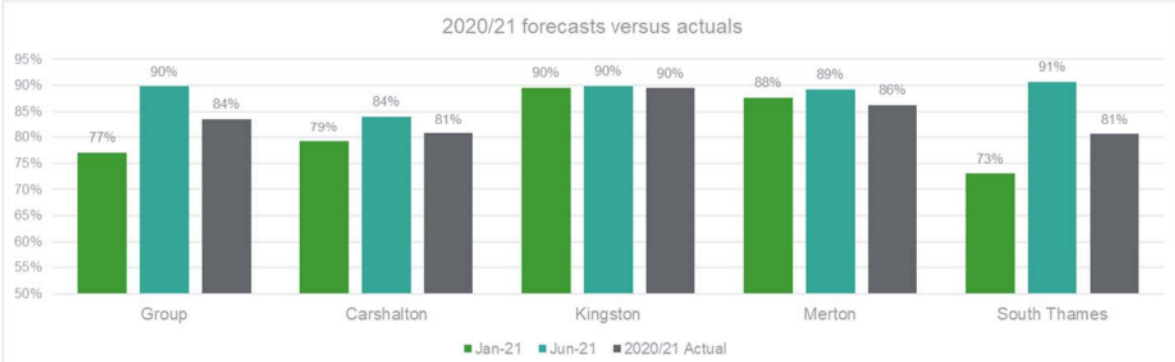# South Thames Colleges Group

Minutes Quality, Learning and Standards Committee
at Merton College, Tuesday 22 November at 5.00pm (the meeting started early)

(All resolutions passed were the unanimous decision of the Quality, Learning and Standards Committee members present unless otherwise stated)

Meeting Title	Quality. Learning and Standards Committee		
Date	22 November 2022		
Members	Mr G. Willett (GW) Chair Cllr B. Fraser (BF) Mr. P. Mayhew-Smith (PM-S) Group Principal / CEO Ms M. Savage(MS) Mr M. J. Stone (JS) Ms C. Streliaev-Pivett (CS-P)		
In Attendance	Mr R. Greenaway(RG) Deputy CEO Ms S. Marfe(SUM) Director of Marketing and Recruitment Ms J. Morrison (JM) Assistant Principal - Quality and Innovation Mr J O'Shea (JOS) Principal, Kingston and South Thames Colleges Mr J. Pemberton-Billing(JP-B) Principal, Carshalton College and Merton College Ms H. Meredith(HM) Head of Governance		

Key Meeting Outcomes			
1	**WELCOME, APOLOGIES, DECLARATION OF INTEREST**		
1.1	Apologies were received from Prof Laville and Mr Cheema and the Vice Principal - HE and Partnerships who normally attends committee meetings.		
1.2	Members confirmed that they did not have any pecuniary or other interest in any agenda item.		
2	**MINUTES OF MEETING OF 18 OCTOBER 202 AND MATTERS ARISING**		
2.1	<u>Accuracy</u>. The minutes were accepted as an accurate record to be signed by the Chair. <u>Matters arising</u> The Action Log was reviewed and updates below were noted and it was agreed not to continue to carry forward items marked ongoing to the Action log :		

Include more reference to LSIPs in reports / agenda for QLS	Report writers	Ongoing	
An annual refresh of the curriculum should take place	PM-S	Ongoing	
SRR to investigate sending employer survey after each contact	SR-R	Ongoing	
Contact Link Governors to put them in contact with their lead officers	HM	Oct/ Nov	HM had put newer Link governors in contact with lead officers and sent reminders to others to fix meetings
Progression destinations for students – report to future QLS meeting to review impact on progression of lower achievement rates including HNS	JM	March 23	
Review attendance at next meeting	JOS	Nov 2022	Item 4.2 on this agenda
HNS to remain as a standing item on the QLS agenda	HM	Ongoing	
Consider using the May meeting to have a deep dive into the DTF	JM	May 2023	Agreed at the meeting to move this to March 23 to allow MS (Link Gov)to attend

2.2	**BOARD ASSURANCE RISK AREAS (PART I)**
	
	GW reminded the Committee that last meeting the Committee decided to revisit both risks allocated to it, agreeing that
	    • the risk attaching to a poor Ofsted result should be reviewed again following the CSAR validation in relation to the drop in achievement rates;
	    • The risk relating to declining student numbers should be reviewed after the day 42 census figures and the improved enrolment figures this year.		

