



SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE AND STROUD COLLEGE
FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

Approved minutes of a meeting of South Gloucestershire and Stroud College
Further Education Corporation
Held on 28 March 2019
At WISE Campus, New Road, Stoke Gifford, Bristol

Present:	Moyra Pascoe	(Chair)
	Sophie Chester-Glyn	
	Mike Croker	
	Phil Eames	
	Roger Ellis	
	Sophie Green	
	David Hagg	
	Kevin Hamblin	(CEO & Executive Principal)
	Martin Jones	
	Dave Merrett	
Ben Short		
In Attendance:	Rich Aitken	(Head of Finance)
	Moira Foster-Fitzgerald	(Chief Group Services Officer)
	Gavin Murray	(Assistant Principal, Quality & Performance)
	Sara-Jane Watkins	(College Principal)
	Sharon Glover	(Clerk)

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from David Benson, Craig Dickinson, Joe Lamonby, Richard O'Doherty, Rokšana Paruzel, Jude Saunderson and Andy Slaney.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests declared.

3. **Other Items of Urgent Business**

There was no other items of urgent business.

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held 28 February 2019 were approved and signed as a correct record.

5. **Matters Arising From Those Minutes**

- a) Actions on the Corporation action log were monitored and updates provided.

6. **Remuneration Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held 18 Mar 19 were noted.

- a) AoC Code of Good Governance amendment and The Colleges' Senior Post Holder Remuneration Code – Members were informed of changes to the AoC Code of Good Governance and the introduction of a Senior Post Holder Remuneration Code. Following review by the Remuneration Committee, the Committee was recommending that Corporation considers adoption of the amendments and the new Code. Should the Code be adopted then further work will be required by the Remuneration Committee relating to the introduction of a Remuneration Annual Report to the Corporation. Consideration will also need to be given as to whether the Committee continues to have oversight for all of the Executive Team or revert back to focus on Senior Postholders. The Corporation saw no reason why not to adopt the Code as considered good governance practice.

It was resolved:

To adopt the amendments to the AoC Code of Good Governance and adopt The Colleges' Senior Post Holder Remuneration Code.

At this point the CEO & Executive Principal and Staff Member were invited to leave the meeting.

- b) Confidential Item.

At this point the CEO & Executive Principal, College Principal, Staff Member and Assistant Principal Quality & Performance joined the meeting.

The Chair advised that she would be bringing forward agenda items 9 and 16 to allow the early departure of the Chief Group Services Officer.

7. **HR Policies (Agenda Item 9)**

Members were presented with a selection of HR policies for approval. Members were informed that each policy was accompanied by a notification of changes document for ease of review. Members questioned whether a 3-yearly review cycle was too long. Members were assured that any legislative changes to policies resulted in an immediate review and some key policies i.e. safeguarding are presented for approval on an annual basis.

It was resolved:

To approve the following policies and procedures; Anti-Bullying and Harassment (Staff), Adoption, Capability, Disciplinary, Grievance, Investigation Guidelines, Maternity, Paternity, Shared Parental Leave, Code of Conduct (Staff), and Redundancy.

8. **Gender Pay (Agenda Item 16)**

Members received the Gender Pay report for publication. Members were surprised by the higher proportion of female to male staff and were informed that the College has always had a significant proportion of females working at the College.

The report was noted.

9. **CEO & Executive Principal's Report (Agenda Item 7)**

Confidential Item.

10. **Principal's Report (Agenda Item 8)**

The Principal reported on the following:

- a) Drop in disadvantaged funding challenge to ESFA – 16-18 allocation is of concern and a formal challenge has been submitted to the ESFA regarding the College's drop in disadvantaged funding. The AoC has used the College's business plan as an exemplar. Although the ESFA has confirmed it was their error the College will not receive confirmation of funding until early June.
- b) Apprenticeship non-levy over delivery – There was concern about the lack of certainty as to whether the ESFA would fund all of the College's over delivery. However, confirmation has now been received that for the current contract (ending 1 April 2019) they are now in a position to fund over-delivery from January 2018 to March 2019. For 1 April 2019 – 1 April 2020 inadequate funding has been allocated based on the November return for apprenticeships. The ESFA has reassured the College that they will review the College's April return and the College will be submitting a business case to lobby for further funding.

- c) Re-application to the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers – There is a need to re-apply to the Register of Apprenticeship Training Providers. This is not a light touch approach and places additional pressure on already stretched staff. This is a high risk area and a significant piece of pressured and important work.
- d) Award to DTS of the ESFA ESF NEET contract for the West of England LEP area challenge to the ESFA – As a pragmatic way forward, and to enable some delivery to learners, the College has agreed to sub-contract with DTS. The Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee (Phil Eames) reported that he had reviewed the bid, appeal and letters from the ESFA and advised that the College had submitted a robust and comprehensive bid and the appeal made relevant points. In terms of whether to enter into the sub-contract is an operational decision however, this highlighted that the College doesn't undertake upward due diligence and there is a risk if the main contractor becomes insolvent as there is no reliance on ESFA due diligence. Reference was made to an AoC publication stating there is no reliance on the funding agency and it is for each College to undertake their own due diligence. It was raised that the government undertake due diligence prior to awarding the contract as it is a national contract and tender process and it is questionable whether the College has the capacity to undertake further due diligence on top of this. Members raised the need to provide a duty of care to its learners and that for significant contracts some form of due diligence is undertaken as there is a need to follow AoC guidance or have a good reason why not. Some members were surprised about the AoC guidance as the government award the contract. Members were informed that this subject was discussed at the recent Audit Committee meeting and of the need for the Corporation to be aware of the financial exposure. The College Principal agreed to raise this matter with the AoC as there was concern that the College doesn't have the time or funding to undertake further due diligence. It was suggested that when contracts are presented to Corporation it is decided at that stage whether further due diligence is deemed necessary.
- e) Destination for Leavers in Higher Education survey data – SGS has received a score of 98.6% in the Employment or Further Study Metric of TEF Year 4. The metric measures the number of learners who report that they are in employment or further study six months after they complete their Higher Education studies. This placed SGS in the top 10% of all HE providers in this metric and was 3.8% above expected performance benchmark. Members asked if there were any statistics on graduate or professional occupations and the Assistant Principal, Quality & Performance agreed to provide.
- f) ConText launch – ConText is a Higher Education student driven journal produced at the Bristol School of Art, Queens Road. This year it has an official ISBN number and will be stored in the British Library.
- g) Exclusions – Currently there are 20 suspensions and 8 exclusions and staff are feeling more supported with regards to behaviour management within the College.

