

Sutton College Governing Board
Part A Minutes of meeting
Monday 25/11/2024 at 18:30 in Room D7 Sutton College

Tom Dillon (TD)	Ex-officio / Principal	Present	
John Dodds (JD)	Business & Community Governor		Apologies
Raywen Ford (RF)	Business & Community Governor		Apologies
Cllr Ed Joyce (EJ)	Co-opted Governor	Present	
Catherine Winslow (CW)	Business & Community Governor / Chair	Present	
Richard Choi (RC)	Business & Community Governor	Present	
Jenny Sims (JS) (CoG)	Business & Community Governor	Present	
Charlotte Sallabank (CS) (VCoG)	Business & Community Governor	Present	

In attendance:

Jan Underhill – Assistant Director Wellbeing, Public Health & Wellbeing Directorate	Present
Delrose Earle – Vice Principal, Sutton College	Present
Laurie Nicholls (LN) Director of Services (DLSS)	Present
Barbara Eayrs (BE) Clerk	Present

Invited:

Kasumi Witty (KW) – Marketing Manager	Present
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AGENDA ITEM	MINUTES	ACTION NO:
1	<p>Welcome and Apologies for Absence</p> <p>JS opened the meeting at 18:30 and welcomed those present.</p> <p>Apologies received from John Dodds and Raywen Ford. These were accepted.</p> <p>The meeting was confirmed as quorate.</p> <p>Declarations of Pecuniary interests</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest in agenda items for this meeting.</p>	
2	<p>Marketing update and questions</p> <p>Focus on budget and future plans</p> <p>KW gave a presentation to the Board highlighting the following:</p> <p>The allocated funding for the Step Ahead project has been effectively utilised, allowing significant progress in key areas, including brand development, marketing campaigns, a Radio Jackie advertisement, leaflet distribution, paid social media advertising, local directory magazine placement and a one-month advertising board at the St. Nicholas Centre. There have also been signage updates, as well as promotional materials purchased.</p> <p>A successful Careers Fair was held which brought together 24 exhibitors from diverse sectors, including local development companies, care, education and public services. It attracted an estimated 500+ visitors, with long queues to access the event. This event was a resounding success, receiving high praise from the London Borough of Sutton and South London Partnership. Any attendees who registered with Step Ahead can be tracked. There were approximately 100 referrals. A further Careers Fair has been planned for 10/04/2025. Both a Health & Social, as well as an event for the Hospitality sector is also being planned.</p>	

A comprehensive market research survey was undertaken and the results distributed to curriculum colleagues. This included key focus areas e.g. fee comparisons, analysis of non-educational competitors, as well as website analytics.

KW said that the social media advertising impact meant that a £500 course launch campaign reached 38,000 people, resulting in 2,444 click-throughs and that a £1,500 Step Ahead promotion reached 99,000 people, driving 4,322 click-throughs. KW said that the click-throughs showed the amount of people taking an active interest in the products the College was promoting at the time. KW said that unfortunately we are unable to see the complete learner journey from click-through to enrolling on a course, as the College's technology does not allow us to do this at this point, but that the proposed new website should allow this tracking. TD said that this was one of the specifications that has been put in the brief for the new website.

Various marketing promotions and events are being planned, including January course promotion, as well as curriculum planning where marketing is working collaboratively with curriculum teams on the 2025/26 programme. An open event is planned to take place on the High Street on 08/02/2025. Promotions are also taking place for enrichment sessions, including Google Classroom Help, NHS Health Checks, a Sutton New Town History Walk & Talk, as well as a Mental Health Awareness session.

The College will be engaging with the community by participating in the Sutton Christmas market on 30/11/2024, which is an event organised by Enjoy Sutton/KW.

KW confirmed that the current Marketing Strategy (2023-2025) is being reviewed.

Investigations for a new College website are in progress and the College is focusing on integration with online payment systems, enhanced tracking capabilities, improved responsiveness, as well as greater flexibility for in-house updates.

Planning is underway for the move to the new premises, where the focus will be on communications and branding.

Marketing is reviewing all course entries for the 2025-26 programme and organising Course Details forms (CDFs). Work has commenced on creating the new course guide and promotional activities are being planned in terms of the 2025-26 programme.

Additional advertising options, such as bus ads, are being explored, though costs remain a significant factor. It was agreed that advertisements on the rear of busses would only raise awareness and the College is already doing that with planned events in the High Street.

