



**SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE AND STROUD COLLEGE**  
**FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION**

Approved minutes of a meeting of South Gloucestershire and Stroud College  
Further Education Corporation  
Held on 7 November 2019  
At WISE Campus, New Road, Stoke Gifford, Bristol

<b>Present:</b>	Moyra Pascoe	(Chair)
	David Benson	
	Sophie Chester-Glyn	
	Mike Croker	
	Matt Davis	
	Carly Dyson	
	Phil Eames	
	Sophie Green	
	David Hagg	
	Kevin Hamblin	(CEO & Executive Principal)
	Martin Jones	
	Joe Lamonby	
	Dave Merrett	
	Richard O'Doherty	
Ben Short		
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Rich Aitken	(Head of Finance)
	Moira Foster-Fitzgerald	(Chief Group Services Officer)
	Kelly Gillett	(Assistant Principal, HE & Adult)
	Gavin Murray	(Assistant Principal, Quality & Performance)
	Sharon Glover	(Clerk)

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming Matt Davis (Staff Member) to his first meeting of the Corporation. Also welcomed was Kelly Gillett (Assistant Principal Higher Education and Adult) who will be presenting the Higher Education report in the absence of the College Principal.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Jude Saunderson, Andy Slaney and Sara-Jane Watkins. Charlotte Argust, Roger Ellis and Juno Sharrock did not attend the meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

The following new declarations of interest were reported and noted:

Sophie Chester-Glyn: Director of Coproduce Care CIC

David Hagg: The addition of “Council Member” to his existing declaration of interest as Chair, South West Regional Advisory Board, Canal and River Trust.

Ben Short: Employed Director of Royds Withy King (law firm) and Member of British Computer Society (BCS).

Declarations of Interests were also raised for Martin Jones, Moyra Pascoe and Ben Short in agenda item 14 and Martin Jones and Richard O’Doherty in agenda item 20.

3. **Other Items of Urgent Business**

There were no other items of urgent business received.

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held 10 October 2019 were approved and signed as a correct record.

5. **Matters Arising From Those Minutes**

- a) Members noted an updated Health & Safety report. In the absence of the Chief Operations Officer the Clerk reported that the Health & Safety report had been revised to rectify a typographical error of the numbers on the training attributable to Office Ergonomics. It was also confirmed that the comparative incident data was correct and that the claim, at the last meeting, to have seen a fall in incidents was incorrect. The reasons for this increase will be investigated at the next Health and Safety meeting.
- b) Actions on the Corporation action log were monitored. The Clerk reported that the Principal felt there to be a low uptake of interest in the Staff Governor vacancy due to commitment required and the fact that many staff have busy lives. The Assistant Principal HE & Adult reported that this will be raised at the next staff forum. The communication channels were also discussed and, although well communicated, it was suggested that the benefits of the role should be expanded and promoted. It was suggested that the new Staff Governor works with the Clerk to revise the current advertisement.

The Chief Group Services Officer confirmed that the pay multiple comparisons against the median of all staff in the Remuneration Annual Report did relate to the full time equivalent staff median.

The Head of Finance reported that there was no need to create a special reserve for staff pay awards as the pay award was accepted by KPMG as an accrual in the 2018/19 accounts. The CEO & Executive Principal reported that it should be standard practice that non-consolidated pay awards are considered when positive surpluses achieved.

The Clerk also reported, on behalf of the Chief Operations Officer, that having read the UN Sustainable Development Goals he will be discussing their use with the Sustainability Group and will report back thereafter.

**Action: Matt Davis (Staff Governor) and the Clerk.**

## 6. **Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Annual Report**

The Chief Group Services Officer presented the report. It was reported that for over 90% of the student population there are no safeguarding concerns. There are many learners where single concerns and, some with multiple concerns, arise and it was hoped that the report was able to contextualise the issues especially with an improvement in capturing and reporting concerns.

Members questioned whether the safeguarding team is adequately resourced to cope with their workload. The Chief Group Services Officer reported that there had been no reduction in the Wellbeing Team as a result of the recent restructure and, when assessed, some of the issues raised do not relate to safeguarding. The team structure has improved with enhanced ways of working and systems of support now in place. The work of the team though is not helped by the multi-sited geography of the College and the differing auditing requirements. Members also raised the need to look after the welfare of staff working on the team as they are involved in upsetting instances.

