

SOUTHPORT COLLEGE

MINUTES OF CORPORATION MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 27TH FEBRUARY 2018

Present:	John Clarke	Principal/CEO
	John Fell	Independent Governor
	Veronica Fell	Independent Governor (Chair)
	Greta Fenney	Independent Governor
	Rob Firth	Independent Governor (Vice-Chair)
	Terry Fleetwood	Independent Governor
	Liam Gaskell	Student Governor
	Marcus Godfrey	Student Governor
	Vickie Hayes	Staff Governor
	Mo Kundi	Independent Governor
	Sue McGuire	Independent Governor
	Keith Millington	Independent Governor
	Kathy Passant	Independent Governor
	Ian Raikes	Independent Governor
	Carol Reid	Staff Governor
Vipin Trivedi	Independent Governor (minutes 204 to 236)	

Ilush Bricknell	Associate Member
Richard Jacklin	Associate Member (minutes 204 to 265)

In Attendance:	Anne-Marie Francis	Vice Principal (Sixth Form & University Studies)
	Eddie Green	Vice Principal (Services)
	Gill Kitchen	Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality)
	Lesley Venables	Interim Clerk to the Corporation

PART ONE

The Chair welcomed governors and associate members to the first meeting of the Corporation of the merged College.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

204 Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Matthew Bousfield (Student Governor), Suzanne Knowles (Staff Governor), Jim Turner (Parent Governor), Stephen Breen (Associate Member), Anita Holt (Associate Member) and Philip Porter (Associate Member).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

205 Declarations of interest were received from Greta Fenney as she is married to a member of College staff, from John Fell as he is married to the Chair of the Corporation and from Mo Kundi who is a trustee of the charity of which Greta Fenney is the Chief Executive.

MINUTES

206 The Chair reported that, since the distribution of the meeting papers, a number of contextual and typographical errors had been identified relating to the minutes of the Corporation meeting held on 20th November 2017. It was agreed, therefore, that these minutes of these two meetings and those from 13th December 2017 would be reviewed by the Interim Clerk and re-circulated to governors for approval.

207 Additionally, the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd January 2018 would include as an appendix the minutes prepared for submission to the Transaction Unit as part of the merger process.

MATTERS ARISING

208 Governors were advised that all matters arising from the minutes of the previous 3 Corporation meetings had either been completed, were in progress or were featured on the agenda.

POST-MERGER UPDATE

209 The Principal/CEO presented a report on post-merger issues. The merger had been completed on time and a full communication plan had been implemented for all stakeholders, as requested by governors. Students had not been informed of the merger directly, but it was felt that sufficient information was available to them through means such as the Student Council and the College website.

210 A copy of the College's revised management structure was provided for information and the Principal/CEO advised that there had been a number of recent resignations which would require a further revision.

211 Additional monitoring of the College's performance against key indicators associated with the merger was required by the Transaction Unit, but the format for this had not yet been determined.

212 The strategic objectives and vision were due to be reviewed by the Corporation at the strategic development day in May and would now encompass the merged organisation. The College Charter was also being revised and would be submitted to the Corporation for approval in the Summer Term. The College's Staff Charter was being reviewed in the summer term and the outcome of this exercise will be reported back to Corporation. The Chair said that the aim of the Board should now be about progressing the College to be outstanding in all areas including the overarching governance of the Board. To this end it is important that governors are mindful of their responsibility of challenging themselves individually to be outstanding and collectively encouraged to do this with an aim that the College governance is progressing to be outstanding by the end of the calendar year.

213 Governors concurred that, although ensuring that the recent merger was successfully implemented should be the College's main focus, there was also a need to consider future options and whether the second stage merger with Hugh Baird College should be pursued. This would form part of the agenda for the strategic development day, setting out possible scenarios and drawing from the experience of other further education college mergers.

214 The role of the former Chair, John Fell, in steering the merger towards its conclusion was recognised and the Corporation expressed its gratitude for this efforts over the period of his governorship and particularly the last 2 years. As a way of thanking governors and associate members for their involvement in the merger process a lunch had been arranged in Clouds Restaurant on 19th April.

GOVERNOR REPORTS

Governors'/Clerks' Forum – January 2018

215 The Vice-Chair summarised the key points of a recent event arranged by the Association of Colleges, which he had attended together with the Chair and the Interim Clerk.

