

**Minutes of the Learner Council Forum held on 9 February 2017 in the Cove, Dartford**

<b>Chair:</b>	Assistant Principal Teaching and Learning – Wendy Davies (“WD”)
<b>Members:</b>	Principal – David Gleed (“DG”) Deputy Principal – Rhiannon Hughes (“RH”) Student Engagement Assistant Dartford – Lorna Goddard (“LG”) Student Engagement Assistant Gravesend – Trevor Fox (“TF”)
<b>Student Reps:</b>	Harley Bates – Motor Vehicle (Gravesend) (“HB”) Rachel Bruce – Motor Vehicle (Gravesend) (“RB”) Ryan Clarke – HE Computing and Systems Development (Dartford) (“RC”) Jack Cornelius – Business (Dartford) (“JC”) Chloe Holness – Business (Dartford) (“CH”) Samantha Love – Catering (Gravesend) (“SL”) Skye Powell – Travel and Tourism (Dartford) (“SP”) Tabitha Whitaker-Fox – Catering (Gravesend) (“TWF”)
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Julian Parkes – College Governor (“JP”)
<b>Apology:</b>	Clerk to the Corporation – Yolanda Hughes (“YH”)
<b>Late Arrival:</b>	College Governor – Alex Lewsley (“AL”)

**Action By**

**1. Welcome**

WD welcomed learners to the meeting of the Learner Council Forum and introduced, JP, College Chair of Governors.

She asked everyone to introduce themselves around the table and advised that the focus of the meeting was to obtain feedback on students’ experience with regard to teaching and learning within the College. She added that CH had agreed to be a Student Governor at Dartford and Harley Bates was the Student Governor at Gravesend.

JP gave a brief overview of the College Governor role and explained that the Governors were selected from different sectors and walks of life (not FE related) to lend their experience and support to the College. He stressed that they were not here as part of the management team to dictate how the Principal and Deputy Principal managed the College. However, they offered support in an advisory capacity to assist the College in its strategy and moving forward. JP mentioned that his term of office as Chair would be finishing in the summer and Alex Lewsley would take over as Chair of Governors from September 2017 and would be involved in these meetings, going forward.

Members referred back to the points raised on the Dartford and Gravesend Learner Council Feedback Sheets below and additional comments raised at today’s meeting are noted in red on the sheets.

Feedback Sheet			
Dartford Council Final Points February 2017			
	Point raised	Suggested solution	Action By
1.	<p>The Canteen is always untidy and the food is often cold as the queue for food is too long. There needs to be more food variety and healthier options with cheaper options available to students. Also due to course times all being different we would like the shop and servery to be open longer giving more students the chance to get food and drink.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only 2 bins.</li> </ul>	<p>More bins need to be allocated in the canteen for students to use. Timetabling can be looked at for staggered lunches. Students need to be involved in the menu planning for their site. Canteen and shop to work around college timetables in opening hours.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DG confirmed that more bins could be provided in the Canteen area.</li> <li>The College would look into the issue of cleaning, but students also needed to take responsibility for keeping their environment clean.</li> <li>DG said that Rob (Senior Chef Manager) would be happy to meet with students to discuss menu planning.</li> </ul>	<p>DG to raise with VP F&amp;R</p> <p>DG to raise with VP F&amp;R Student Reps to promote to their peers the importance of clearing away and disposing of their food after meals and throwing rubbish into bins etc. LG to organise a meeting</p>
2.	<p>Please can there be a cash machine that is available on site, other than this can there be the option to pay by debit card, as there are issues with the card top up machines.</p>	<p>Please can we have a cash machine available to use in a central source. Can a debit card machine be allocated to Refectory, Costa and the shop? We have them to pay fees why not in the food areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DG proposed that PCs be placed in the Refectory, so students could use those machines to top up their cards</li> <li>DG said there were issues with card top ups – another option was to do it online</li> <li>DG asked students how they would feel if they were charged to draw money from cash machines. This has been looked at in the past and the College will find out how much it will cost and report back to members</li> </ul>	<p>DG to investigate and raise with VP F&amp;R</p>

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3.	Some toilets on site do not have mirrors in them, as well as this, the toilets are not always cleaned through the day leaving them in a state, also we would like Tampon Machines in the toilets, as we feel uncomfortable buying them in the shop.	<p>Estates to identify what toilets require mirrors replacing and replace them. A tampon machine would be beneficial for the female students and will help avoid possible embarrassment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DG confirmed that the College would arrange for Estates to add the provision of mirrors in toilets to their works schedule.</li> <li>The College does its best to provide cleaning, but it is also the responsibility of students to keep their areas clean and tidy and use the bins provided. Will arrange to put up signs in toilets asking students to keep areas tidy.</li> <li>DG agreed to provide more tampon machines around the College – first, need to find out where current machines are located and check how often they are replenished. Other machines could be located as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 in B Block near Hair &amp; Beauty</li> <li>1 in B Block Secretarial Department</li> <li>1 in S Block (Österburg Centre)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>DG to raise with VP F&amp;R</p> <p>DG to raise with VP F&amp;R LG and TF to appeal to students through the Student Union to keep areas tidy</p> <p>DG to raise with VP F&amp;R</p>
4.	Can each block have its own communal area allocated to it? Some students do not use the canteen for reasons stated above and would prefer to have a kettle and microwave in an area local to their studies.	<p>Each area to identify a room that can be used and purchase the required equipment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RH agreed that, in an ideal world, it would be a good idea for each block to have its own communal area. Unfortunately, however, there was no additional capacity across the College to have these communal areas.</li> </ul>	<p>DG will look into a possible solution. He said that some Colleges have a separate shop located away from the canteen. He will investigate moving the current shop and locating it in an alternative venue more</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LG added that students that brought up this issue was because they can't get to the canteen, as the break isn't long enough, canteen is too expensive and queues, so the reason for having a communal area was for them to get their food in there. RH said that, for health and safety reasons, having kettles around site for free use can't be advocated, due to the potential for accidents etc.</li> <li>• RH mentioned that the College did have vending machine facilities in various blocks for students to purchase sweets and chocolates. Students said that the prices were extortionate.</li> <li>• Students said that some areas like the Miskin and Hair &amp; Beauty worked late and they did not have anywhere to go for food and food was quite expensive in the canteens – no issue about quality, just price.</li> </ul>	<p>centrally across the campus. Different base to go to alleviate queues etc.</p> <p>DG said on the pricing front, the College was looking to offer a range of meals at different prices, which might help.</p>