Members questioned whether an outcomes report exists and it was reported that the College is looking at linking student records and My Concern to understand the information received about the students. The next phase is to focus on the need to evidence adding value whilst accepting that for some interventions the outcomes will not be known. Although good statistics provided in the report members did not feel assured that some of the issues had been combatted, for example, the ethnic groups at WISE campus. Confirmation was received that there is no ethnic bias and that the

data just reflects the nature of this campus and no concerns were raised. Members suggested a focus group is held with students to demonstrate a 360 degree approach. The Chief Group Services Officer confirmed that a section 175 audit had been completed and the action plan can be shared with governors. It was suggested that the Clerk adds this to the Document Library on Convene.

Members also raised that the report doesn't provide a view on the effectiveness of the interventions. Due to the infancy of data reporting there is now a move towards focusing on triangulating data with the intent to produce further data and trends going forward. Members appreciated that it is difficult to anonymise outcomes and that there is a risk that individuals can be identified. The visibility of numbers was considered to be good and the consistency of approach and application provides confidence in the way situations are being handled.

The Chief Group Services Officer reported the development of a triage guide which is now available on My Concern and can be shared with governors. The Wellbeing Team also hold calibration meetings. Members suggested consideration of the development of some measures to assess if actions are taken within required timescales and that staff have received the appropriate training. It was also suggested that the ethnicity groups are broken down to understand whether any trends are emerging. The Chief Group Services Officer responded that there are so many groups within the ethnicity category, with small numbers, that the benefit of reporting would be questionable. Members suggested that due to the mix of ethnicity at the Bristol campuses it would be helpful to understand the issues and whether any particular groups are affected and how the issues have been resolved. In addition any success stories would be useful to share provided they are on an anonymous basis.

**The report was noted.**

**Action: Chief Group Services Officer / Clerk.**

## 7. **Higher Education**

The Assistant Principal Higher Education & Adult presented the report, which included progress against the 2018/19 Quality Development Plan, 2018/19 Annual Review, 2019/20 Quality Development Plan, Monitoring OFFA Targets and Milestones for 2018/19. Also attached to the report were two regulatory advice guidance produced by the Office for Students.

It was reported that the move from HEFCE to OfS has created a lot of change in HE during the transitional period. The Assistant Principal reported that recruitment had increased slightly against a declining market with an increase in NSS results which is reflective of feedback from the student voice. Members raised that there was confused

data in the executive summary and Annual Review report and asked that the Assistant Principal reviews. The Assistant Principal was congratulated on the improvements and it was suggested that benchmark data is included in the report together with intake by level and by course in order to have an appreciation of the efficiency of delivery.

Members questioned destination data and whether the College has any sense for those learners at Level 6 progressing into graduate employment. Members were informed that the data is high and the graduate data is reflective of the curriculum.

Members questioned the current recruitment levels and although behind the target set in the original 3 year business plan they are on target for the current business plan and in budget.

Members were informed that there is no longer a requirement for the Corporation to approve an OfS assurance statement but there has been the introduction of an access and participation plan annual return, the templates of which had not yet been received from the OfS. Delegated authority was sought for the Group CEO & Executive Principal, as the Accountable Officer for OfS, to authorise the OFFA Access and Participation plan return in January 2020.

Members questioned whether there is a move to increase the HE fees to £9250. The Assistant Principal reported that there are no plans currently to increase the fees as the pricing was considered to be fair for the market and of the need not to currently outprice the College from the market. The CEO & Executive Principal also commented that the direction of HE would need to be reviewed as part of agenda item 20 later in the meeting.

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

- a) **To note the Higher Education Annual Review and Quality Improvement Plan 2019/20 to be made available to the Quality Assurance Agency if requested.**
- b) **Delegate authority to the Group CEO & Executive Principal as the Accounting Officer for OfS to approve the OFFA Access and Participation plan return.**
- c) **To approve the 6 targets in the report for inclusion and monitoring as part of the usual KPI reporting.**

**Action: Assistant Principal, HE & Adult.**

8. **CEO & Executive Principal's Report**

Members noted that this report is to be carried forward to the next meeting.

