



**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 April 2019  
At Stroud Campus, Stratford Road, Stroud, Gloucestershire

<b>Present:</b>	Martin Jones	(Chair)
	Mike Croker	
	Craig Dickinson	
	Phil Eames	
	David Hagg	
	Kevin Hamblin	(CEO & Executive Principal)
	Joe Lamonby	
	Dave Merrett	
	Richard O'Doherty	
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Rich Aitken	(Head of Finance)
	Gavin Murray	(Assistant Principal, Quality & Performance)
	Andy Slaney	(Chief Operations Officer, Commercial & Estates)
	Sara-Jane Watkins	(College Principal)
	Sharon Glover	(Clerk)

The Chair opened the meeting by explaining that he would be chairing the meeting in the absence of the Chair of the Corporation due to ill health. He also mentioned that he would be rearranging the order of the agenda items to allow for the later arrival of the Assistant Principal Quality & Performance.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Sophie Chester-Glyn, Roger Ellis, Moira Foster-Fitzgerald, Sophie Green, Roksana Paruzel, Moyra Pascoe, Jude Saunderson and Ben Short. David Benson did not attend the meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

As Directors of SGS Commercial Services Limited, declarations of interest were raised by David Hagg, Kevin Hamblin, Martin Jones and Andy Slaney, in agenda item 7, Other Items of Urgent Business.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting (Agenda Item 4)**

One typographical error was raised under minute 10b in that the word “uncertainty” should be “certainty”.

Subject to that one change, the minutes of the meeting held 28 March 2019 were approved and signed as a correct record.

4. **Matters Arising From Those Minutes (Agenda Item 5)**

- a) Actions on the Corporation action log were monitored and updates provided.
- b) HE Learner Destinations – members received a report on learner destinations mapped against common job types. When asked about graduate data, members were informed that a comprehensive learner destination report is an agenda item for the next meeting and would be picked up as part of that report.

5. **CEO & Executive Principal’s Report (Agenda Item 6)**

Confidential Item.

6. **Principal’s Report (Agenda Item 7)**

- a) Confidential Item.
- b) Members received the Principal’s report covering Westminster Hall debate; Apprenticeship Allocation 2019/20; Office for Students update; Financial reporting to ESFA and data provided back to Colleges; Bids/Tender tracker and Exclusions, and questions were invited.

Members referred to the Office for Students update and the College’s concerns should OfS decide to calculate student numbers on Non Prescribed HE provision due to the inequity of costs compared to larger institutions. Members were informed that the AoC is being lobbied about this concern.

Members referred to the bid tracker and questioned how the College’s success compares to others and the College’s reputation. Members were informed that

the College is very highly regarded by Bristol City Council and the College had been very fortunate with many ESF projects. However, this is proving more challenging as the College is in competition with national providers. Colleges are also struggling with the bureaucracy of the apprenticeship provision and of the need for the AoC to support Colleges.

7. **Other Items of Urgent Business (Agenda Item 3)**

Confidential Item.

8. **Management Information**

- a) **Management Accounts exception report** – The Head of Finance presented the report and confirmed that the error relating to reference to “satisfactory” financial health had now been rectified. It was reported that there is little change from the February management accounts and the next set of accounts will reflect the updated reforecast. Members discussed the ESF contract in relation to the expiry date and funding received versus forecast and were assured that sufficient provision had been made and that there was comfort with the accounts. Members also discussed the apprenticeship KPIs and assurance was received that there was comfort with the level of income forecast. Members were informed that the local apprenticeship tracking system was considered to be more reliable than the government systems as there is always a data lag. Members suggested it would be helpful to have some narrative under power BI data as it refers to December.

**The report was noted.**

- b) **Primary Risk Registers (including SGSCSL)** (Agenda Item 8c) - Members received the primary risk registers, including new risks relating to financial concerns and any mitigations. The Chair of the Audit Committee informed of discussions held at the Audit Committee and of the need to supplement the individual financial risks with an overarching risk relating to finance as once aggregated the cumulative position is a higher risk that is not necessarily evident in the current risk register.

**The report was noted.**

**Action: College Principal.**

9. **Student Member report**

Members received the report and expressed disappointment that the Student Member was unable to attend the meeting as her input would be welcome.

**The report was noted.**

10. **Learner Charter, Behaviour Policy, FE & HE Learner Code of Conduct and Associated student rules and procedures**

The Principal presented the report and informed that few changes had been made and were mainly in light of GDPR. It was reported that there are 9 permanent exclusions with a simplified process now in place. Members raised that the documents were wordy and read more like formal contracts. They questioned how comprehensible and acceptable they are to students. Members were informed that tutors present the documents as part of the induction which is adapted depending upon the level of students taught. The Staff Member confirmed that the expected level of behaviour is made clear to students. Members asked whether the latest review involved any consultation and the Principal agreed to establish and report back.

**The report was noted and it was resolved:**

**To approve the Learner Charter and FE Learner Codes of Conduct, Behaviour policy and procedure, Higher Education and Professional Student Code of Conduct and to note the Learner Attendance, Punctuality and Retention procedure.**

**Action: College Principal.**

11. **Audit Committee (Agenda Item 12)**

Minutes of the meeting held 21 Mar 19 were noted. The Chair of the Audit Committee (Mike Croker) reported the following:

- a) The Committee received a demonstration of the Smart Assessor tool, although the tool is not yet fully implemented. RSM will be undertaking a further review of Apprenticeships.
- b) Various internal audit reports were considered by the Committee and in particular the GDPR report was remarkably positive. The Higher Education and Professional areas report was presented and the Assistant Principal has been invited to attend the next meeting to provide her perspective on the report.
- c) Arrangements for cover in the absence of the Chief Financial Officer had been discussed and assurances received. The continuing risk is the number of vacancies within the Finance Department. Thanks were recorded to the Head of Finance for all of his hard work.
- d) The Committee reviewed the full risk registers for SGS and SGSCSL and an update of action dates was requested.
- e) Following review of various financial policies, the Anti-Money Laundering, Treasury Management, Whistleblowing and Declarations of Interest policies are being recommended to Corporation for approval. The Chair raised the following questions received via email from an absent Corporation member:
  - In the Anti-Money laundering policy it states Jude Saunderson as the MLRO and it was questioned how this has been covered in her absence. Members were informed that a succession plan of duties is in

place and emails to the Chief Financial Officer are opened by her PA with the College Principal and Head of Finance providing cover in her absence.