216 One session had focused on the shape of outstanding governance and the Corporation was reminded of its ambition to achieve this standard by the end of the academic year. Setting high expectations of the governing body was part of raising standards across all other areas of the College. A further input had been received on the new Insolvency Regime for further education colleges. Copies of both sets of slides would be circulated to governors for information.

Principals'/Chairs' Forum – February 2018

217 The Chair and VP Curriculum and Sixth Form studies attended this forum and reported that this event had centred on how changes to the role of the FE Commissioner to improve performance in colleges. A wide range of factors were now considered and risk assessed to determine the schedule of FEC visits during the year, mainly to colleges that had been graded 3 or 4. Over the whole of the country it was estimated that 60 colleges were in need of intervention and could be supported by the College Improvement Funding (approx £15m in size) and through the National Leaders in FE programme.

218 Many of the questions at the Forum had focused on the complexity of funding and balancing this with maintaining quality of provision.

219 Officers from the Education Skills Funding Agency had presented on a review of 11 to 16 education in London and the lessons for FE colleges. Governors commented that some of the highest performing schools were those that educated 11 to 18 year olds, so there may be some benefit from examining their performance levels to determine whether the initiatives used could be applied to FE.

Governor Activities

220 The Chair advised that previously an informal report had been made by the Chair on activities in which they had been involved between Corporation meetings. It had been felt that this should now be more systematic and would enable the governing body to assess its contribution towards raising engagement levels. All governors were encouraged to participate in the official programme of learning walks.

221 Governors were informed that, in addition to the two events mentioned earlier, the Chair had attended the Southport College staff awards evening, which had highlighted the positive relationships between management and staff.

222 The two staff governors reported that they had recently attended an induction course organised by the Association of Colleges, which had been useful in supporting them in their role. It was recognised that the information provided on the course closely mirrored the initial induction delivered by the Interim Clerk.

223 Two governors – Rob Firth and Keith Millington – had visited the KGV site to observe the standard of accommodation.

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2017/2018 – TERM 2

224 The Principal/CEO presented the termly Corporate Performance Report on progress against each of the strategic objectives,

225 Quality systems for both parts of the organisation had now been brought together and learner-related targets would be monitored by the Standards Committee.

226 The targets for the recruitment of 16-18 year olds had been met or exceeded in 2016/2017. It was noted that in the year to date the number of interviews of prospective applicants had increased further, which, it was hoped, would translate into a larger 16-18 cohort for 2018/2019 for both vocational and academic programmes.

227 Attendance at interviews for College places had been 66% for Southport College and 72% for KGV, with 2 further open evenings taking place prior to Easter. These increased numbers had been achieved against a national trend of a declining demographic.

228 Apprenticeships were in line with the forecast, but there had been lower than anticipated enrolments on HE programmes. Of particular concern for management was the under-performance of the College's adult funding stream, however, it was felt that this could be partially recovered during the remainder of the academic year.

229 Curriculum planning for 2018/2019 was taking place jointly and centred around the delivery of adult funding target, satisfying regional skills priorities, offering a wider Level 1 provision and increased ESOL courses. In light of the future introduction of the new Technical Levels the College was currently establishing 3 month work placement opportunities for learners in all 5 curriculum areas. A Level Study Programmes were also being reviewed.

230 The transfer of apprenticeships from frameworks to standards continued in line with national guidance. The pace of change in this area appeared to have slowed recently and the College was working with local employers to determine their training preferences and needs.

231 Costs were being managed efficiently and remained within the approved budget, but were closely monitored by both management and through the Resources Committee. The Accommodation Strategy was continuing to be implemented and would be overseen by governors.

232 Terms and conditions of employment for lecturers were being reviewed by the HR Task Group, with any amendments subject to consultation with the recognised trade unions. Any new teaching or business support appointments would be made under Southport College contracts. It was important that staff were offered competitive terms and conditions to ensure that retention levels were high and the merged College was able to provide high quality education to its learners.

233 Governors asked that comparative information be provided on GCSE English and maths scores for learners achieving a grade 'D' or below. The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) advised that a full report on value added would be presented to the next meeting of the Standards Committee. It was noted that the Alps4 score only applied to A Level programmes and that Alps 2 was also reported on. A target for Southport College had not yet been set, but the actual figures for value added would be presented to the Standards Committee in March.

