Minutes

# SEG Corporation Meeting (training from 4.30-5pm)

Governor Meetings

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| Date | 24/03/2026 |
| Time | 4:30 PM - 7:00 PM |
| Location | Southport College RG0.04 |
| Members Present: | Paul Walker (Corporation Chair)<br>Laura Bell (Independent Governor)<br>Margaret Boneham (Independent Governor)<br>Michelle Brabner (Principal)<br>Andy Bridson (Independent Governor)<br>Kevin Burke (Independent Governor)<br>Rob Firth (Associate Member)<br>*Roderic Gillespie (Independent Governor)<br>Chelsea Hassanyeh (Student Governor)<br>Anita Holt (Associate Member) (item 1 only)<br>Diane Hutchinson (Independent Governor)<br>*Kashfa Kalim (Independent Governor)<br>Sophie Kinnear (Staff Governor)<br>*Claire Moffat-Lonsdale (Independent Governor)<br>*Mike Naden (Independent Governor)<br>John Sheldon (Staff Governor)<br>Elaine Small (Independent Governor)<br>Tracey Wood (Independent Governor) |
| Members Apologies: | Jamie Boland (Student Governor)<br>Colin Davies (Independent Governor)<br>Mo Kundi (Independent Governor)<br>Susannah Porter (Independent Governor) |
| In Attendance: | Paris Bonwick (Vice Principal Business Services)<br>Lisa Farnhill (Dir. Governance and Compliance)<br>Stephen Musa (Deputy Principal)<br>Paula Smith (Vice Principal Finance) |

*indicates attendance vie videoconferencing facilities

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### 1 - Training – Self-Assessing Against the Ofsted Scorecard

The meeting commenced with a comprehensive presentation from the Deputy Principal, providing the Corporation with a clear outline of where the College currently self-assesses against the new Ofsted scorecard and highlighting the college's preparation for an inspection under the new framework.

The Corporation were provided with examples of scorecards from two colleges that had been inspected under the new framework, highlighting variances between the data and outcomes.

The presentation detailed the significant changes to the framework, noting those already inspected had confirmed it had significantly increased the workload involved during an inspection, with colleges having 16 judgments compared to the seven judgments typically seen in primary school inspections. The inspection process was described as rigorous, likened to an audit, with inspectors examining multiple aspects simultaneously, including inclusion, leadership, governance, teaching, and learning. The experiences of those who had been involved in the pilot and early inspections were outlined, noting many described it as brutal.

Members queried the data focused approach and use of historic data, proposing these data focused outcomes could be achieved without visiting the college, asking if this devalued the process.

The importance of inclusion under the new framework was discussed in detail, noting inspectors will be focusing on how the college supports disadvantaged students and those with special educational needs. Members commented on this as a positive shift, agreeing support for those who were considered disadvantaged was essential, and something the college excelled in, however, proposed the outcomes and progress of all learners should be equally valued.

In reviewing the changes in approach, and considering how best to evidence SEG's strengths, particularly around inclusion, members were given details of an inclusivity dashboard, facilitating access to detailed data on various student categories, including those entitled to free school meals, care leavers, and students retaking GCSE Maths and English. Members noted how the tool helps track attendance and other key metrics, providing a comprehensive view of student demographics and needs, enabling targeted support.

The presentation summarised the college's internal preparations for the inspection, detailing a management preparation day. Members were assured by the Senior Leadership Team's focus on ensuring preparation and support prevents the inspection process being overly burdensome for staff, noting they were prepared to push back against any undue pressure.

Members discussed at length the college's performance against the new inspection judgments, endorsing the cautious approach to self-assessment to avoid overselling capabilities. Members noted where areas will meet the standards, noting some would be strong, and others continued to need attention, noting the impact of outdated data.

Key areas such as safeguarding, inclusion, leadership, governance, curriculum teaching and training, and achievement rates were evaluated, with the college expected to meet expected standards across most categories. Areas of exceptional performance were highlighted, including the reduction in the number of learners categorised under safeguarding due to the trauma-informed approach and strong progress teams, and high percentage of students no longer categorised as high needs by the time their course completes.