- It was surprising that raising whistleblowing concerns via email was not an option. Following discussion it was agreed that the policy should be modified in order to allow the raising of whistleblowing concerns via email and that these should be submitted direct to the Chief Group Services Officer. Staff should be encouraged to raise concerns and that a member of staff should monitor their receipt.
- The question of training for staff on anti-money laundering, data protection etc was raised and whether training completion and rates are monitored. Members were informed that there was no training in place for money laundering but there was for data protection. The Principal agreed to investigate whether anti-fraud training is provided.

**It was resolved:**

**To approve the Anti-Money Laundering, Treasury Management, Declarations of Interest policies and to approve the Whistleblowing policy subject to the inclusion of the option of email contact to raise concerns.**

**Action: College Principal.**

12. **KPI report (Agenda Item 8b)**

The Assistant Principal reported that there are no indicators suggesting that performance will be worse this year and that a small improvement is predicted. Retention for all groups is high, higher than the national average. The only exception being attendance in English and Maths, which is lower than target but not lower than the sector. Members concurred that retention is excellent and that overall the figures are pleasing.

**The report was noted.**

13. **Benchmarking / Trend Analysis (Agenda Item 11)**

The Assistant Principal presented the benchmarking report, drawn from the nationally published achievement rates of other General Further Education institutions operating in and around the South West. The following was reported:

- A steady improvement over 3 years has been made in 16-18 and Adult and is now 7.5% above the College's nearest competitor.
- The achievement rate for 16-18 year olds in 2017/18 was 86%, 8.2% above the average for all institution types with the South West LEP and 3.2% above the national average achievement rate for 16-18 year olds.
- For GCSE English and Maths the College performed well given the size of the cohort compared to the College's nearest competitors, even though English and Maths continues to be challenging. Members questioned why these subjects draw high numbers of learners and were informed that these learners are from lower

performing secondary schools and at Stroud Campus the better performing learners are being retained by the schools. There is an increasing ratio of learners re-sitting their GCSEs as learners are staying longer at College but they attract less funding once they reach 18. Members noted that apprenticeships need improving; however it was recognised that processes are in place to address issues. Members were also informed of the high numbers of apprenticeships on construction and engineering, which are the lowest performing areas nationally. Members discussed the achievement rates of other Colleges and whether anything can be learnt from these institutions. Members were informed of the fast growth of apprenticeships at the College and that there is continuous learning in this respect. Members suggested that best practice is pursued in the best possible way and on a like-for-like basis.

**The report was noted.**

14. **Search Committee (Agenda Item 13)**

Minutes of the meeting held 3 Apr 19 were noted. The Vice-Chair of the Search Committee (Martin Jones) reported the following:

- a) The Chair of the Search Committee (Prue Taylour) has tendered her resignation with immediate effect due to personal and practical reasons. As part of succession planning, Laura Boutle (External Co-Opted Member) had been identified as her successor. Corporation approval of the appointment of Laura Boutle as Chair of the Search Committee was sought.

**It was resolved:**

**To appoint Laura Boutle, as Prue Taylour's successor, as Chair of the Search Committee with immediate effect.**

- b) Following consideration of the re-appointment of the Audit Committee Co-opted member, the Search Committee are recommending re-appointment at the end of her first year of office for a further 3 years to complete her 4 year term of office.

**It was resolved:**

**To approve the re-appointment of Sally Flett (Audit Committee Co-Opted Member) at the end of her first year of office, for a further 3 years to complete her 4 year term of office.**

- c) Confidential Item.

15. **Review of Governance SAR action plan (Agenda Item 14)**

Members received a progress report against the Governance action plan.

**The report and progress against the Governance action plan was noted.**

16. **Safeguarding, Children Protection and Vulnerable Adults Policy (Agenda Item 15)**

Members received an updated policy and the main changes were contained in the covering report. It was suggested, in the report, that the policy review period is shortened to allow for the review cycle to align with the presentation of the annual safeguarding report to Corporation.

**It was resolved:**

**To approve the Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy and Procedure and to agree a shortened review period to allow for the review cycle to align with the presentation of the annual safeguarding report to Corporation.**

17. **Confidentiality (Agenda Item 16)**

Members agreed that due business sensitivities the Item of Urgent Business (item 7), CEO & Executive Principal's report (item 5), confidential part of the Principal's report and appendix (item 6), Confidential Search Committee minutes (item 14) and minutes 5a, 6a, 7 and 14c are to be treated as confidential.

18. **Assessment of meeting (Agenda Item 17)**

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

19. **Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 18)**

Thursday 6 June 2019 at 5pm, Berkeley Campus.

Members were reminded that a tour of Berkeley campus would be taking place at 4.00pm, prior to the Corporation meeting.

The meeting commenced at 5.00pm.

Gavin Murray joined the meeting at 6.15pm (during item 11)

Rich Aitken left the meeting at 6.25pm (after item 11)

The meeting closed at 6.45pm.

The meeting was quorate.