234 In response to questions about the application of new legislation that permitted education and training providers to access school pupils to furnish them with information on future progression opportunities the Principal reported that there were few schools which did not yet permit such access. It was likely that those institutions with sixth forms would be more reluctant to allow staff from the KGV brand entry. The College was obliged to ensure that it permitted free access and had already complied with the law by posting its policy on the website.

235 It was suggested that some governors could become involved in delivering careers guidance to schools in their capacity as experienced professionals. This would meet the College's public benefit duty and would demonstrate commitment to the local community. Schools may be keen to take advantage of such a scheme, particularly in disciplines where there were no large employers.

236 The Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) was asked what strategies had been put in place to attract ex-military personnel to enrol on College programmes, following the introduction of a Government initiative for these individuals. The Corporation was informed that targeted marketing would be used to identify any such applicants, but it was noted that a high level of initial support may be needed to ensure that they met the College's usual entry criteria, as the standards of English and maths were much lower for the armed forces compared to the College. A high percentage of service leavers were also prone to experiencing mental health issues, which could require additional counselling and welfare resources.

Vipin Trivedi left the meeting at this point.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ANNUAL REPORT 2016/2017

237 The Corporation received for information the Equality & Diversity Annual Report for 2016/2017, which set out the ways in which the College had successfully fulfilled its statutory obligations and performance against the identified objectives in this area.

238 The achievement gap between male and female learners was now 1% and for both groups levels of achievement had increased compared to the previous academic year. In relation to age, the 16-18 cohort had out-performed 19+ learners by 4%, which was consistent with 2015/2016. Achievement amongst students from a Black or Ethnic Minority background was 90%, 1% above their non-BME peers.

239 The impact of differentiated teaching and learning was borne out in the figures for SLDD students, whose performance was 3% higher than non-SLDD learners. Supported students had met the same level of achievement as the rest of the College (89%), which was 4% higher than in 2015/2016.

240 Governors noted that achievement levels of students from widening participation postcodes was 4% below that of non-WP learners. This was highlighted as an area for development and would be monitored through the Quality Improvement Plan for 2017/2018.

241 The number of staff undertaking training on equality and diversity had decreased from 1060 to 717, which was questioned by governors. The Vice Principal reported that there was no specific reason for this outcome, but that it could be due to all staff being required to complete an on-line training package in 2015/2016, which was artificially inflated the figures.

242 In response to questions on the underlying analysis of the statistics on value added in relation to areas such as gender and socio-economic background, the Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) undertook to provide some information drawn from the reports submitted to the Equality & Diversity Committee.

243 A summary of the outcomes of the student survey relating to E&D issues was presented. Governors asked whether the trans-inclusive communities were covered by the College's E&D reporting processes and were advised that a high level of work continued with this group of learners. The College was considering whether to apply to be a 'Stonewall Champion'.

244 A small number of concerns had been raised by learners over the apparent lower level of security in the KP building compared to the main building. Management agreed to ensure that further patrols take place during the College day.

245 The Corporation received a revised Equality & Diversity Policy for 2018/2019, to which minor amendments had been made.

246 **Resolved** - That the Equality & Diversity Policy for 2018/2019 be approved

COMMITTEE REPORTS

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

247 The Committee Chair presented for information the minutes of the meeting held on 20th November 2017 and gave a verbal report on the meeting that had been held earlier in the day.

Tuition Fees Policy 2018/2019

248 The Corporate was advised that a small increase in higher education tuition fees had been recommended by the Resources Committee for 2018/2019 and the abolition of the Learner Services Fee for students.

249 In response to questions about comparative fee levels, the Vice Principal Services reported that the College charged less than local higher education institutions and that the fees for adult programmes were in line with most other further education colleges.

250 **Resolved** - That the Tuition Fees Policy for 2018/2019 be approved

Accommodation Strategy

251 The Vice Principal Services reported on discussions that had taken place at the Resources Committee on proposals relating to the College's Accommodation Strategy. Current estimates for the refurbishment of the RG Building into an HE Centre were £700K, which exceeded the original budget by £200K. Governors were assured (at both Committee and Corporation level) that the potential overspend could be compensated for through not pursuing other non-essential works, which would mean that the total amount of capital expenditure would remain within budget. Consequently, it had recommended progressing to the tender stage for the RG Building project.