## 9. Principal's Report

In the absence of the College Principal, the Assistant Principal Quality & Performance reported on the following key points:

- a) Golden thread and Deep Delves – Under the new Ofsted Education Inspection Framework, more is needed to do in terms of the “holistic experience” of learners and to have a greater focus on the impact of the provision delivered and how that enables the learners to have the knowledge that they require to progress. Opportunities for the Corporation to contribute and test what is happening within the College were presented. Communication of dates for the various activities will be issued to governors together with a learner walk guide which is currently in development.
- b) TES application – The College has been nominated for a TES award using the introduction of the TEAMS system.
- c) Sub-contracting the delivery of education and training using ESFA post-16 funds – Following a letter from the ESFA Chief Executive, appended to the report, relating to the control from providers over subcontracted provision SGS has made the necessary changes and have duly signed as requested. A revised sub-contracting policy was presented to Corporation for approval.
- d) Recruitment – There has been an increase of recruitment of 16-18 full time learners this year which will have a positive impact on funding, dependent upon the December returns to the ESFA.
- e) Office for Students – Along with 250 other providers the College failed to pay the annual fee to the QAA by the required deadline. This was due to the lack of clarity around the status of the fee. To resolve this issue the Corporation is being asked to record as an action that this regulatory fee deadline is added to the College's payment and returns schedule to ensure full compliance going forward.
- f) The content of the report also covered the Staff Conference, AoC South West Board vacancy, Increase in Adult Funding 2019/20, 2019/20 pay award, ESFA's new financial model and financial health ratings, Annual Conversations update, ESFA Chief Executive's letter to College Chair's relating to Bournville College investigation and College exclusions and suspensions. The recommendations in the Principal's report were also presented by the Assistant Principal. The Chair raised that no learners had been permanently excluded and tends to be behaviour issues which the College have under control.

Following consideration of the recommendations the Corporation agreed that the Audit Committee should be tasked to review the recommendations arising

from the Bournville College review and provide assurance to the Corporation. The Corporation also raised discontent with the delay in ESFA's communication of the new financial model which hinders the Corporation's ability to do its job properly and that recommendation 5 should be revisited at the December Corporation meeting. The Chair advised that the Principal has chased the ESFA and a response is awaited.

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

- a) **To approve the 2019/20 Sub-contracting policy.**
- b) **To approve the 2019/20 1% cost of living pay award to staff (excluding Senior Post Holders (including the Clerk) and members of the Executive Team) to be paid in December and backdated to 1 August 2019.**
- c) **To task the Audit Committee to review the ESFA letter regarding the Bournville College investigation and provide assurance to the Corporation.**
- d) **To note the Office for Students letter and to ensure that their regulatory fee deadline be added to the College's payment and returns schedule.**

10. **Management Information**

- a) Management Accounts Exception Report – The Head of Finance reported an error in the current ratio, as raised by one of the Corporation Members, and confirmed that this had been a formula error that had now been corrected and there is no concern re: liquidity and the financial health score is at the top end of good. Confirmation was also received that there is now a table showing a 24 month cash flow in the management accounts but had been excluded from the condensed version on Convene. This will be addressed going forward. The value of production of a 24 month cash flow was questioned when Colleges do not know their funding position that far in advance. The Head of Finance advised that the information is prepared as part of the 2-year financial plan and governors felt that this information would provide them with an opportunity to take action sooner rather than later. However, earlier notification of funding would be helpful for planning purposes and members questioned whether the AoC was taking this forward with the ESFA. It was reported that although this had been raised previously the funding pot for the Further Education sector is traditionally dipped into for School funding. Members raised that 50% of national Colleges are in deficit so how can they plan if only receive funding settlements for one year. Members asked that the CEO & Executive Principal contact the AoC South West Regional Director in this respect and also to contact the Chief Executive of the AoC and also raise the delay in production of the new financial templates and the impact this is having on Colleges.

The Head of Finance reported a healthy cash flow for March /April, which is traditionally a time when cash flow dips. The overall forecast surplus against

budget was also reported and assurance provided that there was no cause for concern.

Members raised confusion with the inclusion of the current budget in the management accounts as the management accounts should be reporting against the budget approved by the Corporation with any deviations reported and approved. It was suggested that the “live” budget is used for internal monitoring and not presented to Corporation to alleviate any confusion and that any revised forecasts should be presented for Corporation approval, if needed.

