# Sutton College Governing Body
# Part A Minutes of meeting
# Wednesday 13/05/2026 at 18:00 in Room D7 Sutton College

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| Tom Dillon (TD) | Ex-officio/Principal | Present |
| John Dodds (JD) | Business & Community Governor | Apologies |
| Raywen Ford (RF) | Business & Community Governor | Present |
| Cllr Ed Joyce (EJ) | Co-opted Governor | Present |
| Kate Leeming (KL) | Business & Community Governor | Present |
| Manas Nath (MN) | Business & Community Governor | Present |
| Charlotte Sallabank (CS) (VCoG) | Business & Community Governor – Vice Chair | Present – joined online 18:15 |
| Jenny Sims (JS) (CoG) | Business & Community Governor – Chair | Present |
| Colin Kin Hang Siu (CKHS) | Business & Community Governor | Present |
| Elizabeth Tumath (ET) | Business & Community Governor | Present |
| Catherine Winslow (CW) | Business & Community Governor | Present |
| Laura Lam (LL) | Student Governor | Present – arrived 18:30 |

**Invited:**

Genevieve Gould – Head of Curriculum & Quality (Essential Skills) (GG) Apologies
Michaela Moher – Head of Curriculum & Quality (Vocational & Creative (MM) Present

**In attendance:**

Jan Underhill (JU) – Director Wellbeing, Public Health & Wellbeing Directorate Present
Delrose Earle (DE) - Vice Principal Present
Laurie Nicholls (LN) Director of Learner Experience/DSL Present
Barbara Eayrs (BE) Director of Executive & Corporate Operations/Clerk Present

| AGENDA ITEM | MINUTES | ACTION NO: |
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| 1 | **Welcome and Apologies for Absence**<br>JS opened the meeting at 18:00. MM was welcomed to the meeting.<br><br>Apologies had been received from John Dodds and Genevieve Gould. These were accepted.<br><br>The meeting was confirmed as **quorate**.<br><br>**Declarations of Pecuniary interests.**<br><br>There were no declarations of interest in agenda items for this meeting. | |
| 2 | **Curriculum Planning Tool**<br>MM shared her experience of using the curriculum planning tool as a relatively new HCQ and undertaking curriculum planning for the next academic year for the first time at Sutton College. MM explained that she joined part way through the current academic year's curriculum planning process and had been able to learn from what had worked well, identify challenges within the curriculum, and consider areas for development for the forthcoming year.<br><br>MM stated that she found the curriculum planning process clear and well-structured, with clearly defined timelines outlining the various stages of planning. She particularly valued the collaborative approach and opportunities to work with other departments, including MIS, especially in relation to course calculators and ensuring courses were financially viable. | |

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| | MM advised that the Room Clash Report had been particularly useful during the curriculum planning process. MM noted that room allocation continues to present challenges across the College, despite departments having designated base rooms. Additional pressures arise from tutor availability and working patterns, together with the need to timetable classes at times that are accessible and suitable for learners. MM explained that ongoing discussions with other Heads had supported a more coordinated and seamless approach to resolving these challenges.<br><br>LN confirmed that the implementation of the Room Clashing Tool had significantly reduced the amount of work required in relation to room clashes.<br><br>MM stated that the initial focus had been on developing the core programme and highlighted the value of the robust quality assurance process. Input and feedback from colleagues reviewing the programme had been greatly appreciated and had contributed positively to strengthening the curriculum offer.<br><br>Once the core programme had been developed, MM presented it to SLT and found this to be a valuable exercise in explaining the rationale behind the programme and how it would support both the College and learners. MM advised that the support, challenge, and questioning provided by SLT had been constructive and helpful, enabling further refinement and development of the programme prior to moving into the course approval stage. MM expressed confidence and enthusiasm about launching the programme and progressing to course approval.<br><br>MM expressed thanks to the departmental Curriculum Operations Officer for the significant support provided throughout the curriculum planning process. MM noted that the clear timelines and deadlines for each stage of activity, together with the ongoing quality assurance feedback, had been particularly helpful. MM also reflected that valuable learning had been gained from this year's process and programme development which would support future planning activities.<br><br>MM advised that, in some cases, learner IAG may not have been sufficiently robust, resulting in additional support requirements for learners. MM stated that a key priority for the coming year would be to strengthen entry requirements. She will continue to utilise Skillsbuilder assessments to assess learners' English and maths levels. MM further noted that where a course was not deemed the most appropriate option, learners are signposted to alternative provision within the College to ensure they are directed to the most suitable course.<br><br>MM stated that a key priority would be to reduce course cancellations and better manage learners' expectations to minimise disappointment where courses are unable to run.<br><br>MM advised that the Caring sector continues to be a growing area, with ongoing recruitment demand within Adult Social Care. RF asked whether there may be opportunities to develop courses for older people that could support independence and potentially help reduce future care needs. MM responded that this was certainly an area that could be explored further.<br><br>KL asked MM how the Planning Tool had worked in practice. MM advised that, in her experience, the tool had worked efficiently and that she had been able to keep pace with the process effectively. A question was raised regarding whether the effectiveness of the Planning Tool would be formally tracked or measured. DE responded that this would not be separately tracked, as an established timeline was already in place to monitor the overall Programme Planning process. | |



