



SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE AND STROUD COLLEGE
FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

Approved minutes of a meeting of South Gloucestershire and Stroud College
Further Education Corporation
Held on 6 June 2019
At Berkeley Campus, Gloucestershire

Present:	Martin Jones	(Chair)
	David Benson	
	Sophie Chester-Glyn	
	Mike Croker	
	Craig Dickinson	
	Carly Dyson	
	Phil Eames	
	Sophie Green	
	David Hagg	
	Kevin Hamblin	(CEO & Executive Principal)
	Joe Lamonby	
	Dave Merrett	
	Richard O'Doherty	
Ben Short		
In Attendance:	Rich Aitken	(Head of Finance)
	Moira Foster-Fitzgerald	(Chief Group Services Officer)
	Gavin Murray	(Assistant Principal, Quality & Performance)
	Andy Slaney	(Chief Operations Officer, Commercial & Estates)
	Sara-Jane Watkins	(College Principal)
	Sharon Glover	(Clerk)

Martin Jones opened the meeting and explained that due to the ill health of the Chair's husband he would be acting as Chair for this meeting. Carly Dyson was then welcomed to her first meeting of the Corporation. The Chair also advised that there would be one item of AoB to be taken at the end of the meeting.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Roger Ellis, Roksana Paruzel, Moyra Pascoe and Jude Saunderson,

2. **Declarations of Interest**

The Clerk reported, and members noted, a new declaration of interest received from Carly Dyson in that she is employed by Nationwide Building Society.

Craig Dickinson's (Staff Member) interest in agenda item 14 was also declared and noted.

3. **Other Items of Urgent Business**

Confidential Item.

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held 25 April 2019 were approved and signed as a correct record.

5. **Matters Arising From Those Minutes**

- a) The written resolution relating to the Item of Urgent Business from 25 Apr 19 meeting was noted.
- b) Actions on the Corporation action log were monitored and updates provided. Confirmation was received that students had been consulted on the review of the Learner Charter and there is currently no anti-fraud training to staff in place but this is an action that will be taken forward.
- c) Whistleblowing policy – The Chief Group Services Officer had requested further discussion in relation to the submission of whistleblowing allegations direct to her, as agreed at the last meeting in her absence. She expressed reluctance for allegations to be raised with one individual and clause 6 of the policy was deliberately silent on this and provides options for raising allegations.

Following detailed debate, the outcome of discussions was that there should be clarity of whom to send allegations to and the policy should make it easy to raise allegations to members of SLT and the Clerk. A hyper-link between the policy and SLT members and the Clerk on the new College website was requested together with clarity that the raising of allegations also includes via

email. It was also suggested that there is a link in the policy to the Financial Regulations and Anti-Bribery, Anti-Corruption and Anti-Fraud policy.

It was resolved:

To approve amendments to the Whistleblowing policy, as discussed.

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

Confidential Item.

7. **Principal's Report**

The Principal reported on the following:

- a) Consultation and restructure – The Principal confirmed that the full business proposal had been previously circulated to governors and reference was made to a table indicating the volume of staff currently in consultation. As far as possible there has been a focus on redeployment and voluntary redundancies had been invited. Staff briefings had been held across all campuses and staff are aware of the funding cuts across the sector and the responsibility of the Corporation to ensure the College remains solvent.
- b) 16-18 Funding update – Following submission of a business case to the ESFA regarding the miscalculation of the College's disadvantaged factor due to an error in the ILR algorithm confirmation was received that ESFA has supported the business case. An assumption had already been made that the College would win the business case when preparing the College budgets.
- c) West of England Combined Authority Adult Grant Funding application – The allocation is more positive than expected especially when compared to other Colleges but would not have an impact on the restructuring exercise.
- d) FE Commissioner's Letter – Appended to the report was a copy of the recent FE Commissioner's letter to the sector, including 10 key financial targets that Corporations are asked to consider in light of the challenging financial context of the sector. Members discussed the FE Commissioner's letter and it was suggested that the Audit Committee is asked to provide assurance on the content of the letter and to report back to Corporation on a comply or explain basis.
- e) Gloucestershire LEP project pipeline – Members were updated on two proposals for Stroud Campus to address the call from Gloucestershire LEP with regard to new project ideas. The proposals are in addition to any pipeline projects being proposed for Berkeley Campus.
- f) Staff Utilisation – An outstanding audit action to complete utilisation stats for teaching in the College has now been completed and shared with auditors. The table of data was appended to the report. Members asked the Principal what can

be gleaned from the data and she advised that staff are working at maximum capacity and that there is no slack in the system and the sector is very challenging. Confirmation was received that this will become an annual exercise undertaken by the Chief Group Services Officer.

g) Confidential Item.

The report was noted.

Action: Audit Committee.

8. Management Information

a) Management Accounts exception report – The Head of Finance reported that a significant amount of work had been undertaken on the forecast outturn and the revised forecast surplus was reported. Work is also being undertaken to ensure the College remains in ESFA “good” financial health. Confirmation was received that provision had been made this year for the cost of the restructuring exercise. Cash flow remains positive and there are no concerns to raise.