Categories of disadvantage were discussed, with the high proportion of disadvantaged within SEG highlighted, with members asking if students were aware of the categorisation. The Deputy Principal confirmed this was not shared, as it was not considered to benefit the students, outlining details of an article which provided analysis of inspections to date and indicated those with more disadvantaged students, had less favourable outcomes.

The item concluded with a detailed summary of the college's efforts to improve apprenticeship outcomes, with overall data and individual success highlighted. Members asked about the approaches and strategies underpinning the positive trends, noting the strength of management, commitment of staff and improvements in communications with employers and apprentices. The college's achievements in securing degree apprenticeships for students at BAE Systems were highlighted as a significant success, with members asking how this is used to further improve the reputation of the college's apprenticeship provision.

**Item 1: Resolved -** The Corporation resolved to note the update, endorsing the current assessment of performance and initiatives to strengthen areas still needing attention.

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### 2 - Welcome and Apologies for Absence

The Chair officially opened the meeting, welcoming everyone in attendance, and noted apologies for absence as outlined above, which were detailed and accepted.

**Item 2: Accepted –** The Corporation accepted the apologies outlined.

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### 3 - Declaration of Interests and Confidential Items

Members were reminded to declare any interests related to the agenda items. The Dir. Governance and Compliance reminded members she also acted as the Data Protection Officer, declaring an interest in policies on the agenda.

The Chair confirmed that there were no items considered to be confidential and needing to be reviewed without staff present,  however, emphasised the importance of maintaining confidentiality around commercially sensitive opportunities. Redactions from the approved minutes were agreed, asking that any reference to pipeline projects is redacted from the prepared minuted for this meeting.

**Item 3: Resolved –** The Corporation resolved to endorse the suggested redactions and maintain confidentiality around commercially sensitive items.

## 4 - Minutes

The minutes from the meeting held on 16th December 2025 were reviewed and approved. Members were given the opportunity to raise questions or concerns, but none were noted. The minutes were accepted, and it was agreed that any commercially sensitive information would be redacted from the public version of the minutes to maintain confidentiality.

**Item 4: Approved –** The Corporation approved the minutes from the meeting held on 16th December 2025.

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## 5 - Matters Arising, Actions Summary and Confidentiality

Outstanding actions and matters arising from previous meetings were considered. The impact statements were reviewed and agreed upon, highlighting the progress made on various initiatives. Confidentiality of certain matters was reiterated, ensuring sensitive information is handled appropriately.

**Item 5: Approved –** The Corporation approved the impact statements from the meeting held on 16th December 2025.

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## 6 - Governance Matters & Chair's Report

The Chair provided a verbal update on activities since the last Corporation meeting. This included the application of the College Seal, which had been endorsed by the Resources Committee for the execution of a deed related to a building project.

The Chair confirmed he continued to hold regular fortnightly updates with the Principal and Director of Governance and Compliance, advising these were informative and helpful in maintaining ongoing communication and oversight of strategic information.

The Chair confirmed he and the Vice Chair had completed the half year appraisal of the Director of Governance and Compliance, which included formal and informal feedback from members and Committees, thanking those who had contributed.

**Item 6: Noted –** The Corporation noted the update.

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## 7 - Committee Updates

Updates from the Audit, Resources, Standards, and Governance Committees were received, detailing their recent work and discussions.

### 7.1 - AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Audit Committee provided an update to the Corporation, outlining the work undertaken by the Committee at their meeting held on 10th February 2026.Members were assured by the provision of a detailed update from the audit service on fraud and the Economic Crime Corporate Transparency Act, ensuring the Committee was fully aware of the associated requirements. The Corporation was informed that following the training, the Committee requested additional assurance around the fraud controls and Act compliance, asking for examples of fraud risk registers, and increased fraud reporting, now to be a standing item on future agendas.

