Minutes
SEG Standards Committee Meeting
Governor Meetings

Date	02/12/2025
Time	2:30 PM - 4:30 PM
Location	Boardroom – Southport College Campus
Governors Present	Michelle Brabner - Principal – (Ex-Officio Member) Kevin Burke (Independent Member) *Anita Holt (Associate Member) Kashfa Kalim (Independent Member) Sophie Kinnear (Staff Governor) Susannah Porter (Independent Member) Elaine Small (Independent Member) Tracey Wood (Independent Member and Committee Vice Chair) (acting as Committee Chair)
Invited Attendees	Rachael Brownhill (Assistant Principal Learner Development and Careers) Lisa Farnhill (Dir. Governance and Compliance) Vickie Hayes (Director of Student Support and Inclusion) Stephen Musa (Deputy Principal)
Apologies	Roderic Gillespie (Committee Chair - Independent Member)

***indicates attendance via videoconferencing facilities**

1 - Welcome & Apologies for Absence

The meeting commenced with Committee Vice Chair, acting as Chair, welcoming all attendees, especially the new staff governor, noting she was attending her first meeting, with brief introductions provided by all present. Apologies were noted and accepted.

Item 1 - Accepted: Memebrs accepted the apologies outlined.

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2 - Declaration of Interests

The Committee Vice Chair addressed the matter of declarations of interest, noting that no conflicts of interest had been declared prior to the meeting. Attendees were asked if there were any interests to declare related to the agenda items, and none were identified.

Item 2 -Noted

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3 - Minutes / Matters Arising

The minutes from the previous meetings held on 16th September 2025 and 6th October 2025 were reviewed and approved, without amendments.

Item 3 – Approved: The Committee approved the minutes from 16th September and 6th October 2025.

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4 - Actions Summary and Impact Statements

The Committee reviewed the summary of actions from previous meetings. It was confirmed that all actions were either completed or in progress, with the exception of the action related to the Board's preferences for presentation of KPI's within Corporation meeting packs.

Members agreed this was now superseded by changes to the way Corporation agendas will be constructed and how the meetings will run, to include changes to how Committee work will be fed back.

The Committee reflected on their previous request for feedback from the Board, as to how best to ensure assurances from Committee work were sufficient, and comprehensive without being overburdening, and emphasised the importance of continuing to seek feedback to refine the approach further.

The Dir Governance and Compliance briefly outlined the proposed changes to the structure of Corporation meetings, having been initiated by the Corporation Chair, to enhance the strategic focus of Board meetings and more closely align Committee work and assurances to the strategic intentions.

Item 4 – Approved: The Committee noted the updates against the actions and approved the impact statements.

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5 - Confidential Items

The Committee confirmed no redactions were necessary within the minutes from the 16th September and 6th October meetings. It was also agreed that there were no items on the agenda that required staff to withdraw. The Chair noted that discussions around performance could potentially identify individuals or courses, and care would be taken to avoid breaches of confidentiality.

Item 5 – Resolved: The Committee approved full publication of the minutes from 16th September and 6th October 2025.

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6 - Risk movements

The Deputy Principal advised the Committee that the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) had not met since the last Standards Committee meeting to formally review the risk register. Members were however informed that in line with the Committee's recommendation, the risk associated with monitoring visits would be replaced, as there would not be any further monitoring visits. The wording of the replacement risk, addressing the uncertainty surrounding the updated Ofsted inspection framework was outlined and agreed.

Members briefly discussed the lack of detailed information and feedback from those having been inspected or involved in the pilot. The Committee discussed the importance of simplicity in the risk description due to uncertainty around the framework and potential impact of gradings, under the new scorecard system. Members endorsed the proposed changes, noting that it may be necessary to review this further when outcomes from recent inspection activity is made publicly available, and the impact of outcomes are better known.

Item 6 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to endorse the updated wording of the Ofsted risk and supported the risk scoring and mitigations provided.

Decision/Matter arising: The Committee agreed to remove the risk associated with monitoring visits and replace it with a new risk reflecting the uncertainty surrounding the updated Ofsted inspection framework. This would be finalised at the next SLT review meeting.

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7 - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The Committee received a detailed update on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) activities and achievements, with progress against targets outlined.

Key highlights included the launch of a sensory room, trauma-informed training for all staff, and alternative welcome events designed to enhance confidence and participation among vulnerable learners. Enhanced transitions for SEND and EHCP learners were also noted, with visits from Year 11 students already underway. Members asked about staff induction processes, including training for new staff in relation to trauma informed practice, and were assured of its inclusion within the staff induction program.