The College website statistics comparison data shows a positive shift as these are up from the same period last year (Aug-Oct 2024 v Aug-Oct 2023).

KW identified various risks to the department which include competing College projects where multiple high priority projects have diverted resources away from general marketing efforts, impacting the focus on increasing enrolments. Changes to or implementation of new processes frequently require the Design Officer to dedicate time to design work, pulling resources away from regular marketing activities.

KW said that website traffic data indicates strong performance in attracting visitors, but lower than expected conversions into enrolments. Potential causes include course

	<p>times not aligning with learner schedules, insufficient or unclear information on CDFs, course pricing perceived as too high and desired courses or levels not available at Sutton College.</p> <p>KW said that a challenge for the Spring term is that there is a decrease in the number of courses available to market, limiting options for enrolment growth. In-planning is in progress for the Spring term so more courses will become available to be marketed.</p> <p>EJ asked if the College had any support from the Council with their channels of communication, to which KW responded that she is in contact with the Communications Team at the Council and that various promotions are published in the Council newsletter, Insight.</p> <p>RC asked if KW could share the website analytics with Governors.</p> <p>Action: KW to share the website analytics with Governors.</p> <p>KW was thanked for taking the time to present this update to Governors.</p>	21
3	<p>Minutes of meeting 14/10/2024 (Parts A & B)</p> <p>Part A</p> <p>Part A Minutes of the meeting held on 14/10/2024 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>Part B</p> <p>Part B Minutes of the meeting held on 14/10/2024 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
4	<p>Matters arising from the minutes not covered on this agenda</p> <p>None.</p>	
5	<p>Governing Board Questions 25-11-2025.</p> <p>In terms of JBD's comment re Finance, the Finance Manager is working with the Strategic Finance Business Partner at the Council and a detailed finance update, with projections, will be given at the next Governing Board meeting. The Finance Manager will be asked to attend the Governing Board meeting on 28/04/2025 to present the Finance report to Governors.</p> <p>The questions regarding the monitoring of marketing campaigns were discussed above.</p> <p>TD said in terms of the questions asked by JS requesting what percentage of courses have termly enrolments in order to ascertain how many enrolments still to come, as we are currently in the process of ESOL enrolments for courses commencing in January 2025, this will increase over the next two weeks and will be provided as live data.</p> <p>Action: TD to request Finance Manager to attend Governing Board meeting on 28/04/2025.</p> <p>Action: TD to provide breakdown of enrolments still to come for January 2025 course starts.</p>	22 23
6	<p>Governors' Business</p> <p><i>(Document circulated in advance – to be taken as read)</i></p>	

	<p>BE confirmed that nine external applications have been received for prospective Governors, but no Staff Governor applications. JS said that the role of a Staff Governor was to support the College by attending six meetings a year and that they are not required to feed back to staff. The role involves giving their views as a member of staff in order for Governors to hear another voice. An advert to this effect will be published in Inform.</p> <p>CW said that she is willing to support JS with the interviewing process. It was agreed that JS liaise with BE to book a room at the College daytime and evening for these interviews to take place. JS will create a set of questions.</p> <p>Action: JS/BE to publish an advert in Inform advertising for a Staff Governor.</p> <p>Action: JS/BE to liaise regarding room booking to interview prospective Governors and JS to create a set of questions.</p>	<p>24</p> <p>25</p>
7	<p>Principal's report (Document circulated in advance – to be taken as read)</p> <p>TD said that the GLA have made it very clear that colleges will not receive any additional funding if we go over our allocation. We will tightly monitor to ensure that we achieve 97-100% as per the threshold. TD said that we are currently at 70% of our allocation for the GLA and that any potential clawback will be factored into the financial budget for 2025-26 year-end and will be factored into the achievement rate of 78% to ensure close monitoring continues and ensures we have a clear drive forward. TD said that he would be attending a provider meeting later in the week and will update Governors if there are any changes.</p> <p>TD said that it is hoped that Step Ahead, which is funded by the UKSPF, can continue as he would like to keep the team and grow the area. The impact of Step Ahead has been great as their reach and engagement with the community is unique. There are many opportunities for Step Ahead to focus on.</p> <p>Regarding question 4 asked of the DfE on the report, TD said that it has been confirmed that the UKSPF will be funded for another year and although Multiply is not being funded again this can be funded through the UKSPF fund.</p> <p>TD said that recruitment is a sector wide issue, including SEND staff. TD said that some applications have been received from an agency, which will be looked at. A lot of providers now employ permanent tutors, which will ensure more flexibility in terms of times that courses can run through the day.</p> <p>TD said that the College was looking to outsource working with colleagues in the Family Hubs. The Head of Curriculum & Quality – Employment & Skills (including Apprenticeships) will look at the process and work with Council departments in this regard. The College will still be responsible for the quality assurance.</p> <p>TD outlined some key headline data for 2023-24 results, with further detail and information in the College SAR, which will be presented to the Board in the coming weeks. He highlighted that we can demonstrate progress and improved achievement across levels and funding and that we are now closer to the national benchmark. Further work is required this academic year to ensure that we achieve above the national benchmark in all areas of the College. TD said that achievement College-wide has improved from 79.2% in 2022/23 to 83.2% in 2023/24 across all funding elements.</p>	