Feedback Sheet			
Gravesend Council Final Points February 2017			
	Point raised	Suggested solution	Action By
1.	<p>There is no changing room for the 8 girls in our area, we have to share a disabled toilet whilst there are two changing rooms for the boys, one the rooms were female but the FE was crossed out. <b>There is no equality.</b> Some of the girls need to get fully changed when they arrive at college so it's not as easy as just putting on overalls when we arrive and need our own proper changing area. – <b>Motor Vehicle</b></p>	<p>A changing room needs to be provided for the female students, males having 2 and females having one disabled toilet is not fair.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RH thanked RB for her articulate explanation in respect of this issue and acknowledged that the situation was understandably unacceptable and apologised unreservedly for her experience.</li> <li>• RH said that she line managed Mark Andrews, Assistant Principal Business, Construction and Engineering, and they had both walked around the area with Andy Stevens. Presented a drawing plan and come up with a final design that provides a separate female changing room with benches and pegs. Currently, on the plan, there is no provision for a private cubicle within that area, but this could be considered. Talked about lockers – smaller ones for valuables like phones, purses etc. Two male changing areas would also be provided. Plan is not finalised yet, but staff agree that it has to be a comfortable experience for students.</li> <li>• JP queried why the female changing rooms were discontinued. RH said it was for a variety of reasons, including leaks in rooms, etc. Some of the things had not been thought through properly.</li> </ul> <p><i>AL arrived at this point.</i></p>	<p>RH to raise this point with MA. TF to organise an urgent meeting with MA for RB to attend to discuss these plans</p>

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2.	There needs to be better lighting at the bottom car park of the campus, as students <b>Do Not Feel Safe</b> when walking there of an evening. We often have students working late and as the only spaces are available there we need to feel safe when walking to our cars. Lights were provided on open evening so why not for the students all year round?	<p>Lights to be installed along walkway to car park and in the car park itself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DG confirmed that temporary lights would be erected in the bottom car park before the Open Day on 1 March.</li> <li>• LG mentioned that lighting had also been raised as an issue in the back car park near the golf course at the Dartford campus. DG confirmed that temporary lighting could be organised at Dartford to address this problem in the short term and also pot holes could be filled in as a temporary measure.</li> </ul>	<p>DG to raise with VP F&amp;R</p> <p>DG to raise with VP F&amp;R</p>
3.	We would like to have access at break times to the Gym and the swimming pool, as it seems it is <b>underused</b> and a facility going spare. This would help to create more activities for us to do on campus.	<p>We are willing to pay a monthly subscription to use the facilities (£5-£10) and would hope that it can be staffed and access allowed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DG explained that the swimming pool at Gravesend was now NMTC's facility, as they ran commercial courses and used the swimming pool for training. Consequently, it was difficult to schedule in use by students and the College would also need to employ life guards, which was an extra expense.</li> <li>• Issue with the Gym at Gravesend is that the front desk was not staffed. The Gym at Dartford was used as part of the Public Services course and there was a front desk there.</li> </ul>	

Feedback Sheet			
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4.	<b>Toilets / Plumbing</b> – There are many issues with the toilets and plumbing around the site that has been reported. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Leak in H Block Boys Toilets</li> <li>○ Ladies toilets in H Block not up to a good standard</li> <li>○ Toilet doors broken by Catering Department</li> <li>○ Water is either too hot or too cold in Hair</li> <li>○ No Hot water in Brick workshop</li> </ul>	Estates to look at the Jobs logged and try to help resolve these issues as they have been going on a long time.	DG said that H Block toilets were shared with Ifield School and agreed to raise this with VP F&R DG will raise this with Duncan Weetman DG will raise with VP F&R Issue with Brick workshop pump – will be resolved during Half Term
4.	There are many times that the College is being locked before students have finished their courses. Hair & Catering work after hours (sometimes up until 11pm), and security have often locked the main doors so they cannot leave, and there is no guard around. Also they lock the bottom car park gate meaning if we are parked down there we have to drive up the one way system to exit which has almost ended in accidents with others coming the correct way around the system.	Ensure students have actually finished before locking college, and shut gates after all cars have left. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● DG took on board TWF's concerns and confirmed that the College needed to make sure that there was communication between Curriculum and Security staff. It should be easy to arrange and have a system to check all students had left the building before locking up areas. In terms of car parking, DG said Security do shut the back gates – need to put up signs at certain points of day 'No Entry', so it solves this problem and lighting will help.</li> </ul>	DG agreed to raise this matter with VP F&R to talk to Security and CMs about this and make sure all the doors are left unlocked until everyone has left the building.  DG to raise with VP F&R

JP asked the learners, from a Governor's point of view, for their thoughts on how effective the Learning Council Forum was. TWF stated that it had proved to be a very useful medium in which to speak with the College management team face-to-face to discuss serious points that were important to learners. She felt it was much better than writing or emailing a complaint/issue remotely, as it was not possible to gauge the reaction from staff using those particular methods of communication.

WD concluded by thanking members for their attendance and contributions to the meeting.