- h) The Principal tabled a briefing note to illustrate the change in learner profile and recruitment trends since 2014/15. Members questioned whether the College had lost learners to SGS Berkeley Green UTC and were informed that the UTC offer is different from that of the College's offer.

The report was noted.

**Action: College Principal.
Assistant Principal, Quality & Performance.**

11. **Management Information (Agenda Item 10)**

- a) (i) Financial Strategy – Confidential Item.
- (ii) Investment Strategy – Members raised the demand on Information Technology and were informed that digital had been ring-fenced and learners are encouraged to bring in their own devices.

**It was resolved:
To approve the Investment Strategy.**

- b) Management Accounts exception report - The Head of Finance presented the report, including the current forecast surplus which is a favourable variance to budget due to the high level of vacancies. Cash flow is also reporting a healthy position. Members raised a decline in the 2018/19 forecast financial health grade that was reported as “satisfactory”. Members were informed this was an error that would be rectified for the next report. Members sought and received assurance that the year-end financial health grade will be “good” and that no remedial action is required.

The report was noted.

- c) KPI report – The Assistant Principal Quality & Performance reported that overall College retention was higher than in previous years. Although a drop is expected the outcome will still be higher than last year. Members congratulated the College on the excellent result. English and Maths attendance remains of concern but is comparable with other Colleges. Members were informed that Colleges are dealing with issue not picked up by Schools and as some students are taking longer to achieve this impacts on funding and results in funding reductions.

Members were informed of an error on the governors' dashboard relating to application data and additional data was tabled and presented at the meeting. There was comfort with the Higher Education applications and data will be provided next time.

The report was noted.

d) RCU Sunburst Report – Members were informed that this report was not yet available and would be carried forward to a future meeting.

12. **Progress against College Quality Improvement Plan, including the Higher Education HE QIP (Agenda Item 11)**

The Assistant Principal presented the report and advised that expected progress is being made. Satisfaction levels are improving and over 90% annual conversations have been deployed. Higher Education are reporting positive destinations and are fully registered to provide disability support.

The report was noted.

13. **Student Member report (Agenda Item 12)**

Members noted that this agenda item is to be carried forward.

14. **Curriculum Strategy, including the Higher Education Strategy (Agenda Item 13)**

The College Principal reported that the Curriculum Strategy is presented following the curriculum conference and reflects the requirements of the Local Enterprise Partnerships' Industrial Strategy.

It was resolved:

To approve the Curriculum Strategy, including the Higher Education Strategy.

15. **Ecotricity Roof Top Solar PV at WISE Campus (Agenda Item 14)**

Members were informed that this agenda item is to be carried forward.

16. **Strategic Property Group (Agenda Item 15)**

Confidential Item.

17. **Curriculum Conference**

Members received a report on the Curriculum Conference held 7 March 2019.

The report was noted.

18. **Corporation Seal**

The application of the Corporation Seal to the Lease relating to part ground floor of the John Huggett Engineering Hall and Licence for Alterations (Minor Works) was noted.

19. **Confidentiality**

Members agreed that due to personal and business sensitivities the Remuneration Committee confidential minutes, agenda items 6b, CEO & Executive Principal's report (item 9), Financial Strategy (item 11 a) (i)), Strategic Property Group minutes and Growth Hub business case (item 16), Curriculum Conference notes (item 17) and minutes 6b, 9a-f, 11 a) (i) and 16 are to be treated as confidential.

20. **Assessment of meeting**

A summary of feedback in relation to the meeting held 28 Feb 19 was received. The Clerk distributed forms to members so that an assessment of the Corporation meeting could be undertaken.

The Chair reported that taking on board feedback from the last meeting she had asked the Executive Team to try and keep reports to 2 x A4 sides. There will also be an assumption that the reports have been read in advance by Corporation members in order that time at the meeting can be focused on strategic discussions.

21. **Any Other Business**

Members were informed that HE/FE/19+ funding was to be discussed on Radio 4 at 11am on 29 March.

22. **Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 25 April 2019 at 5pm, Stroud Campus.

The meeting commenced at 5.00pm.

Roger Ellis joined the meeting at 5.05pm (after item 5)

Sara-Jane Watkins and Gavin Murray joined the meeting at 5.25pm (after item 6b)

Rich Aitken joined the meeting at 5.27pm (during item 7)

Moira Foster-Fitzgerald left the meeting at 5.30pm (after item 8)

Sophie Chester-Glyn joined the meeting at 5.35pm (during item 9)

Martin Jones left the meeting at 6.30pm (after item 11 a) (i))

The meeting closed at 6.58pm.

The meeting was quorate.