	<p>Moving from Trinity to Ascentis for our ESOL provision should make a significant difference to our achievement rates.</p> <p>TD said that the draft SAR will be available within the next two weeks and that anything that cannot be evidenced will not be published in the SAR. Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) will also be shared with Governors when available. CW asked if it would be worthwhile to seek validation from a colleague outside of Sutton College. TD said that he could approach a colleague from another adult education provider to do this.</p> <p>TD outlined key risks identified by SLT that the College are currently facing, with actions achieved or actions that will be taken to minimise the risks and impact on the College.</p> <p>TD said that the HR and Payroll function of the College will be reviewed to ascertain how this will operate moving forward.</p>	
8	<p>Finance data report (Document circulated in advance – to be taken as read) Recorded in Part B minutes</p>	
9	<p>Curriculum & Quality update (Document circulated in advance – to be taken as read)</p> <p>Sutton College Dashboard</p> <p>DE said to allow a variance of up to 5% in figures as we are working with live data.</p> <p>Attendance and retention is good and in-year planning is taking place with a range of new initiatives being introduced, particularly those by the Head of Curriculum & Quality (HCQ) for Essential Skills such as the Skills Café's for English & Maths IAG designated to attract learners. The HCQ is able to ask the learners questions and talk them through what the course/s entail and better assess where they fit in.</p> <p>Learners completing end-of-year feedback, as well as those who completed Learner Induction Surveys, largely reported that they feel safe, that they are happy with their course and what they are learning and that they feel supported in their learning. Learner induction surveys were introduced in the current academic year and this will be repeated mid-year/course. The mid-year/course survey will be pushed out through google classroom which should give a better uptake in completing the survey to better understand the learner experience and where improvements can be made.</p> <p>DE highlighted that enrolment numbers are good and that learners are receiving the advice that they need. Tailored Learning has reached more than 50% of the target for the year and Adult Skills Fund (ASF) has enrolled 28% of its target. There is room for caution and close attention needs to be paid to ASF enrolments to ensure the planned targets are met by the end of the academic year. Bespoke courses with the NHS affect attendance in terms of Tailored Learning as participants who are ill are sometimes unable to attend.</p> <p>It is anticipated that by the end of the Autumn term at least 95% of tutors will have had a learning walk style observation. Formal observations will begin in earnest in the near future, as well as departmental deep dives.</p> <p>DE said that in ESOL moving to another awarding body, as well as employing permanent tutors will strengthen this area as the HCQ will have time to develop and support the area better. Classroom visits are being made by the IAG team, where they</p>	