Significant achievements were celebrated, including the official launch of The Bridge, the Carnegie Centre of Excellence for Mental Health in Schools Gold Award and the Young Carers Award, with plans to aim for the Young Carers Plus Award. Outreach efforts were commended, particularly the collaboration with Sefton Inclusion Team and the accessibility reviews that ensured buildings were accessible and responsive to the needs of new students.

Members were informed that The Happiness Project, showcased at the AOC conference, received widespread recognition, and has led to plans to launch a Happiness Network to collaborate with other colleges and embed happiness and belonging as core principles throughout the sector. The Committee commended the inclusive culture and strong emphasis within the College on ensuring every student has the support to achieve, asking if all the awards, accolades and initiatives are being marketed and publicly celebrated.

Achievement gaps were discussed, with reductions noted in several areas, including free college meals learners (gap reduced to 4%, meeting the target) and male BME versus non-BME learners (gap narrowed to 3%). The inclusion panels were highlighted as instrumental in monitoring achievement gaps and implementing swift interventions. Monthly panels, involving heads of division and frequent leaders, were established to ensure collaborative efforts in supporting vulnerable groups and addressing challenges effectively.

Noting the improvement to student voice initiatives, the Committee emphasised the importance of measuring the impact of initiatives, asking if activity and initiative specific surveys are undertaken to support with monitoring impact. Memebrs were assured that single item surveys were used to assess effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.

The Committee enquired about the impact of reduced free college meals, with assurances around early interventions, communicating available support and a positive supportive culture. Members asked about analysis of the improvements, seeking to assurances of awareness of initiatives having the biggest impact. The Committee was informed the panels were considered to have had the most positive impact, as well as offering an opportunity to continually analyse what is and isn’t working. Members commended the supportive, individualised approach and were informed of future plans, which included embedding EDI CPD compliance and launching an EDI newsletter to strengthen partnerships further.

Memebrs discussed the concept of belonging as a potential addition to title of EDI (EDIB) , aligning with sector trends and enhancing inclusivity across the curriculum., with rational for and against inclusion considered at length.

The Committee concluded by celebrating and highlighting the statistics within the report and expressed appreciation for the progress made. Members reiterated the need for continued monitoring and evaluation to ensure measurable impact and targeted interventions. The discussion highlighted Southport Educations Group's commitment to fostering an inclusive environment and achieving long-term EDI objectives.

Item 7 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to include the EDI report as essential information to the Board for reflection on the Committee's work, commending progress made and endorsing the targets set.

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8 - Learner Perspectives and Engagement

The Committee reviewed a range of learner engagement activities, with the Assistant Principal Learner Development and Careers highlighting a productive and impactful term. Progress in improved satisfaction was outlined, along with key initiatives, which included international partnerships, such as a visit to New Jersey by Design and Planning students, which focused on renewable energy and sustainability.

The Assistant Principal Learner Development and Careers outlined work with local employers, and other key contacts to support with increasing student engagement and effective mock interviews. Collaborative projects were also emphasised, including carpentry students building theatre sets and hospitality students participating in charity events at the Hilton in Liverpool. In response to questions, it was confirmed there had been an increase in the number of departments undertaking cross-campus activity, with members noting these activities fostered cross-departmental and cross-campus collaboration and strengthened employer relationships.

An outline of the updated induction process was given, with survey results confirming that they had been successful, resulting in improved learner satisfaction, as well as improved attrition rates. This was attributed to structured planning and initiatives like the Happiness Project, which evidenced positive impact on learner satisfaction. Curriculum-level survey results were shared for further analysis, identifying areas for praise and improvement. Members noted one area had not seen improved satisfaction scores, with this discussed. Members were assured by the analysis of reasons, prompt initiation of actions, and discussed potential to re-survey areas of concern.

The Committee confirmed that positive praise had been shared with areas where results had improved, whilst reflecting on the previous year’s survey results and impact of actions to improve satisfaction. The Committee analysed the local context, including the summer incident, heightened anxiety and other localised issues. In discussing challenges in learner satisfaction, particularly around understanding assessments and maintaining interest in sessions, members sought assurance of actions to address concerns raised and ensured students received feedback of this. Members asked about consistency and sharing of good practice, with plans to address these issues detailed, which included targeted interventions and curriculum-specific feedback analysis.

Complaints were reviewed, noting five had been received this year, primarily from parents regarding communication issues, with it clarified that this was less than the same point in the previous year. Members endorsed the approach and responses, including a review of parental communication, and specific actions to address concerns where complaints were upheld.

Members asked about call recording, to safeguard staff and support with complaint analysis and training. Members were advised that this had not been considered previously, with it unclear whether this was common practice in the sector, with an action noted to consider this further.