**The report is noted.**

**Action: CEO & Executive Principal.**

- b) Final 2018/19 KPI report – The Assistant Principal reported that retention closed at 2% above the benchmark rate for GFE. The pass rate for those retained was 0.7% above the benchmark and the achievement rate was 2.5% above benchmark, placing the College back into the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile which has been achieved one year earlier in the College’s journey to an outstanding improvement plan, and 2.8% above the College’s outturn in 2017/18. For work based learning, the overall framework achievement rate was 4.9% above the benchmark and 9.8% above the final outturn in 2017/18. Functional Skills has increased by 7.6%, which is significantly above the benchmark. Areas of further improvement being GCSE English and Maths and A levels. Members questioned whether the A Level achievement was expected and achievable. Confirmation was received that it was attributable to the way in which the College had transitioned to the linear A Levels and when the target was set there was uncertainty of these changes. There will be a new focus for next year on destination data, as a result of the new Education Inspection Framework, and this will be a better measure of success. Members were informed that a full analysis of the College’s achievement and learner outcomes will be available as part of the College’s annual Self-Assessment Report and as a result there will be no KPI reporting until January.

Members asked that their congratulations be passed onto staff and the Chair of the Corporation informed that she would be preparing a letter of thanks to staff on behalf of the Corporation.

**The report was noted.**

## 11. **Single Equality – Policy & 2018/19 Annual Report**

The Assistant Principal presented the annual report, including the Equality Objectives and progress to date. The report also served to highlight how the College meets, and in many instances, goes beyond its statutory duties.

The report confirmed that there are no revisions required to the Single Equality Policy other than a renewed Equality Impact Assessment, which the Corporation approved previously. The Assistant Principal confirmed that the policy will be kept under

review in light of the proposed UK exit from the European Union but significant changes are not expected and therefore has not been added to the College risk register.

Following review, members raised one typographical error in the Single Equality Report 2018/19.

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

**To approve the Single Equality Report 2018/19 for publication on the College's website, subject to one typographical amendment.**

12. **Extension to Lease to Bristol City Football Club**

Members were informed that this item will be carried forward to a future meeting as the lease was not ready for presentation. The CEO & Executive Principal reported that the same terms and conditions would apply and the lease premium linked to RPI.

13. **Teaching, Learning & Assessment Report**

The Assistant Principal presented the report informing the Corporation of progress against actions to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. It was reported that by the end of 2018/19, 95% of full time teachers had been observed and the outcome of these observations were reported. The outcomes represents a 2% improvement on 2017/18, which is also reflected in improved pass and achievement rates. The focus for the current year will be a risk based approach to the 5% of teachers not observed last year.

Attention was drawn, in the report, to the first departmental review of Information Technology and Computing Department together with a high level review of current progress towards actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning. At the outset the Unions were not supportive of Departmental reviews but this attitude has positively changed with departments now requesting reviews. Members commented that it was pleasing to evidence the triangulation of data and outputs.

**The report was noted.**

14. **Search Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held 16 Oct 19 was noted. The Vice-Chair of the Search Committee (Martin Jones) reported the following:

- a) The Committee considered succession planning and questions were invited but none raised.

*At this point Ben Short was invited to leave the meeting.*

- b) Following review of Ben's first year of service the Committee is recommending his re-appointment to complete his first 4-year term of office. Ben has a keen interest in the Further Education sector and has useful skills and experience to offer although his attendance is slightly lower due to work priorities. The CEO & Executive Principal reported that having spoken with Ben, Ben had wondered whether he would be more suited as a critical friend to the College rather than a Corporation member. The Chair of the Corporation also mentioned that the CEO & Executive Principal could act as his mentor to help develop his knowledge of the sector.

**It was resolved:**

**To approve the re-appointment of Ben Short, at the end of his 1<sup>st</sup> year term of office, for a further 3-years to complete his first 4-year term of office.**

*At this point Ben Short re-joined the meeting and Moyra Pascoe was invited to leave the meeting. The Vice-Chair (Martin Jones) took over as chair of the meeting.*

- c) It was reported that Moyra Pascoe had indicated that she would be willing to continue as a Corporation Member for a further 2 years in support of the new Chair and stand as Vice-Chair during this period should the Corporation so wish.