Members were advised that the Committee had reviewed the register, focusing on new IT resourcing and strategy risks, as well as Ofsted readiness, with plans in place to reconsider how materialised and static risks are reported.

The Committee provided assurances around their review of the internal audit plan, retaining procurement, adding in marketing, and scheduling a dedicated fraud audit in place of income and debtors.

Members noted that compliance updates were received, covering cybersecurity, GDPR, health and safety, and critical incident planning. Policies recommended for Corporation approval included health and safety, IT disaster recovery, and GDPR.

The Committee confirmed they had reflected on their own effectiveness, with improvements in policy reporting, with work underway to monitor attendance to ensure this did not impair their ability to provide assurance and oversight. Members asked about the size of the Committee, and whether this needed to be strengthened. Concern was expressed over quoracy and breadth of knowledge if the Committee operates on minimum numbers. Assurances were provided that the Committee was comfortably larger than the statutory minimum requirements, which required membership of three, with two for quoracy, having six members until a resignation this week, and an internal requirement of three for quoracy. It was confirmed that the Committee continued to look at options for improving attendance and strengthening its skillset through recruitment, supported by the Governance Committee.

The item concluded with the outcome of the evaluation of performance of internal and external auditors, noting satisfaction with the external audit service, and improvements made by the internal audit service. The Committee confirmed work was continuing to ensure further improvements in timely reporting and proportionate information requests by the IAS.

**Item 7.1: Noted –** The Corporation noted the update, endorsing the recommended policies and updates to the internal audit schedule.

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### 7.2 - RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Resources Committee provided an update on the meetings held on 27th January and 10th March 2026. The Corporation noted that the Committee had reviewed monthly management accounts, enrolment, HR, IT resourcing, financial forecasts, financial regulations, projected cash flow, and considered the impact of the new financial system.

It was noted that there were a number of items highlighted for Corporation review or approval, which would be listed as individual agenda items. Members were informed of the Committee’s thorough review of the updated financial forecast, with the Committee Chair advising the deficit had increased, however, a positive financial health rating of ‘good’ had been maintained, with this to be outlined in more detail by the Vice Principal Finance under a later item.

Marketing and enrolment data were noted to have been discussed in detail, with the Corporation informed that the Audit Committee attended the January meeting of the Resources Committee to seek assurances, having been concerned about the increased risk rating. Members noted that both Committee’s received detailed assurances from the Deputy Principal and Head of Marketing, including measures to drive up applications, improve retention and increase conversion rates. The Committee Chair confirmed that they felt that the enrolment and marketing challenges had been addressed and suitably mitigated against.

Estates updates were noted to have included information confirming the completion of the Fearne demolition, pitch improvements, and a review of the timing for the new estates’ strategy. Members were advised of work to support the tendering exercise for the renewal of the cleaning contract and an extension to the catering contract.

The Committee advised of their input into a full rewrite of the IT strategy, noting rationalisation of equipment was a priority, however, asking that the strategy avoids operational level detail, endorsing a principles-based approach with an operational implementation strategy.

In concluding, the Committee advised of HR reports detailing staff turnover, sickness, and insight into the impact and actions as a result of staff focus groups led by the Principal, commending the work of the leadership team in facilitating these, and working to address all actions and recommendations.

In concluding, the Committee Chair acknowledged the clarity and organisation of staff reports.

**Item 7.2: Noted –** The Corporation noted the update, endorsing the policies and recommendations.

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### 7.3 - STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Standards Committee reflected on the progress in areas of focus, which were areas identified of improvement over the past three years, noting marked improvements in Maths, English, apprenticeships, and attendance.

Members were advised that the Committee had reviewed these in detail, along with other key areas, which included the impact report, safeguarding and early interventions, and EDI outcomes. The Committee confirmed they had welcomed new student representatives who actively participated in discussions.

The Corporation were informed that the Committee had suggested the development of annual impact report, and then endorsed the first draft, which highlighted achievements and outcomes, positively reflecting the organisation to external, and internal stakeholders, with advice given over the accessibility of the language used.