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| | CW asked MM whether programme planning had required her to work significantly more hours. MM responded that she had been able to work within her contracted hours by effectively prioritising tasks and managing her calendar to meet deadlines.<br><br>The Board thanked MM for attending and for sharing her experience of the Programme Planning process and use of the new planning tool. | |
| **3** | **Minutes of meeting 11/03/2026 (Parts A & B)**<br><br>**Part A**<br><br>**The Part A Minutes of the meeting held on 11/03/2026 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.**<br><br>It was agreed that the QIP would be uploaded to the Governors' shared drive in advance of the next meeting scheduled for 08/07/2026, following completion of the next Quality Scrutiny Review Panel. BE to notify Governors once the QIP had been uploaded to the shared drive.<br><br>Action: BE to notify Governors once the QIP had been uploaded to the shared drive.<br><br>**Part B**<br><br>**The Part B Minutes of the meeting held on 11/03/2026 were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.** | 80 |
| **4** | **Matters arising from the minutes not covered on this agenda**<br><br>Comments were made regarding the new Curriculum Planning Tool developed for Heads of Curriculum & Quality, with Governors noting that it was helpful to see how robust the process was. It was acknowledged that a fuller assessment of the tool's effectiveness could be undertaken next year. Governors also noted that time savings for staff were already evident, particularly in relation to the reduction in work required to resolve room clashes. | |
| **5** | **Governing Board Questions to SLT and Responses**<br><br>Further insight was provided in response to questions raised by Governors and the responses from the SLT google sheet:<br><br>**Q1 - Digital Development** – as referenced in TD's report, significant progress has been made in this area, supporting the wider Council transformation agenda. The development is currently being tested internally through Google systems, led by the IT & Digital Innovation Manager. It was noted that the initiative is expected to deliver financial savings, particularly in terms of staff time and operational efficiency. Consideration had previously been given to procuring an external platform; however, the in-house solution has proven to be effective.<br><br>MN advised that he had met with the IT & Digital Innovation Manager and had been impressed by the level of automation that had already been implemented.<br><br>**Q2 – The Youth Hub**, referenced within TD's report, was discussed as a new initiative aimed at supporting young people aged 16–24 and was described as a valuable opportunity that aligns alongside the Trailblazers programme. It was noted | |



