



SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE AND STROUD COLLEGE
FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

Approved minutes of a meeting of South Gloucestershire and Stroud College
Further Education Corporation
Held on 25 January 2024
Via Microsoft Teams

Present:	Matt Atkinson	(Chair)
	Douglas Blackstock	
	Louise Bright	
	Sophie Chester-Glyn	
	Lynne Craig	
	Mike Croker	
	Phil Eames	
	Kevin Hamblin	(CEO & Executive Principal)
	Yusuf Ibrahim	
	Dave Merrett	
	Irene Molodtsov	
	Gary Parsons	
In Attendance:	Rich Aitken	(Director of Operational Finance)
	Gavin Murray	(Deputy Principal)
	Jude Saunderson	(Chief Financial Officer)
	Sara-Jane Watkins	(College Principal)
	Sharon Glover	(Clerk)

When asked, there were no requests to un-star any of the starred items.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Andres Garcia-Knight. Paul Farrell, Joe Griffin and Viridian Joseph did not attend the meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

The following declarations of interest were raised and noted:

As Directors of SGSCSL, interests were declared for Louise Bright, Kevin Hamblin, Dave Merrett and Jude Saunderson in agenda item 5a relating to the disposal of Berkeley.

As CEO and Trustees of SGS Academy Trust, interests were declared for Lynne Craig, Phil Eames and Kevin Hamblin in agenda item 14 relating to SGS Academy Trust.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held 30 November 2023 were approved as a correct record, ready for signing by the Chair.

In the third bullet point under item 8 of the minutes, the Chair referenced an increase in the number of staff that required support and clarified that this was as a result of an increase in new staff recruitment.

The Chair also reported that a meeting had been held with Foot Anstey to discuss the disposal of Berkeley and a checklist was requested in order for clarification of the steps needed to complete the transaction and track progress.

At the last meeting there was discussion about the inclusion of an overage in the Immersa lease and this will be picked up under item 5a. Confirmation has also been received that Immersa are content with the leasing of certain rooms in the John Huggett Engineering Hall to SGS Berkeley Green UTC.

4. **Corporation action log**

The Principal asked that the action for Moira Foster-Fitzgerald is carried forward.

In relation to the other action, the Deputy Principal confirmed there was confusion as there were two separate improvement plans for Apprenticeships and High Needs which have now been merged ready for presentation to the Learning & Quality Committee. Actions for SGS Create provision had not been included in the College Improvement Plan as, at the time, this provision had not existed.

5. **Strategic Update and Development**

- a) Confidential Item.
- b) Confidential Item.

6. **Performance Monitoring Report**

Members received the performance monitoring report and questions were invited. Members raised that the heading showing current actual or forecast was confusing. Clarification was received that some data is known i.e. 16-18 whereas other data is

not as clear. The Principal agreed that this needed to be made clearer in the report. Members were informed that there is growth with apprentices and the College is aiming to achieve target. In the last report pipeline data had been included where as the current report reflects numbers from the ILR. Members were assured that data is being closely monitored and members felt assured by this.

Members questioned the reason for the amber rating on adult funding and were informed that the ESFA funding is challenging, however, members were assured that there is provision for any under delivery. Members also questioned the Higher Education data and were informed that there is concern for some students suffering with mental health problems that may look to defer for a year. Assurance was provided that the College is taking actions to try and retain these learners. Members sought clarity on the 16-18 attendance target and questioned what this had been based on. Members were informed this was an aspirational target year average.

The Chair summarised that the RAG rating had been based on actual data, where available, together with management intuition.

The report was noted.

7. Diversity, Equity Inclusion & Belonging

- a) DEIB 2022/23 Annual Report - Members received the annual report and, following scrutiny, noted a reduction in learners participating in the Inclusion Committee. Members were informed this related to reduced learner numbers and there was an expectation that the percentage would increase when there is further knowledge about the Committee.

Following an email from the DEIB Link Governor, the Deputy Principal provided clarification on ethnicity and disability information within the report. Members were informed that much had been done to improve the staff ethnicity but gaps remain and the disability profile has widened.

Members were informed that the government has launched a consultation on draft gender questioning guidance. The College has taken the view of the AoC to maintain the status quo as the guidance requires considerable refinement. Should the guidance change then Corporation will be notified.

Following scrutiny of the data, members questioned the disability profile as the learner disability figures appeared to be on the high side. Members were informed that the data had been taken from the College's Management Information system and had also included those learners with high needs in order that funding can be received to make adjustments for these learners. When asked, confirmation was received that the College is doing enough for these learners but it would be helpful to include a definition of disability in the report. Members were informed that objectives had been added to improve the ratio of staff with disabilities. However,

the Deputy Principal agreed to double check the figures. Members raised the lack of diversity in the Senior Leadership Team and also asked for the dates of the REACH meetings. The Deputy Principal agreed to chase up dates.