Members were advised that student voice continued to be central to the work of the Committee, confirming they had been given an outline of the student survey outcomes and subsequent 'You Said We Did' campaign, launched to enhance student understanding of how feedback is used. The Committee Chair confirmed that this had been noted for its positive impact, highlighting the Committee and college's prioritisation of student voice. The Corporation noted feedback from the apprenticeship conference indicated this had been successful. Improvements in learner feedback around key aspects of the conference were highlighted, with sessions having previously scored the lowest, now scoring among the highest, evidencing the impact of student feedback in shaping and improving what is delivered.

Members were informed that the Committee had considered safeguarding at length, with the reduction in interventions by 20% in the first semester, a positive shift after year on year increases. Members noted this was considered to be as a result of robust staff training, positive relationships supporting early intervention and deescalation of issues. Attention was also drawn to the external support and strength external relationships, with workshops and initiatives further supporting preventative measures.

The item concluded with an outline of a review by the auditors of the college's approach to EDI, noting the outcome was positive, with strong processes for recruitment, impactful training, and strategic use of data, supported by effective governance.

**Item 7.3: Noted –** The Corporation noted the update, endorsing the policies and recommendations.

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### 7.4 - GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Governance Committee provided an update from the meeting held on 10th February 2026. Members were informed that attendance at meetings had been discussed, emphasising the value added by members, and issues caused by persistent absences, whilst acknowledging the voluntary nature of the role, with a framework for attendance being developed.

The Corporation was informed that the Committee had discussed ways to boost attendance and acknowledged that difficult conversations took place about persistent absences and their impact on Board performance. It was also noted that the Committee would, when appropriate, consider the circumstances in which persistent absence might impair effectiveness to the point where they need to consider their place on the Board, and where reallocating a member's seat to someone who can attend regularly could better support the Board's in achieving its strategic aims. It was noted that the discussions held had led to the resignation of David Mutori, whose attendance had been very low, with limited onsite attendance, for the past two years.

Members were informed of progress with researching an appropriate reviewer for the next external governance review, thanking members for responding to the survey about priority areas. Members were also informed of discussions within the Committee and progress with engaging a consultant to support the Board's review of how well the College meets local skills needs.

**Item 7.4: Noted –** The Corporation noted the update, endorsing the policies and recommendations.

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## 8 - Compliance and Statutory Items

In addition to accepting the recommendation of the Audit Committee to approve the IT Disaster Recovery Plan, the Corporation reviewed items as recommended by the Committee's for Corporation review and approval.

### 8.1 - Updates to the IAS schedule

The Audit Committee summarised their recommendations for updates to the annual plan, advising that they had considered a number of high and increasing risks and were seeking additional assurance in some areas. Members noted some changes would impact the 2026/2027 schedule, to be approved in summer, however, had asked that an additional review of marketing to be scheduled for as soon as reasonably practical.

Members noted that the timing would depend on the scope and may result in this being an additional review in the 2025/2026 review period. It was clarified that the budget was available for this, and the internal audit service had the availability to carry out the additional work.

The Committee indicated that they were seeking approval to amend the schedule for 25/26, to include marketing, and increase the scope for 26/27, adding in fraud, to replace income and debtors.

**Item 8.1: Resolved -** The Corporation approved the changes to the Annual Internal Audit Plan for 2025/2026 and increased the scope for 2026/2027.

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### 8.2 - GDPR Policy Updates

The Corporation was asked to approve policy updates related to the suite of GDPR policies. The Dir. Governance and Compliance, as the Data Protection Officer, summarised the updates, confirming some reflect statutory requirements and others were procedural improvements.

**Item 8.2: Resolved -** GDPR policy updates were approved, reflecting statutory requirements and procedural improvements.

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### 8.3 - Investment Policy & Performance, including Treasury Management

The Corporation was reminded of its requirement to assure itself of treasury management compliance and to approve policy updates. The Resources Committee confirmed that they endorsed the recommended updates to the investment policy.