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| | that the initiative is focused on addressing youth needs within the borough, with the funding application due for submission by the end of the week.<br><br>The proposed Hub aims to operate as a central borough resource through the co-location of DWP Youth Work Coaches and Employment Coaches at the College for a minimum of three days per week. It was further noted that the initiative would support engagement with young people aged 16–24 and attract additional learners into the College.<br><br>JS commented that the initiative was the right approach and TD confirmed that the College is working collaboratively with the borough on its development. It was also noted that each borough is expected to establish a Youth Hub and that additional services and support provision would feed into the Hub model.<br><br>**Q3 - Cheam Park Allotments** – DE reported that the College is exploring the potential to deliver qualifications from the site, with a particular focus on expanding SEND provision. Staff have already supported initial activity on site, including clearing the area and holding a brainstorming session under the arbour to consider future curriculum opportunities. The site is available at a cost of £200 per annum.<br><br>JS advised that this presents a potential opportunity for Governor involvement and agreed to discuss further with DE outside of the meeting. JS also suggested that Governors could consider a visit to the site at the final Governing Board meeting of the year and indicated an intention to develop a project for Governor participation. DE confirmed that contributions such as seeds and bulbs would be welcomed to support development of the site. JS noted she would raise the opportunity with Governors, highlighting the potential for positive and exciting outcomes.<br><br>Action: JS and DE to meet to discuss potential opportunities for Governor involvement in relation to Cheam Park Allotments.<br><br>Action: JS to raise the opportunity for Governor involvement in relation to the Cheam Park Allotment site with Governors.<br><br>**Q4 – Welcome Weeks** for 2026/27 will run at the start of each accredited course. The main change is the introduction of an in-house, non-accredited programme focused on developing learners' skills in using Google Classroom. Tutors will use the platform to deliver resources, assignments, and feedback, enabling online submission and improved access to learner progress. This approach is intended to strengthen digital skills, improve accessibility and tracking of learning, and enhance feedback, communication, and overall learner engagement.<br><br>LL asked whether the laptops would be upgraded, noting that the online British Values assessment had taken a considerable amount of time to complete this year. DE responded that the Welcome Weeks for the 2026/27 academic year will focus on the daily use of Google Classroom and that, in most cases, learners will use their own devices. DE added that learners will be supported to develop the skills needed to access and use online resources effectively.<br><br>RF queried whether there were challenges in consistently embedding British Values across curriculum areas and emphasised the importance of monitoring this to ensure consistency across the College. RF also asked how the College intended to address the issues experienced previously. | <br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>81<br><br><br>82 |



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| | DE responded that the issue was not that British Values were not being taught within classrooms, but rather that the College had not previously been able to evidence this effectively. The introduction of the British Values assessment for learners provided clear and robust evidence of this. DE further advised that the observation process is being strengthened so that observers will specifically check learners' understanding of British Values, with this being formally recorded within observation reports.<br><br>JS reminded Governors to submit their questions to the shared sheet in advance of meetings in order to support openness and transparency within discussions. | |
| **6** | **Governors' Business**<br>JS informed Governors that a resignation had been received from JD from the Governing Board, which Governors formally accepted.  JS will contact to JD to thank him for his service.<br><br>Action: JS to contact JD to thank him for his service due to his resignation from the Board.<br><br>Action: BE to arrange for an advert for the Governor vacancy to be placed on the College website. | <br><br><br>83<br><br>84 |
| **7** | **Principal's & MIS update – CONFIDENTIAL ITEM** | |
| **8** | **Finance data update – CONFIDENTIAL ITEM** | |
| **9** | **Curriculum & Quality update**<br><br>**Trends Across College**<br><br>JS queried whether there were any trends emerging across the College, noting that she had personally observed some disconnect during observation activities.<br><br>DE responded that a key area of concern relates to consistency amongst managers in auditing course documentation and felt this was where weaknesses had arisen. DE advised that she is addressing this through the scrutiny process by challenging managers where tutors have not met the required standard and asking what actions are being taken in response.<br><br>DE further noted that observation reports should include a specific section confirming whether course documentation has been audited by managers, enabling appropriate follow-up where this has not taken place.<br><br>JS commented that, during observations, she had identified two areas that appeared to have declined over time: Schemes of Work, which had initially started strongly at the beginning of the year, and the use of feedback/progress trackers.<br><br>Action: JS and DE to meet to discuss the use and monitoring of feedback/progress trackers.<br><br>RF asked whether, for the purposes of future reports, a brief update could be included outlining how the identified issues are being addressed following the discussions between JS and DE.<br><br>Action: DE to include a brief update in the next report outlining how the identified issues discussed with JS are being addressed. | <br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br><br>86<br><br><br><br>87 |