In summarising, the Committee expressed optimism about the positive trends in learner satisfaction and engagement while recognising the need for continued efforts to address identified areas for improvement. The importance of local context and demographics in shaping learner engagement strategies was also emphasised, with the Committee acknowledging the unique challenges faced by the College due to regional trends.

Item 8 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to note the update, including assurances from improved satisfaction and attrition scores.

Task: The SLT will consider the use of call recording, researching its use in the sector, cost and safeguarding implications.

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9 - Audit Reports relating to Standards

The Deputy Principal confirmed there had been no reviews linked to the Committee's Terms of Reference in the review period.

Item 9 – Noted

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10 - Quality of Education Report

The Deputy Principal summarised the Quality of Education Report, focusing on the implementation and impact of the new teaching and learning strategy. Members were informed observations had commenced with nine areas reviewed, identifying varying practice, with more effective sessions, however, members were informed that fewer instances of highly effective teaching were observed. The Committee discussed the need for targeted professional development to elevate teaching standards further and improve teaching practices observed, with a need to move away from 'teaching to the middle' to increase higher grades.

Attendance data was analysed, highlighting curriculum attendance at 89% and progress tutorials at 84%. Members noted that English and maths attendance remained below target despite a range of interventions, including the adjustment of time tables, and staff presence in corridors to guide students. The Committee acknowledged the complexities of tracking attendance data and the importance of understanding local context, discussing the lack of consistency in reporting attendance codes in the sector. Members discussed at length the value of having accurate data, including prior attendance data whilst acknowledging the challenges faced in obtaining accurate school and benchmarking data. The impact of session numbers on the data was also highlighted, with the proportionality of a missed progress and resit lesson considerably higher than for core subject lessons. The Committee noted the success of the Engage programme, targeted at previously disengaged learners, which had demonstrated promising results. Members discussed the importance of understanding and knowing learners, maintaining a focus on the improvements made, and not just the raw data, with attendance of 71% for those who had been school refusers being considered a significant achievement.

Attrition rates were considered at length, noting improvement compared to previous years and outperforming regional and national averages. The college's emphasis on placing learners in appropriate courses and improving induction processes were identified as key contributors to improved attrition rates.

The transition from BTECs to T levels and the anticipated introduction of V levels were discussed, with questions asked around preparation for the defunding of BTECs. Assurances were given around the limited impact, due to the college having proactively diversified its curriculum offerings to minimise disruption to learners. Members discussed the lack of clarity surrounding V levels, particularly regarding qualification combinations and workload implications for staff. The Committee reflected positively on the successful introduction of T Levels, agreeing that the introduction of V Levels offered the opportunity to create new inspiring qualifications, with it expected it would be supported by funding for CPD to ensure staff felt equally well prepared to support students to succeed in new qualifications.

Questions were asked around embedding LSIP priorities into curriculum planning. The Committee emphasised the importance of aligning the curriculum with career destinations rather than focusing solely on courses, recognising the broader approaches adopted in other countries. The Committee discussed the strategic approach to refining the curriculum, enhancing teaching quality, and ensuring learners are supported in achieving their goals. Members noted alignment between the progress made and the College's commitment to continuous improvement and alignment with sector priorities as central to the college's overarching strategic plan.

Item 10 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to accept the assurance provided by the report, supported by robust discussions.

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11 - Self-Assessment Report 2024/25 and Strategic Improvement Plan

The Committee received a detailed presentation of the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) for 2024/25 and the Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP) for 2025/26. Members noted the SAR provided a comprehensive analysis of learner demographics, highlighting the diverse and often challenging backgrounds of students, including a significant proportion of young carers, care-experienced individuals, high levels of deprivation, and an increase in students supported by Youth Offending Teams due to incidents during the summer of 2024. Members noted the college's steady and supportive approach in addressing these challenges, ensuring a calm and effective leadership response.

The curriculum was noted to align with regional priorities, focusing on sectors such as healthcare, construction, digital, hospitality, and professional services, rather than solely targeting the visitor economy. Key strengths highlighted included high pass rates on A-level equivalent courses, positive destinations, strong performance in T levels, and improvements in high-grade achievements. Pastoral support was praised as exemplary, highlighting the achievement of embedding work experience into A Levels, and enrichment activities, with positive feedback from students and employers. High needs achievements were notably above the college average, with 100% positive destinations for these learners. In response to questions about destinations, it was clarified that they were related to the subject studied, noting data collection also improved, exceeding the target for known destinations.