Members suggested the inclusion of ESFA financial health objectives in the management accounts in order for there to be visibility of the boundaries between grades. Confirmation was received that these will be included at the start of the next academic year. Members also sought clarity of the difference between income forecast for SGS Commercial Services. Members were informed that the budget had previously included damages from We-Link but there is no material breach until 1 August 2019 so had been removed from the budget. Further information will be contained in the SGSCSL report to the July Corporation meeting.

Members raised the high level of debtors, in particular the Higher Education fee. Members were informed that there are no concerns with HE and fees are received in tranches and had not yet been fully reported. The Head of Finance reported that he will ensure this is reviewed.

The report was noted.

b) KPI report – The Assistant Principal reported that retention is 2% above the average West of England Colleges and the Gloucestershire and Swindon areas. There is 98% data integrity so this figure may slightly decrease once the data is cleaned up. It was reported that attendance in English and Maths remains lower than target but is stable over time. Attendance on core qualifications is stable at 89%.

Members also received an update on current 16-18 applications. Members expressed disappointment at the reduction in applications at Queen’s Road and WISE campus. The Principal reported that the numbers at Queen’s Road are small

and there is a reduction in learner interest in Creatives and A Levels. The current focus is on the conversion of all learners. Members questioned the retention on Apprenticeships which appeared lower than last year. Members were informed of the impacts on the data and that nationally there is a decrease in figures and that the College was considered to be good in comparison to regional and national data.

Members concurred that the report was encouraging.

The report was noted.

9. **Annual Teaching, Learning & Assessment report & Review of the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy**

The Assistant Principal presented the report containing a high level review of actions to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment together with a revised teaching, learning and assessment strategy. Members were informed that 90% formal lesson observations have been conducted and a report of the breakdown of the numbers of staff that have been supported was presented. This was considered to be a positive outcome with staff moving in the right direction.

The focus currently is preparation for the new Ofsted Common Inspection Framework. Attention was drawn to the revised Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy which was aligned with the College's mission and Improvement Plan. Confirmation was received that consultation had taken place with staff and students and the strategy recognises a step change in the development of new skills and behaviours for staff. The strategy is also to be clear on progress made by SGS learners compared to when they joined the College. Members raised the focus needed on employability skills and results for employers. Members were informed that the focus of the new framework is about relevant skills development but results will continue to be a focus as these are tangible measurements.

The report was noted and it was resolved:

To approve the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy.

10. **Targets 2019/20 & Review of KPIs for 2019/20**

The Assistant Principal reported that the strategy of target setting has been to focus on maintaining gradual progress and this has worked to date. Clarity was provided that the 3.3% referenced in the report related to improvement taking the College to an overall achievement rate of 86.7 against a target of 87%.

It was proposed that the targets are moved slightly in order to provide challenge to achieve high achievement rates with a continued focus on apprenticeships and GCSE English and Maths. The targets are conservative with a 2% overall improvement to 89%, which is in the top decile. It was reported that the financial targets will be presented at the July Corporation meeting. Members questioned how learner

outcomes and skills needs are assessed and were advised that it is harder to assess soft skills but this forms part of the Teaching policy.

The CEO & Executive Principal reported that everything is being cut back as £3m is being taken from the budget which is therefore having an impact on support. In this context performance is outstanding but the concern is that there will be a consequence of reducing expenditure especially at a time when learners require more support.

The report was noted and it was resolved:

To approve the targets contained in Appendix 1 of the report.

11. **Fees and Charges Policy 2019/20**

Revisions to the policy were presented by the Head of Finance. When asked, confirmation was received that there is compliance with the current ESFA funding conditions but a review will be undertaken at the start of the academic year to ensure ongoing compliance with 2019 legislation when available later in the year.

Following review members asked that the wording relating to Higher Education student loans is reviewed in paragraph 7.15.4 for accuracy. The Chair proposed that going forward the notification of policy changes document is not required and that the Corporation should only receive a tracked changes version of revisions to documents. This proposal was endorsed by the Corporation.

It was resolved:

To approve the Fees, Charges and Refunds Policy 2019//20.

Action: Head of Finance.

12. **2018/19 Governance Self-Assessment Report process and review of Governance Strategy**

The Clerk presented a report with recommendations in order to progress the development of the 2018/19 Governance Self-Assessment report. Having introduced a new governance self-assessment process last year it was being proposed that the same approach is adopted. Also received were proposed revisions to the Governance Strategy.

It was resolved to:

- a) **Approve the Governor Self-Assessment questionnaire for use in the 2018/19 Governance Self-Assessment Report process.**
- b) **Approve the Executive Team questionnaire.**
- c) **Approve the Chair's Performance Review questionnaire.**
- d) **Approve the Governance Strategy.**
- e) **Approve that the Chair, Vice-Chairs and Clerk draft the 2018/19 Governance Self-Assessment Report and action plan for Corporation consideration.**

13. **Student Members**

The Clerk reported that following Student Union elections two candidates have been appointed as President and Vice-President of the Student Union and will also fill the two Student Member positions on the Corporation. Corporation approval of their appointments was sought. Members discussed attendance of the Student Members and it was acknowledged that attendance at meetings was very much dependent upon the individuals elected. The Clerk reported that meetings are ongoing with the Inclusion Manager and Student Enrichment Officer on how to improve Student Member engagement at Corporation level.