3.	**Strategic Objective- CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY TO DELIVER GROWTH & CONTRIBUTE TO LSIPs**		

3.1	**INTERNAL PROGRESSION DATA**
3.1.1	JM reported that internal progression is at just over 50% overall – very similar to this time last year. More detail on this will be provided with Destinations Data.
3.2	**LOCAL SKILLS IMPROVEMENT PLANS (LSIP) UPDATE** The Committee noted two slides (below) from the FE Commissioner, Shelagh Legrave from her presentation to the Corporation on 7 November.

Investment in skills identified by the DfE

New provision and more funding:

- Strategic Development Fund (SDF) will help prepare and support collaborative projects to deliver Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs).
- Likewise, the Local Skills Improvement Fund (LSIF) will be rolled in March 2023 to support providers deliver LSIPs.
- New funding to invest in equipment that will support the delivery of Higher Technical Qualifications.
- LSIPs are being rolled out which should help to support providers to understand where investment is needed to meet the needs of employers and local skills gaps.
- Roll out of T Levels across the country as a prestigious alternative to A levels.
- Roll out of new adult provision such as Skills Bootcamps, Multiply and Free Courses for Jobs.

Investment in the workforce

- Opportunities for FE teachers to gain valuable industry experience on our **Industry Exchange programme.**
- **National Leaders of Further Education and National Leaders of Governance programmes** empower, mentor and support college principals, senior leaders and governors.
- The **Education Training Foundation funded** to set FE professional standards, and to help colleges improve quality in areas such as leadership, governance and teaching.

Simplified funding systems aims:

- A single **Skills Fund** that brings together all direct funding for adult skills, making the system easier for colleges to navigate
- A simpler and fairer way of allocating the funding within the Skills Fund.
- Giving more certainty to colleges over their funding, including over multiple years.

In return, the DfE wants colleges to:

Engage with employer-led skills plans:

- Work with employer representative bodies and employers in the development of Local Skills Improvement Plans.
- Consider Local Skills Improvement Plans when making decisions on your post-16 provision and skills offers.
- Use Local Skills Improvement plans to prioritise and focus your LSIF fund where there is local employer demand.
- LSIPs should also help you prioritize your mainstream funding, using it effectively to put on relevant courses to meet employer needs.
- Consider links between your provision and that offered by other providers.

Act as a delivery partner for government-backed programmes:

- Continue to co-create T Levels with employers and other key delivery partners and providers.
- Engage with local authorities and mayoral combined authorities to support delivering the aims of Multiply.
- Engage with support programmes to support providers to deliver T Levels and new changes to the level 3 vocational technical qualifications landscape.

Deliver high quality and relevant provision by:

- Adhere to new accountability structures to help ensure that you are putting on the best and most relevant provision for your area. These new structures include an **Accountability Agreement, a Performance Dashboard** and a **skills measure.**
- We have also improved the Secretary of State intervention powers to help providers not meeting local needs drive their own improvements.
- We have piloted a new programme to support colleges to undertake **Curriculum and Financial Efficiency reviews.** We intend to launch this from the start of the 2022/2023 academic year.

PM-S confirmed that the College will need to produce an **Accountability Agreement** for 2023-24 identifying the action the college is taking in relation to each local skills shortage area in time for submission to the ESFA in the summer term 2023. PM-S confirmed that the London LSIP is due to be published around Easter 2023 and that the Accountability Agreement will be written after the LSIP is published.