**Item 8.3: Resolved -** The Corporation approved updates to the investment policy.

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### 8.4 - Reforecast of the Budget

The Resources Committee brought to the attention of the Corporation the adjustments to the forecast approved at their January meeting, asking the Vice Principal Finance to summarise the changes. Members were advised that changes included adjustments to the payroll line, to reflect the approved pay award, as well as an increase to the budget available for travel passes, negatively impacting the deficit value and financial health score, with the insolvency ratio now reduced from 3.3% to 3.1%.

Members queried the maintenance of the financial health grade of good, when the scores had declined, being advised of the range of scores that maintain a rating of good. Members discussed the impact of the loan, and reviewed the cash flow, being assured that the Resources Committee regularly reviewed the longer-term cash flow, whilst also confirming the March reforecast was expected to present a more positive picture, closely aligned to the original budget.

Members discussed the impact of depreciation, with further assurances given to the Corporation of the depth of discussion within the Resources Committee, as evidenced in the minutes and impact statements. The discussion highlighted the importance of maintaining financial stability and carefully managing resources to support the long-term financial stability of the College.

**Item 8.4 – Resolved:** The Corporation resolved to accept assurances relating to the financial position from the updated financial forecast.

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### 8.5 - Financial Regulations

The Vice Principal Finance confirmed the recommended updates as a result of the Resources Committee review had been incorporated into the version presented for Corporation approval, with an explanation provided around the changes to tender amounts and reassurances around benchmarking.

**Item 8.5 – Resolved:** Updates to the financial regulations were approved.

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### 8.6 - Terms of Reference for Resources

Members were assured there had not been any amendments to the Committee’s delegated authority, other than those already approved by the Corporation in December; however, were presented for approval due to the format and presentation having been fully reformatted.

**Item 8.6 – Resolved:** Terms of reference for resources were approved, following a full rewrite to create a more logical format.

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## 9 - Principal's Strategic Oversight Report

The Principal provided a summary of updates to key priorities and progress towards organisational objectives, as well as summarising DfE and sector changes and priorities.

The Principal informed the Corporation that a comprehensive review of the newly released White Papers had been completed, ensuring the likely impact and any required operational changes could be taken into account in the college's planning. The potential impact of SEND and curriculum reforms were outlined, noting operational and delivery details were not yet available, however, the team were analysing the available information to ensure any necessary action could be implemented swiftly once the necessary detail is released.

The Principal briefly outlined the outcome of local Ofsted activity, noting the focus on wellbeing. The Principal provided an overview of the staff focus groups completed, to assure the Corporation of their supportive and open culture. Members were informed the staff had been positive and supportive of the initiative, with an action tracker created to ensure all suggestions could be reviewed, and actions fed back. The Corporation was assured that where implementation of ideas was not possible, staff would be informed of this, including being advised why it was not possible to implement.

The Principal summarised the content of the Strategic Intention Action Tracker, confirming there would be a focus on the third Strategic Intention, whilst offering a brief update of progress against all Strategic Targets.

Members noted how the report highlighted achievements and areas for improvement and discussed at length the ongoing relevance of the targets previously set by the Board, discussing the long term nature of the targets, for achievement by 2028. Members discussed progress towards the target to be in the top quartile of colleges in the Northwest region, and considered the original intent. Members discussed how the size of the college, alongside shifts in weightings of courses, meant this may now not be achievable, or the most suitable target. Members proposed that targets should be stretching and aspirational, but relevant and achievable, with it agreed this should be reviewed after results are released, with the SLT agreeing to reflect and propose other suitable ways to measure progress and ambition for the outcomes of leaners.

**Item 9 - Resolved:** The Corporation resolved to accept the assurances provided by the update, agreeing to review the goal of being in the top quartile of colleges by 2028 due to changes in league table criteria.

**Task:** Conduct background work to identify a suitable alternative measure for the top quartile target and bring suggestions for review at the autumn meeting of the Corporation.