It was resolved:

To approve the appointments of Charlotte Argust and Juno Sharrock as the two Student Members on the Corporation, with effect from 1 August 2019 until 31 July 2020.

14. **Staff Member Election Procedure**

The Clerk reported the resignation of Craig Dickinson (Staff Member) and of his resignation as a Staff Member from 26 July. The procedure for the election of Staff Members was appended to the report for Corporation consideration. The Clerk also raised that Craig's departure will create a vacancy on the Strategic Property Group.

Craig Dickinson refrained from the following resolutions.

It was resolved to:

- a) **Confirm that a replacement should be sought for Craig Dickinson, preferably from Stroud campus;**
- b) **Confirm that the Staff Member appointment is to be for a four year term of office;**
- c) **Approve the Staff Member election procedure;**
- d) **Consider Craig's replacement on the Strategic Property Group as part of the annual review of Committee membership.**

15. **Learner Destination Data and Progression**

The College Principal reported that the results had been positive and there are no specific issues in terms of ethnic minority groups compared to other groups studying at the College. Members asked why the destination date for Unknown was high and confirmation was received that this was due to learners who cannot be contacted due to changes in contact details. Members concurred that this was a pleasing report.

The report was noted.

16. **Strategic Property Group**

Confidential Item.

17. **Partnership Proposals 2019/20 and SGS Provision and Service Subcontracting Policies and Procedures review**

Members received a report on partnership proposals 2019/20 and other partnership activity which is not a sub-contract arrangement but is of strategic importance. It was reported that there are no changes proposed to the Provision or Service Subcontracting policies. Members discussed proposals for the subcontract arrangement with the Pauline Quirke Academy for Study programmes and were informed that this involved 25 FE learners and a long term partnership development, subject to ESFA approval.

It was resolved to:

- a) **Confirm that all subcontracting delivery is high quality and low risk. Where sub-contracting organisations are not rated financially as low risk this is acceptable to the College due to the track record, contingency plan and oversight with the sport National Governing Bodies.**
- b) **Continue working with existing partners in 2019/20.**
- c) **Approve a subcontract arrangement with the Pauline Quirk Academy for Study Programmes, subject to ESFA approval.**

18. **Equality & Diversity Impact and Assessment Policy**

Members received the Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment policy, guidance document and policy template for approval.

It was resolved:

To approve the Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment policy and policy template.

19. **Corporation Business Plan 2019/20**

Members noted that this item is to be carried forward.

20. **Strategy Away Day**

Members noted a report from the Strategy Away Day held 9 May 2019.

At this point members of staff and the Staff Member were invited to leave the meeting.

21. **Any Other Business**

The Chair reported that the Unions had requested a meeting with the Corporation as a result of the current restructuring exercise. A note from the Unions was read out as an Executive pay cut had been requested. The Chair and Vice-Chair, along with the Clerk, had met with the Unions and listened to their concerns and it was made clear

that the meeting did not form part of the consultation exercise and would not set a precedent for the future.

There appeared to be confusion about the SGS Group structure, in comparison to other College structures, and the roles and responsibilities of the Corporation, Executive Team, Group CEO & Executive Principal and College Principal.

It was explained at the meeting that the Executive Team had received the same pay increases as staff apart from the Group CEO & Executive Principal who had not received any pay increase in the past couple of years. It was also explained that following the departure of the Vice Principal there had been no replacement and her roles and responsibilities consumed by other members of the Executive Team, who are working hard under pressure. Members were asked if there was any support to cut Executive salaries. Following discussion the Corporation were mindful of the anxiety caused by the restructuring exercise but did not feel it appropriate to take any action on either the size of the Executive Team or their level of pay as this could have a negative effect on the leadership of the College.

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

Members agreed that due to business sensitivities the Item of Urgent Business (item 3), CEO & Executive Principal's report (item 6), confidential part of the Principal's report (item 7), confidential Strategic Property Group minutes (item 16), confidential appendix to the Strategy Away Day report (item 20) and minutes 3, 6a-d, 7g and 16 are to be treated as confidential.

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

A summary of feedback in relation to the meeting held 25 Apr 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 4 July 2019 at 5pm, Stroud Campus.

Members were reminded of the dates of the upcoming Prize Day events and were encouraged to attend other various College events taking place.

The meeting commenced at 5.05pm.

Sophie Chester-Glyn joined the meeting at 5.10pm (after item 3)

Moira Foster-Fitzgerald left the meeting at 5.55pm (after item 7)

Rich Aitken, Craig Dickinson, Kevin Hamblin, Gavin Murray and Sara-Jane Watkins left the meeting at 6.50pm (after item 20)

The meeting closed at 7.05pm.

The meeting was quorate.