The new duty on the Governing Body to review how well the college provision is meeting local needs also requires governors to collaborate with the governing bodies of other local providers.; PM-S suggested that the South London Partnership (SLP) will set up a sub-regional governance conference to allow discussion between governors from different colleges.

SM joined the meeting at 4.58pm

3.3	**CURRICULUM PLANNING FOR NEW COURSES FOR 2023/24**
3.3.1	SM reported that two comments from governors at their recent Awayday have been included in the curriculum planning Action Plan for 2023-24: 1. Ensuring quality of A level provision 2. Ensuring that an appropriate lower level offer is in place

3.3.2	Curriculum planning is taking into account staffing needs and training and issues around ensuring quality.
3.3.4	The College Principals commended SM for the level of detail provided by the Research Report commissioned to support Curriculum Planning 2023/24. Key findings and recommendations from this were shared with governors at their Awayday. The purpose of the research was to ensure a group level overview of curriculum design and to position STCG to respond effectively to local market needs. Key findings were based on analysis of local and regional markets including key skills in demand identified by borough, travel to Learn trends and concluded with recommendations for curriculum planning. PM-S reported on staff buy-in to these recommendations and how this research is being used to shape the curriculum and the recruitment of staff to deliver this.
3.3.5	GW thanked SM for this positive work.

4.	**Strategic Objective- ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION**
4.1.1	**SELF ASSESSMENT (POST-VALIDATION REVEW)**
4.1.1	**VALIDATED COLLEGE AND GROUP 2021/22 SELF ASSESSMENT REPORTS** GW and 8 governors had participated in the Group Self-Assessment Report validation event immediately prior to this meeting. All of the committee members present had attended the validation which they found to be a positive and robust process for reviewing performance and progress across the Group.
4.1.2	The validation panel agreed the grades in the report – all grades this year were a Grade 2 Good Grade. The panel of governors asked for follow up on some points in the draft SAR.
4.1.3	The validated Group level self-assessment grades are as follows: **Grade Profile**

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	RAG
Overall Effectiveness	2	2		
Education programmes for young people	2	2	2	🟩
Adult learning programmes	2	2	2	🟩
Apprenticeships	2	3	2	🟩
Provision for learners with high needs	3	3	2	🟩
Quality of education	2	2	2	🟩
Behaviour and attitudes	2	2	2	🟩
Personal development	2	2	2	🟩
Leadership and management	2	2		
2021/22 NEW: Contribution to meeting skills needs (sub-judgement)	⬛		Reasonable	🟧

4.1.4	GW thanked the team at college for their work in preparing the SAR reports and the validation process and asked for the committee's thanks to be passed on to colleagues.
4.1.5	It was **resolved** to note the report and to recommend the SAR to the Corporation for approval.

4.1.2 4.2	**VALIDATED QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN 2022/23** The QIAP will be prepared taking into account the feedback from the validation and will be presented for approval by the Corporation on 8 December 2022.

4.2 4.2.1	**ATTENDANCE DATA** JP-B presented attendance data reporting concerns at the lower than normal attendance across the Group particularly in relation to English and Maths where attendance at the colleges ranged from 66.1% (Kingston) to 76.3% (Merton). Low attendance in English and Maths is impacting negatively on overall attendance which is about 4% below the same time last year.

Year to date attendance	2022-3	2021-2
All provision	82.7%	86.1%
English & Maths	69.2%	73.5%