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## 10 - SI 1: A Place Where Learners Fulfil Their Potential

### 10.1 - Principal's overview of SI1

The Principal confirmed that the pack included an overview of Strategi Intention (SI) One, including the action tracker and key performance indicator (KPI) extract. Members were asked if they had any questions, noting the focus of this meeting would be on the third SI.

**Item 10.1 – Noted**

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### 10.2 - Student Perspectives Report

The Corporation were informed that the Standards Committee had asked for this item to be included for the assurance of all Members in relation to the participation and development of students. Members were informed that the Student Perspectives Report provided detail of student voice initiatives and their impact, providing assurance of the participation and development of students, with questions invited.

**Item 10.2 – Noted**

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### 10.3 - Malpractice Policy (inclusive of AI)

The Corporation approved updates to the malpractice policy, noting the detailed discussions held by the Standards Committee in relation to the use of AI, including the risks and benefits, noting the benefit of contributions from the student governors on how they used it in their lessons and outside of college.

**Item 10.3 - Approved:** The Corporation approved updates to the malpractice policy.

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### 10.4 - Impact Report

The Corporation noted the Standards Committee had recommended the implementation of an impact report, which highlights the strengths of the organisation to external stakeholders. Members noted the positive feedback from the Committee, with minor amendments suggested, to include an external review ahead of publication, to ensure it was understandable and free from jargon to support external stakeholders gain the full benefit from the document.

**Item 10.4 – Noted**

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## 11 - SI 2: A Place Where People Want to Work and Are Supported in Their Careers

### 11.1 - Principal's overview of SI2

The Principal confirmed that the pack included an overview of progress against actions under the second SI, referencing reports that linked to the progress as well as the KPI extract. The discussion highlighted the positive feedback received from staff focus groups and the importance of maintaining open communication channels.

**Item 11.1 - Noted**

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### 11.2 - Health and Safety Annual Report and policy updates

The Corporation was assured by the Audit Committee of Health and Safety compliance, with the updated policy recommended for approval. The Corporation was advised that work had been undertaken to simplify and streamline health and safety policies, to ensure they were accessible and understandable to all staff.

**Item 11.2 - Approved:** The Corporation assured itself of Health and Safety compliance and approved policy updates.

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## 12 - SI 3: A Place Where Employers Develop Their Skilled Workforce

### 12.1 - Principal's overview of SI3

The Principal provided a detailed overview of the impact of actions relating to the third SI, highlighting that the pack included stakeholder mapping in addition to the KPI extract and action tracker.

The discussion highlighted the importance of engaging with stakeholders and identifying gaps where additional focus and effort are needed. Positive impact of strategies implemented to improve retention rates for apprentices and ongoing efforts to ensure timely and quality reviews were noted.

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The Principal outlined events and connections that facilitated wider conversations that continued to raise the profile of the college, providing unique new opportunities, reflecting on the Bridge and discussing other upcoming opportunities.

In concluding, the Corporation agreed that pursuing strategic opportunities that aligned to local workforce needs remained a priority, however, should not be a distraction or risk the core business.

**Item 12.1: Resolved –** The Corporation resolved to endorse the decision of the SLT REDACTED

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## 13 - SI 4: A Place at the Heart of Our Communities

### 13.1 - Principal's overview of SI4

The Principal provided an overview of fourth SI, focusing on community engagement and related initiatives. Attention was drawn to the progress against targets in the pack. The discussion highlighted the importance of maintaining high standards and continuous improvement. Positive feedback from staff focus groups was noted, and the significance of open communication channels, including SLT attendance at a range of meetings that facilitated conversations and opened up opportunities for the college that would not otherwise be made available.

**Item 13.1: Noted**

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## 14 - Date of Next Meeting and Closing Comments

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as the Governor and Governance development day on 7th May 2026, noting this was full day event.

The Chair provided closing remarks, thanking members for their contributions and emphasising the importance of continued engagement and participation.

The meeting closed at 7pm

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