252 Corporation members asked about the consequences of exceeding the capital expenditure figure in the budget submitted to the Transaction Unit and were advised that, in this event, the additional monies would be funded from the College's cash reserves, which were sufficient to cover this amount. Under the terms of the financial agreements with the TU any over-performance in terms of cash generation would be offset against the additional capital expenditure.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

253 The Corporation received for information the minutes of the Governance Committee meetings held 7th November 2017, 13th December 2017, 22nd January 2018.

254 The Committee Chair provided a verbal report on the meeting held on 27th February 2018. A revised induction and training plan had been prepared by the Interim Clerk and had been recommended for approval.

255 The Committee had considered a report on governor attendance levels for the period between September 2017 and January 2018. It was noted that attendance had met the overall target of 75% for both the Corporation and committee meetings. However, further work was required on the presentation of the data, to separate the performance of governors and associate members.

256 Following nomination and election processes amongst staff and learners at KGV, two individuals had been recommended for appointment as governors.

257 Governors were reminded of the Corporation's recent decision to require all existing and new governors to undergo a Disclosure & Barring Service Check. This process would be managed by the Clerk, with whom any questions should be raised, as opposed to channelling these through the College's HR Department.

- 258 **Resolved -**
- 1 That Suzanne Knowles be appointed as a teaching staff governor for a 4 year term of office commencing on 27th February 2018
 - 2 That Matthew Bousfield be appointed as a student governor for a term of office from 27th February to 31st July 2018
 - 3 That the induction and training plan for 2018 be circulated to governors

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

259 The Chair of the Standards Committee presented for information the minutes of the meetings held on 7th November and 5th December 2017. At the Committee's most recent meeting (10th January 2018) reports had been received from each curriculum departmental head on performance levels in 2016/2017 and priorities for 2017/2018. Governors had also reviewed the Quality Development Plan and had requested that all future versions of the report should provide an update on progress against each of the areas for improvement.

AUDIT COMMITTEE

260 The Chair of the Audit Committee presented for information the minutes of the meetings held on 20th November and 6th December 2017. The former had received the draft Financial Statements for 2016/2017, together with the Committee's Annual Report to the Corporation. Governors were reminded that, as a result of a previous request, the high risk action plan had been circulated to Corporation members.

261 At its December meeting the Committee had considered the performance of Grant Thornton against key indicators and had recommended its reappointment as the financial statements auditor for 2017/2018.

262 **Resolved** - That Grant Thornton be appointed as financial statements auditors for the 2017/2018 financial statements

POLICIES

263 At the November 2017 Corporation meeting Southport College governors had approved a revised Safeguarding Policy. This document had now been revised further to incorporate KGV and some other minor changes and was presented for approval. It was noted that new guidance would be issued shortly by the Department for Education, which would be included in a future version of the Policy.

264 **Resolved** - That the revised policy on Safeguarding be approved

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

265 The Vice Principal (Sixth Form & University Studies) was asked whether any progress had been made on offering Further Maths to learners. Governors were advised that staff were examining the prospective group sizes and the associated viability of this course to ensure that it was cost effective for the College to deliver. Currently 7 students had expressed an interest in undertaking Further Maths in 2018/2019, but not all of these had been interviewed.

266 Whilst it was noted that Further Maths tended to be an additional qualification for those studying 3 A Levels and opportunities may be limited by timetabling, at the Standards Committee meeting student governors had felt that this subject should be offered to support learners in their progression to university. It may also be possible to attract learners from other high performing competitor colleges following the positive Ofsted inspection outcome.

267 Governors questioned the branding of the merged college and were informed that the legal entity was Southport College, but that two separate brands operated within that framework, namely Southport College and KGV.

268 The Chair reported that the Corporation had a policy of committee chairs serving for 2 years and then stepping down and perhaps moving committees. Part of the role of being a committee chair was to encourage other potential candidates to step up to the role in the future. It was noted that committee vice-chairs were not automatically appointed as committee chairs.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

269 The Interim Clerk presented a draft list of meeting dates for the remainder of 2017/2018. Governors were asked to feed back any comments on these and the timings of meetings.