Areas for improvement were identified, including a decrease in adult achievement rates, with challenges in specific courses outlined, and below-target apprenticeship achievement rates also discussed. Members noted that English and maths had improved, however, required further improvements, including in the consistency of teacher feedback. Members were assured of actions already in progress, including prioritisation of observations in underperforming areas, support and CPD for staff, as well as the use of performance management processes. The SIP was described as a dynamic action plan aligned to the strategic intentions, with detailed site-specific plans, reflecting the college's commitment to transparency and impactful change. The Committee expressed confidence in the pace of change and the positive impact of new initiatives, as evidenced by improved KPIs and learner survey results, noting more timely information was supporting the Board’s strategic oversight.

The Committee discussed changes to the Ofsted inspection framework, and considered the potential timing of an inspection, and asked about local inspection activity. The Committee acknowledged the challenges of adapting to new standards while demonstrating readiness and progress, and were assured by the prioritisation of staff wellbeing, through support, training and effective preparation. Members commended the approach, endorsing the messaging around the shift in terminology and importance of reducing the high stakes nature of inspections and focusing on actionable outcomes and student centric improvements. Members asked about the governance aspects of an inspection, and areas for improvement specific to the Board. A summary of the Governance SAR and GDP was outlined by the Dir Governance and compliance, noting a focus on streamlining information to ensure key messages are understood, whilst maintaining a strategic focus. Members asked about benchmarking and comparator colleges, noting the variation in structure, curriculum offer and size, with Riverside College considered to be a similar institution.

The item concluded with members commending the new format, proposing this was clear and action focused.

Item 11 – Resolved: The Committee resolved to recommend the SAR and SIP to the Corporation for approval.

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12 - Meeting Reflection

12.1 - Risk Reflection

It was noted that the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) had not reviewed the risk register since the last meeting, with members reflecting on the importance of incorporating updates related to the new Ofsted framework, however, did not feel any further revisions were required as a result of their discussions.

Item 12.1 - Resolved: The Committee agreed to incorporate updates related to the new Ofsted framework into the risk register during the next SLT review.

12.2 - Items To Be Reported to The Board

The Committee discussed the items to be reported to the Corporation at its upcoming meeting on 16th December 2025. Key points of information and assurance were identified to ensure clarity and alignment with the Corporation's expectations.

Members agreed the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP) were critical items for presentation. It was agreed that the Deputy Principal's presentation as made to the Committee should be repeated to the whole Board to ensure strategic oversight, focusing on progress in inclusion, retention, and attendance, as well as ensuring areas for improvement are understood by the whole Corporation. The Committee emphasised the importance of showcasing impact and providing assurance to the Corporation, reflecting the College's commitment to transparency and continuous improvement.

The Committee agreed key topics such as learner perspectives and Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), should also be presented, focusing on the distance travelled in these areas. Whilst acknowledging an element of duplication with the work of the Committee, the Committee emphasised the value of presenting a comprehensive report on learner perspectives and EDI achievements to governors, to ensure oversight of key strategic priorities and to showcase the progress made. Members commented on how the induction survey results and summary were considered key resources for understanding the impact of recent initiatives in alignment with the strategic intentions.

The Committee discussed examples of impact reports produced in their own organisations, offering a one-page summary of strengths and key data, with it agreed examples would be shared. The value in successfully summarising complex data was outlined, with it encapsulating key achievements, outcomes, and broader measures of student success, serving as a comprehensive overview for governors and marketing tool to be used with stakeholders. The Committee expressed interest in this initiative, recognising its value in enhancing stakeholder engagement and demonstrating the college's impact beyond traditional metrics.

Item 12.2 - Resolved: The Committee agreed the Self-Assessment Report and Strategic Improvement Plan should be presented to the Corporation for approval, along with the Student Perspectives and EDI reports as essential information. The Committee agreed to explore the possibility of [producing an annual impact report to encapsulate key achievements and outcomes for presentation to the Corporation.

Task: TW to share example impact summary document. SM to consider drafting an impact report, including key achievements and outcomes, for presentation to Corporation and use with external stakeholders.

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13 – Date of next meeting and Closing Comments

Ahead of concluding, the Committee was informed of the College's participation in National Grief Awareness Week. Members noted both campuses would be illuminated in orange that evening as part of this initiative, in partnership with Queen's Court Hospice, demonstrating sensitivity and support for the community, with staff invited to a remembrance service, further strengthening ties with the hospice.

The Committee discussed the importance of community engagement and expressed appreciation for the progress made and the collaborative efforts in fostering inclusion and belonging. The importance of maintaining momentum in these areas and continuing to monitor and evaluate the impact of initiatives was outlined.

Members and attendees were thanked for their time and contributions, noting the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 4th March.