Chair asked the student governor if she would know how to log a complaint or who to speak to if she was dissatisfied with the college, with the student confirming she would speak to her progress tutor.</p> <p>Members discussed the difference in processes around behaviour expectations, complaints and exclusions to that used in schools. The AP Student Experience and Welfare explained that the MSR process directed those dissatisfied with the outcome to the complaints process, which underpinned increased complaints relating to the MSR process, with members satisfied that this was the right approach and ensured the college was following due process fairly and consistently.</p> <p><b><u>Item 10 – Resolved:</u></b> <i>The Committee resolved to accept the update and recommend this to the Corporation as essential information.</i></p>	
S.23.58	<p><b>ITEM 11 DESTINATIONS REPORT 2021/22</b> The AP Student Experience and Welfare advised the Committee that the report covered 16-18 learners and included comparative data for 3 years. Unknown destinations had improved, with a reduction of almost 3%, now at 5.5%, however, the college's aim was to reduce this to 3%.</p> <p>Members noted that overall, destinations data was positive, with it highlighted that the two-year extended diploma moving to a 'one plus one' model resulted in what looked like a significant increase in students starting a new programme of study at the college.</p> <p>Members asked if there were any areas of concern, with the AP Student and Experience suggesting the data indicated reduced social mobility, with many</p>	



students, possibly due to the increased cost of living, choosing to stay local when progressing to HE. Members confirmed finances were likely to be a contributing factor due to travel costs, however, proposed the strong, high quality HEI's in the Northwest supported high achievers to stay local, which had also underpinned the college's decision to withdraw from the oversaturated market.

Members discussed data collection, expressing disappointment that the resource heavy process was not supported by external agencies that also collected the information, including Connexions. The AP Student Experience and Welfare informed the Committee that the College was looking to invest in alternative processes and services that would reduce the burden of the data collection and be more cost effective.

**Item 11 – Resolved:** *The Committee resolved to note the update.*

## S.23.59 ITEM 12: POLICIES FOR APPROVAL

### **Item 12.1: Careers Education Policy**

The AP Student Experience and Welfare explained that the updated policy would support the college in achieving the Gatsby Benchmarks. Members were informed that the policy had been reviewed and by the Link Governor for Careers, with further amendments made ahead of presentation to the Committee. The Committee endorsed the policy.

### **Item 12.2: Provider Access Policy**

The AP Student Experience and Welfare summarised the new policy which outlined the college's commitment to providing access to external providers and ensured the College addressed the updated guidance around 'the Baker Clause' which had come into effect in January. The Committee endorsed the policy.

### **Item 12.3: MSR Policy**

The AP Student Experience and Welfare explained that the MSR policy was reviewed and approved by SLT annually, however, following a review of guidance, would now be built into the Committee's workplan. The Committee endorsed the policy.

### **Item 12.4 (TABLED): Entry Criteria**

The Vice Principal thanked the Committee for allowing the policy to be tabled. Changes, which centred around accessibility, inclusivity and individualised assessment of suitability were summarised. Members noted the updates simplified entry criteria across all levels, ensuring students could enter courses based on ability and commitment as opposed to being based on prior achievement. Members clarified courses at Level one and below would have no formal entry requirements and would be based on a successful course discussion. Members commented on how this was in alignment with discussions held during the Strategy Event, around being a beacon of the community with a place for everyone.

**Item 12 – Resolved:** *The Committee resolved to recommend for approval the four policies.*

## S.23.60 ITEM 13: SAFEGUARDING (Update Report September-March)

The AP Student Experience and Welfare summarised the detailed report, contextualised information and incident and referrals data.

Members noted significant increases in the need for intervention, with the experienced and established team suitably skilled and resourced to support the students. A summary of changes to roles and responsibilities, including the training of an additional deputy DSL to meet the increased demand were detailed.

Members were advised that staff training completion rates needed to improve, although a further 10% had completed it since the report had been drafted. When interrogated, members were assured this was mainly in-year starters and contractors, with some, including cleaning staff not having access to devices to carry out the training or email addresses to receive reminders, with this being addressed through line managers.

Members reviewed and discussed the data, including the low retention for teen mothers as well as LAC learners, often due to leaving the area, with other vulnerable groups having stronger retention, evidencing strong support. This was backed up by examples of how the college recognises the achievements of the young people facing additional challenges, including senior leaders congratulating those with exceptional attendance, as well as external validation through awards and kitemarks. Members expressed concern over worrying statistics of escalating support needs, highlighting the pressure on the college to intervene where external agencies are stretched. The team was commended for their work, indicating safeguarding was a strength of the college, with the report well written and clear, facilitating effective oversight by governors.

The item concluded with a member asking that details of the college food bank appeal are shared with governors to allow them to support the service and make donations, noting this service was accessed by staff and students.

**AP S.E. &  
Welf.**

***Item 13 – Resolved:*** *The Committee resolved to commend the team and assure the Corporation that evidence indicated safeguarding support was effective, with the college having an adaptable and responsive approach to increasing safeguarding challenges.*

**S.23.61 ITEM 14: WORK EXPERIENCE REPORT**

The report was summarised, with the Committee assured there was no risk of clawback due to success in placing students.

Members asked about challenges in relation to finding placements, with the Committee advised sole traders could not be used due to safeguarding risks, and despite the low number of medium and large businesses locally, all students needing a placement had been placed or scheduled to go out.