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| | In relation to curriculum highlights, DE noted that although the ESOL pass rate shown in her report is positive, she continues to take a cautious view as the performance profile still appears uneven. | |
| **10** | **Learner Experience update**<br><br>It was reported that a new member of the Front of House team has joined the College through the Trailblazer programme.<br><br>It was also noted that the Step Ahead Team Manager role ended at the end of March 2026, following the conclusion of UKSPF funding and insufficient funding to continue the post. Responsibility for line management of the team has now transferred to LN.<br><br>**Learner Support Fund (LSF)**<br><br>LN confirmed that the Learner Support Fund (LSF) forms part of the GLA allocation and that it is for the College to determine how much of the allocation is designated towards LSF support.<br><br>In response to a question from RF regarding how learners are made aware of the fund, LN advised that information is shared during Welcome Week, incorporated within Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) processes, referenced during induction, and supported through the use of an information video. LN also noted that the application process has now been streamlined.<br><br>RF further asked whether there is a cap applied to individual applications. LN confirmed that there is a cap applied to individual applications and advised that the level of support available also depends on the length of the learner's course. LN further noted that a matrix is used to provide guidance and ensure consistency in decision-making.<br><br>**Facilities**<br><br>LN reported that some facilities across the College have encountered issues, which have affected aspects of daily operations. These include areas such as roof leaks, equipment not operating at full efficiency and signs of infrastructure wear that are being addressed.<br><br>JU confirmed that progress relating to the new College build had paused during the pre-election period. However, now that this period has concluded and new Council members are being welcomed, it is anticipated that work and discussions will begin progressing again. There is a full Council meeting scheduled for 26/05/2026.<br><br>In response to a question from CW, LN confirmed that air reassurance testing had been successfully completed by an external contractor following the asbestos remedial works, confirming that all affected areas are safe and suitable for continued use.<br><br>TD added that the College's working relationship with the Council's Facilities Team, together with LN and the Head of Centre Operations, has strengthened considerably. TD further noted that maintaining a high quality of service remains a priority in order to minimise any impact on learners. | |



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| | LN reported that, since November 2025, the Site Team has been operating below full staffing capacity. However, a local bank of staff has now been established to provide additional support when required.<br><br>**Safeguarding**<br><br>LN reported that a training session was delivered during the December 2025 CPD day to support staff in clearly distinguishing between a safeguarding concern and a general cause for concern.<br><br>LN highlighted the data included within the report, which demonstrated the positive impact of the training, including a 47.4% reduction in overall referrals to the safeguarding helpdesk. It was noted that the reduction in misdirected referrals has enabled more effective allocation of safeguarding resources.<br><br>LN further advised that SEND tutors, in particular, are now managing classroom-based concerns more effectively as a result of the improved understanding and guidance provided through the training.<br><br>RF commented that Governors may not currently have a sufficiently clear understanding of the distinction between a general cause for concern and a safeguarding issue.<br><br>Action: LN to share the safeguarding training materials from the December 2025 CPD session with Governors when the draft notes are circulated - CPD Day - 17.12.25 Safeguarding and Behaviour. | 88 |
| **11** | **Risk Register**<br><br>TD presented the Risk Register and confirmed that there had been limited changes since the previous review, noting that a greater number of updates would be expected at year-end.<br><br>JS reminded Governors to review the Risk Register alongside the meeting agenda papers and to add any questions to the questions sheet in advance of meetings. It was noted that a direct link to the Risk Register is included within the agenda for ease of reference.<br><br>TD advised that completed actions would be filtered out moving forward and confirmed that an overview snapshot is available via the Risk Register dashboard. | |
| **12** | **Confidential Items**<br>Discussions under the following agenda items were recorded confidentially under Part B minutes:<br><br>• Principal's update<br>• Finance update<br>• Section from Curriculum & Quality update | |
| **13** | **AOB** | |



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| | KL commented that it would be beneficial for additional information or communication regarding anti-Semitism to be circulated.<br><br>TD advised that this would be discussed with the Senior Leadership Team in order to consider the most appropriate approach and noted that information could potentially be included within Inform.<br><br>Action: TD to discuss the possibility of adding additional information or communication regarding anti-Semitism in Inform with SLT.<br><br>EJ commented that the new Council cycle is not expected to result in significant change and noted that there continues to be a strong level of goodwill towards the College within the Council. JS congratulated EJ on being re-elected to the Council.<br><br>JS presented TD with a card on behalf of the Governors in recognition of his forthcoming marriage. | 89 |
| **14** | **Dates of future meetings**<br>**Full Governing Body meetings from 18:00-20:00 on Wednesdays unless otherwise specified.**<br><br>• 08/07/2025 | |
| **15** | **Closure**<br>The meeting closed at 19:53. | |

Signed: ____________________________________________Print Name: Jenny Sims
Chair of Governors

Date: ____________________________________________



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