	<p>highlight different routes to employment. Assessments are now held on site and a matrix has been developed to assist assessors and so that standards are maintained across the board.</p> <p>The Curriculum planning process has started for the 2025-26 academic year and on 22/01/2025 the College will be having a full Matrix review. The College will be extending the academic year and looking closely at start and end times, as well as better room utilisation in terms of maximising efficiency so that we can cope with the workload.</p> <p>The SEND learners are thriving and the learners on the Publishing Pathways partnered with Step Ahead, who are supporting their employability skills, to produce a magazine. LSIP will be interviewing the learners and their intention is, if happy with the project plan, to roll it out across South London and will assist with funding the project. This feeds into the GLA directly as SLP report to the GLA on all projects.</p> <p>The Services to People department has mostly started well, with most of the funded provision recruiting and successfully enrolling.</p> <p>From 02/12/2024 all HCQs will be in their new roles. DE said that the College is hoping to outsource some of the Family Learning by engaging with partners. Work is already taking place in Family Hubs in the most disadvantaged wards. TD/DE to meet with RC to discuss exercise classes for older Hong Kongers.</p> <p>Action: TD/DE to meet with RC to discuss exercise classes for older Hong Kongers.</p> <p>The HCQ is working on recruitment of apprenticeships for the 2025-26 hybrid year end apprentices. Discussions are also taking place regarding policy change in terms of apprenticeships. Sutton College is not alone as an adult provider facing challenges as FE colleges are also struggling. All options are being explored.</p> <p>A total of 844 individuals are scheduled to have advice and guidance via the IAG service this year. Central to the IAG strategy for this academic year is that all learners on funded courses will have had access to the IAG service by the end of the autumn term. The service is on track to achieve this target.</p> <p>Destination data is collected from learners. Learners completing Adult Skills Fund (ASF) courses up to 14/11/2024 amount to 122. It is to be noted that these will have been short lower level (often entry level) courses. 96 of those have completed the destination survey. The challenge is to ensure that destination data is collected for all learners completing funded courses. Once the data is collected, we need to ensure that there is thorough analysis to support quality improvement efforts.</p> <p>The staff are working extremely hard to deliver a high quality service. Staffing remains an issue in the curriculum team. The process of appointing permanent tutors to some departments will now go ahead after a brief pause in the process.</p> <p>DE said that at the Job Fair on 10/04/2025, the College will have their own stand where it is hoped that recruitment can be discussed with those that would like to be teachers. The College will then deliver the relevant training course whereby the learners can be nurtured, which will help to fill some of the gaps that we are experiencing.</p> <p>TD explained that an Ofsted Readiness tracker has been created and is regularly monitored at SLT and the Strategic Working Forum where everyone has a role and colleagues are challenged when we meet. There are currently 91 tasks on the tracker.</p>	28
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	<p>Action: BE to send out a copy of the Ofsted Readiness tracker to Governors for information.</p> <p>JS said that she hoped that Governors were accessing all the information that is being shared with them. An Ofsted Pre-planning meeting to be scheduled for Governors in the new year.</p> <p>Action: JS to schedule an Ofsted Pre-planning meeting for Governors in the new year.</p>	<p>29</p> <p>30</p>
10	<p>Learner Services & Safeguarding update (Document circulated in advance – to be taken as read)</p> <p>LN said that the ESOL assessments and enrolments have now commenced for courses in the spring term.</p> <p>Step Ahead is an enthusiastic team. A second coach has now been recruited and an admin support role has now been filled. The team is well on its way to meeting the outcome targets, including already achieving our first 'Good work' outcome for someone who was previously unemployed. A recent audit by the SLP was a positive experience and endorsed the work being carried out.</p> <p>Work continues on some community projects, which were initially slow to get off the ground, but are now quite successful. Feedback has been very positive. With the recent restructure that has taken place, there will be a HCQ dedicated to this area.</p> <p>The classroom affected by the flood are now back in use. We are currently in the process of re viewing all office space and identifying rooms for the permanent tutors.</p>	
11	<p>Risk Register (Verbal update)</p> <p>The updated version of the Risk Register will be shared with Governors, which JS has seen. If any risks change the Board will be notified before a meeting. If Governors have any questions, to email to TD who will respond. JS said that the document is very detailed and the format is good.</p>	
12	<p>Confidential Items Discussions under the following agenda items were recorded confidentially under Part B minutes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of Learner Services report - Safeguarding element • Financial report • Restructure element in Principal's report 	
13	<p>AOB</p> <p>EC's family have asked that a donation to the Guide Dogs Trust or Battersea Dogs home can be made in her memory.</p> <p>All Governors welcome to attend the College CPD day on Wednesday 18/12/2024.</p>	
14	<p>Dates of future meetings Full Governing Body meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10/02/2025 at 18:30 in D6 • 28/04/2025 at 18:30 in D6 – Finance Manager to attend • 09/06/2025 at 18:30 in D6 • W/C 14/07/2025 TBC 	

15	Closure The meeting closed at 20:40.	
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Signed: _____ Print Name: Jenny Sims
Chair of Governors

Date: _____