Committee members were advised of anticipated issues as T Levels expand, with securing placements expected to be a national issue, compounded for the college with a high proportion of small businesses. Members noted that for those students that did not reside in Southport, placements could be sourced in towns local to their homes, however, there were then additional complications due to competitors seeking placements in those areas.

***Item 14 - Resolved:*** *The Committee resolved to note the update.*

**S.23.62 ITEM 15: EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT REPORT**

The AP MIS and Apprenticeships summarised progress against KPI's, highlighting the impact of staffing challenges and actions to improve communications and employer engagement.



Minute No.	Minutes	Action
	<p>Members asked for a summary of staffing updates and the revised structure for the merged areas, which would be supported by a new CRM system. The Committee was assured by the training and support in place for the newly merged team and risks to income were described as low due to the enhanced rates for those enrolled.</p>	
	<p><b><u>Item 15 - Resolved:</u></b> <i>The Committee resolved to note the update.</i></p>	
	<p><b>ITEM 16: AUDIT OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b></p>	
S.23.63	<p><b>16.1 – Apprenticeships</b>  The AP MIS and Apprenticeships informed the Committee that the intention had been to provide the Committee with a copy of the report of the follow up review, however, the publication had been delayed. The Clerk provided a summary of the verbal feedback from the IAS to the Audit Committee the previous week, which had been positive, detailing improved practice and solid progress, with three of the five previous recommendations considered to be fully implemented. and good progress against the remaining two.</p>	AP MIS & App.
	<p><b><u>Item 16 - Noted:</u></b> <i>The Committee resolved to receive the report once published.</i></p>	
	<p><b>ITEM 17: HIGHER EDUCATION</b></p>	
S.23.64	<p><b>17.1 HE Quality Development Plan 2022-2023 Update</b>  The AP Teaching, Learning and Quality advised the Committee that the action plan reflected the size of provision offered, with only four actions. Members attention was drawn to progress in relation to achievement rates and retention as well as the action to review the curriculum offer, which would conclude under the next item.</p>	
	<p><b><u>Item 17.1 - Noted:</u></b> <i>The Committee resolved to note the update</i></p>	
S.23.65	<p><b>17.2 HE Curriculum Offer Update</b>  The VP confirmed the Governors review of the college’s HE offer during the Strategy Event had supported the recommendation to withdraw from the HE market. The College would instead offer Level 5 apprenticeships and some PGCE provision to support the development of staff.</p>	
	<p>The Committee supported the decision, reiterating the level of high quality HE provision locally, resulting in duplication, reduced enrolment and a negative experience for learners, agreeing to recommend to the Corporation that resources are focused on the College’s other areas of strength.</p>	
	<p><b><u>Item 17.2 – Resolved:</u></b> <i>The Committee resolved to recommend ratification of the decision to withdraw the HE curriculum offer.</i></p>	
S.23.66	<p><b>17.3 OfS Ongoing Conditions of Registration Compliance Report</b>  The AP MIS and Apprenticeships reassured the Committee that all historic data errors and issues were now fully resolved. The Committee clarified there had been no sanctions, with only OfS requirement being to resubmit the data, with this having not impacted any claims.</p>	
	<p>Members were advised that a presentation on OfS compliance would be circulated to all members of the Corporation, highlighting how it would only be relevant to this academic year due to the intention to withdraw from OfS regulated HE provision.</p>	AP MIS & Appren./ Clerk

Minute No.	Minutes	Action
	<p>The team was thanked for their work in rectifying historic errors and clarified that the Level five apprenticeships would not fall under the OfS, with no registration required from 2023/2024 onwards.</p> <p><b><u>Item 17.3 – Resolved:</u></b> <i>The Committee resolved to accept the update and would receive a presentation on conditions and compliance.</i></p>	
S.23.67	<p><b>ITEM 18: RISKS RELATED TO STANDARDS</b></p> <p>The VP summarised the high risks on the risk register relating to the Terms of Reference for the Committee, asking the Committee to highlight any suggested amendments to the scores or mitigations.</p> <p>Members noted a review of the scores would be undertaken after the release of benchmarking information at the end of March.</p> <p><b><u>Item 18 – Resolved:</u></b> <i>The Committee resolved to accept the report subject to a review following the release of benchmarking data.</i></p>	
S.23.68	<p><b>ITEM 19: ITEMS TO BE REPORTED TO THE CORPORATION</b></p> <p>The Clerk summarised the actions and recommendations to be presented to the Corporation, with the Committee agreeing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Item 12, the policies relating to careers, behaviour and admissions criteria for approval</li> <li>• Item 10, complaints report as essential information</li> <li>• Item 17.2 and 17.3 relating to the ratification of the decision around the HE curriculum offer and OfS compliance as essential information</li> </ul> <p>Members considered the benefits of recommending for information curriculum and safeguarding updates, however, the Principal confirmed these would be captured in her Principal’s report.</p> <p><b><u>Item 19 – Resolved:</u></b> <i>The Committee resolved to highlight these items to the Board.</i></p>	
S.23.70	<p><b>CLOSING COMMENTS AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions, with staff thanked for their hard work in producing the reports. The next meeting was noted to be on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> June 2023.</p>	

**The meeting ended at 5.20pm.**