- b) DEIB Strategy and Policy - Members were informed that there were no significant changes to the policy and DEIB strategy presented for approval. Members noted the breadth of activities and the Deputy Principal added there is greater awareness, particularly around unconscious bias, with a change in the mix of learners i.e. more 14-16 learners and those with disabilities. However, at the same time there is no growth in complaints/concerns. Members were informed that the College is a more inclusive organisation and the Chair raised that this is a question for the Inclusion Committee to consider.
- c) DEIB Link Governor feedback - The views of the Safeguarding/DEIB Link Governors were invited. Members were informed that the College is meeting its legal obligations and although on a journey, had come a long way. Having attended Inclusion Committee meetings, one of the Link Governors advised that the meetings are very inclusive, vocal and with good input. It was suggested that representatives from this Committee are invited to present at a Corporation meeting. It was suggested that the annual report also includes comments from the learners and the need to evidence all the great work in order to capture the impact was raised. Members questioned to what extent partnership working is happening both ways. Members were informed that the partnerships are contractual arrangements with reciprocal arrangements in place.

The report was noted and it was resolved:

- a) **To note the DEIB 2022/23 Annual Report, subject to changes raised.**
- b) **To approve the DEIB policy.**
- c) **To approve the DEIB Strategy.**

Action: Deputy Principal.

8. Staff Voice Report

Members received a report detailing the main themes per campus from the autumn staff forums. Members asked that the next report also includes what is working well. The Principal advised that there are many positives that hadn't been included in the report. Members were informed that Ofsted had issued questionnaires to staff and although the College won't see the outcomes there may be some key themes that arise in the governor meeting with the Ofsted Inspectors.

The report was noted.

9. Management Accounts

The Director of Operational Finance reported a favourable position against budget with no particular concerns to raise. Assurance was provided that apprenticeships and WECA Adult funding is being closely monitored.

Members were informed that revisions to the presentation of the Executive Summary are being developed and thanks were provided to Mike Croker for his helpful feedback.

Following scrutiny of the report, members questioned whether there are any concerns with the adjusted current ratio as showing red RAG rating but comments had been omitted. Members were assured that there were no concerns with year to date actuals and that this KPI had a limited use. Members discussed the apprenticeship forecast and were informed that over the last 12 months concerns had been raised in relation to apprenticeships and the challenge to recruit staff, which has now been addressed. In relation to electrical apprenticeships, additional starts have been delayed until April 2024. When asked, confirmation was received that the cash days expectations will be achieved and that all red RAG ratings are being managed.

The Chair congratulated the Director of Operational Finance on the birth of his baby girl and for taking time to attend the Corporation meeting.

The report was noted.

10. **Executive Report**

The Chair invited the Principal to provide an update on the Ofsted inspection due next week. The Principal advised that the Ofsted visit has been welcomed as the College has been working hard to address areas of concern. Staff are calm, prepared and working collectively, but are not complacent. The College is doing its best to ensure that staff feel comfortable and looked after. Gavin Murray and Pat Mcleod are the nominated College leads and have been involved in scoping areas with the inspectors. The Clerk has been involved in the planning meetings and communication to governors. There will be daily feedback sessions with Ofsted and the Principal will keep the Chair updated, especially with any emerging themes. On behalf of the Corporation, the Chair wished the College well with the inspection and confirmed that an email from the Corporation had been sent to staff wishing them well.

Members were informed that the College has been invited to join the West of England Institute of Technology and of its intent to become a member. The Chair proposed, and Corporation agreed, that this item is to be re-presented at a future Corporation meeting as there was not sufficient information at this stage on which to base a decision about College membership of the IoT.

The Principal reported that significant progress has been made on securing bids of strategic importance against regional and national priorities and their impact. Full details were available in the report.

The report was noted.

11. **Search Committee**

Confidential Item.

12. **Link Governor Role Description**

As an action on the External Governance Review action log, the Chair and Clerk had produced a generic Link Governor role description, that had also been reviewed by the current Link Governors. Corporation approval was sought to the role description and views invited on how Link Governors report back to Corporation. It was agreed to continue with the current reporting process whereby feedback is invited when the link topic is reported to Corporation

It was resolved:

To approve the Link Governor role description.

13. **Corporation Code of Conduct**

Revisions to the Code of Conduct for Corporation Members were presented for approval.

It was resolved:

To approve the Code of Conduct for Corporation Members.

14. **SGS Academy Trust**

The SGS Academy Trust Annual Report and Financial Statements were noted.

15. **SGS College Annual Report and consolidated Financial Statements**

The final signed off version of the SGS College Annual Report and consolidated Financial Statements were noted.

At this point the Staff Governor and members of the Executive Team and College staff were invited to leave the meeting. Kevin Hamblin was invited to remain in the meeting.

16. **Remuneration Committee**

Confidential Item.

17. **Confidentiality**

Members agreed that due to business and personal sensitivities, the disposal of Berkeley report (item 5a) and all of the Estates strategy reports (item 5b), Search Committee confidential minutes (item 11), Remuneration Committee minutes (item 16) and minutes 5a, 5b, 11 and 16 should be treated as confidential.

18. **Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 21 March 2024 at 5pm, WISE Campus.

The meeting commenced at 5.00pm.

Yusuf Ibrahim joined the meeting at 5.07pm (after item 4)

Lynne Craig left the meeting at 5.31pm (after item 5a)

Irene Molodtsov left the meeting at 6.00pm (during item 5b)

Rich Aitken, Gary Parsons, Jude Saunderson and Sara-Jane Watkins left the meeting at 6.45pm (after item 15)

Kevin Hamblin left the meeting at 6.53pm (during item 16)

The meeting closed at 7.07pm

The meeting was quorate.