**It was resolved:**

**To approve the re-appointment of Moyra Pascoe, at the end of her current term of office, for a further 2-year term of office.**

*At this point Moyra Pascoe re-joined the meeting and resumed as Chair of the meeting and Martin Jones was invited to leave the meeting.*

- d) The Chair of the Corporation reported that Martin had offered to remain on the Corporation and continue as Vice-Chair of the Corporation until 31 July 2020 to see out the current academic year.

**It was resolved:**

**To approve the re-appointment of Martin Jones, at the end of his current term of office, until 31 July 2020.**

*At this point Martin Jones re-joined the meeting.*

- e) As part of new induction feedback it was suggested that governors are invited to the College pantomime to support learners and get to know other governors in a social environment. Members were asked to contact the Clerk if available to attend.

15. **Stakeholder Engagement Report**

Members received a report updating on Stakeholder activity and strategy. The reported included updates on Apprenticeships, Employer Engagement, Work Experience, Diploma in Sporting Excellence, Community Learning, Full Cost and Work-based Learning. As part of continued community learning, the report sought Corporation approval for the continued use of Nelson Trust as a new subcontract partner, subject to the Trust meeting due diligence checks.

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

**To approve the use of Nelson Trust as a new subcontract partner, subject to the Trust meeting due diligence checks.**

16. **GDPR & Freedom of Information Act report (including any revisions to the Model Publication Scheme)**

Members received a report providing an update on Freedom of Information requests and data subject access requests received during 2018/19. Also presented was a new Freedom of Information policy, which now incorporated the model publication scheme, and a revised Data Privacy and Protection Policy with minor revisions to reflect changes in the College's structure. The Assistant Principal reported that reference in the report to ePrivacy Regulation section 23 should say section 29.

Members asked if there was any further information on the data leaks experienced by Swindon College. The Assistant Principal reported that this was now in the hands of the Police and no further information has been released.

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

**To approve the Freedom of Information Policy and Data Privacy and Protection Policy.**

17. **Framework of College policies**

Members received a report outlining the current status of the College's Framework of Policies which has been maintained to ensure compliance with the Department for Education guidance on the statutory policies required by Further Education Colleges.

**The report was noted.**

18. **Confidential Minutes Review**

Members received a report covering the review of minutes and documents that had previously been deemed confidential. In accordance with the Standing Orders for the Corporation and its Committees, the Chair of the Corporation and the Chairs of each committee had undertaken a review and made recommendations to the Corporation in order that, where appropriate, minutes and documents now deemed non confidential

can be released for the public record, including the publication of minutes on the College website.

**It was resolved:**

**To approve the Chairs' recommendations of those minutes and documents now deemed non confidential to be released for the public record.**

19. **Corporation Seal**

The application of the Corporation Seal to the build contract with Kier for the Growth Hub development at Stroud campus was reported and noted by the Corporation.

*At this point Martin Jones, Richard O'Doherty and College staff were invited to leave the meeting.*

20. **Strategy Task & Finish Group**

Confidential Item.

*At this point Martin Jones and Richard O'Doherty re-joined the meeting and the Staff Governor (Matt Davis) and members of College staff were invited to leave the meeting.*

21. **Remuneration Committee**

Confidential Item.

22. **Confidentiality**

Members agreed that due to business and personal sensitivities the Confidential Minute review (item 18), Strategy Task & Finish Group report (item 20) and Remuneration Committee agenda item (item 21) and minutes 20 and 21 are to be treated as confidential.

23. **Assessment of meeting**

A summary of feedback in relation to the meeting held 10 Oct 19 was received. The Clerk distributed forms to members so that an assessment of the Corporation meeting could be undertaken.

24. **Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 5 December 2019 at 5pm, Stroud Campus.

The meeting commenced at 5.20pm.

Moira Foster-Fitzgerald left the meeting at 5.52pm (after item 6)

Rich Aitken and Kelly Gillett left the meeting at 6.45pm (after item 13)

Mike Croker and Joe Lamonby left the meeting at 6.56pm (after item 17)

Matt Davis and Gavin Murray left the meeting at 7.10pm (after item 20)

The meeting closed at 7.25pm

The meeting was quorate.