4.2.3	At the SAR validation JS had asked whether staffing in English and Maths is an issue and was told that it is not. JP-B and JOS confirmed that staffing in these areas is not a problem.
4.2.3	Governors asked what is being done to improve attendance and what can be done to replicate the higher attendance at Merton across the Group. JP-B and JOS outlined a combination of activities being used to address this ranging from disciplinary action, support provided by student services or persuasion (E.g. offering free breakfast to students). BF asked what reasons students are giving for their low attendance; the main issues are mental health and anxiety about going into college or learners' part-time jobs.
4.2.4	GW asked for this to be an Agenda item at the next meeting.
4.2.5	It was **RESOLVED** to note this update
4.3	**LINK GOVERNOR SCHEME REPORT**
4.3.1	The Committee reviewed a report from Jim Marshall about his new role as Link Governor for personal development and Careers.
4.3.2	HM reported that Ofsted had published Terms of Reference for thematic reviews of Careers Guidance which it will be undertaking. HM had shared the link with officers and JM.
4.4 4.4.1	**INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT ON QUALITY ASSURANCE** This report had been reviewed by the Audit Committee in June 2022.
4.4.2	The review made one high level recommendation about Probationary observations and one medium level recommendation about developmental lesson observations. There had been slippage on quality monitoring observations- particularly for probationary staff with 54 probation observations overdue, representing 66 per cent of probationary staff. The College was behind on completing staff developmental observations due to resourcing pressures having only completed 64 observations for 583 staff.
4.4.3	The report also reviewed the effectiveness of forecasting of success rates, college by college. JS commented that the committee found the first bar chart in the report (below) comparing each College's forecasts against actual outcomes very useful.

Forecasting for 2020/21:

In the table below we have compared the College's forecasts for overall success rates as of January and June 2021 against the actual performance of the group and the individual colleges.

2020/21 forecasts versus actuals

4.4.4	The Committee discussed the findings from this report at the SAR validation event and expressed concern about the slippage in relation to probationary observations and developmental lesson observations.
4.4.5	It was **RESOLVED** to note the Report.
5.	**REVIEW OF BOARD ASSURANCE RISK AREAS**
5.1	Members reviewed the two risk areas allocated to the committee and the assessment of the level of risk for each as shown below:

Risk Areas	Assurance	Risk Assessment		KPI	2022-23 Strategic Objectives
		Cross Reference to Risk Register	2021-22 Net Score for Risk Area		
Poor Ofsted or OfS/TEF Result		14,16,18	20	Student Experience and Outcomes	1. Enhance the quality of education across the Group, improving weaker provision and raising standards of teaching and learning in all areas
				Teaching and Learning	
Declining student numbers or either planned student targets not achieved or opportunities not realised		1,2,3a,3b,4	78	Student Participation	2. Establish an effective curriculum development strategy that assesses demand and delivers growth where it's needed by our stakeholders, working closely with employers and other partners and contributing to our Local Skills Improvement Plans
					6. Plan and deliver a set of signature changes to our digital practice, introducing new experiences for our students

5.2	The Committee had discussed these risks at the last meeting and agreed that both should be kept under review: • the risk attaching to a poor Ofsted result should be reviewed following the CSAR validation; • The risk relating to declining student numbers should be reviewed after the day 42 census figures and the improved enrolment figures this year.
5.3	The Committee felt that overall the risk level relating to a poor Ofsted result was correct.
5.4	RG confirmed that the risk score allocated to the risk around declining student numbers was reduced to 67 when 16-18 enrolment was above target. The risk relating to HE and Apprenticeship enrolment numbers will be reviewed later in the year.
5.5	It was **resolved**: That the Committee was satisfied that the risk level for each of the risks is correct at the moment and that sufficient controls and/or actions are being taken to manage these risks.
	DATE OF NEXT MEETING Next meeting to be held on Tuesday 31 January 2023 @ 5.30pm.
	The Chair thanked everyone for their time particularly thanking all governors and officers who attended the SAR validation for most of the day of this meeting. The meeting closed at 5.45pm. **Signed:** …………………………............Date:…………………………………

Action points		Responsible	Deadline	Signed off
1.	Progression destinations for students – report to future QLS meeting to review impact on progression of lower achievement rates including HNS	JM	March 23	
2.	Review attendance at next meeting	JOS	Nov 2022	
3.	Use the March 23 meeting to have a deep dive into the DTF	JM	March 2023	Agreed to move this to March 23 to allow MS (Link Gov) to attend
4.	Attendance to be an Agenda item at the next meeting.	JOS, JP-B	Jan 2023	