



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 October 2022
At Stroud Campus, Stratford Road, Stroud, Gloucestershire

Present: David Hagg (Chair)
Douglas Blackstock
Sophie Chester-Glyn
Lynne Craig (joined via Teams)
Mike Croker
Matt Davis
Phil Eames
Catherine Green
Kevin Hamblin (CEO & Executive Principal)
Dave Merrett
Gary Parsons
Rick Sturge

In Attendance: Moira Foster-Fitzgerald (Chief Group Services Officer)
Gavin Murray (Deputy Principal)
Jude Saunderson (Chief Financial Officer)
Sara-Jane Watkins (College Principal)
Sharon Glover (Clerk)

The Chair informed that the new Student Governor, Khadija Nisar, was intending to join the meeting but due to transport issues was now unable to attend. Members were also informed that Lili Riley, the other Student Governor, had decided to step down in order to focus on her studies and a re-election is taking place.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Louise Bright, Irene Molodtsov and Khadija Nisar. Ben Short did not attend the meeting and Sophie Green is on maternity leave.

2. **Presentation – Special Educational Need & Disability (SEND)**

Three members of College staff were welcomed to the meeting and a presentation on SEND was provided, the slides being available on Convene. The presentation provided an overview nationally and as a College, with the areas of need at SGS being in line with national trends.

The Principal reported that the number of 16-18 full time learners leaving school with some form of additional needs has increased. Taking into consideration the need for free College meals, up to one third of the current cohort are high needs or vulnerable, which is higher than other GFE Colleges. The government's SEND agenda focusses on schools not colleges which means that Colleges need to meet the lower level needs of learners from their current resources. The College has undertaken a restructure with additional investment provided due to the complex needs of these learners. Members questioned whether there was additional financial support provided for these learners. Although a marginal increase provided it was confirmed that there is a reliance on the College to make reasonable adjustments. Some learners' needs have not been addressed by their schools' which places SGS in an ethically poor position. When asked whether this encroaches into Local Authority statutory responsibilities members were informed that there is an expectation that the College will provide additional support to their teachers, with no external funding support. The Local Authorities are struggling with the volumes and learners are more open at College as they feel it is a safe environment. There is a statutory duty to provide education, which makes a very challenging balance. There is a lack of external resources and the pandemic has increased the impact. Members questioned how far the College can go financially to provide support and were informed that there is an expectation on teachers to differentiate their lessons to accommodate the students' needs. Members questioned why the College has a higher proportion of students with higher needs compared to others. Members were informed that there are various reasons but in the main, SGS is the College of choice as the provision is good. The College has developed a portfolio to assist individuals to cope independently. Generally, the transition to post-16 education for those learners with high needs is poor across the sector and the College only discovers learners' needs post enrolment.

Members questioned how the success of initiatives are measured in order to provide assurance to the Corporation that duties are being met. The Deputy Principal advised that gaps are being noticed in school leavers post pandemic and the College is looking to close these gaps due to interventions being taken and prepare them for adulthood. Members questioned whether there are any KPIs that would demonstrate progress. The Deputy Principal advised that there would be a mixture of measures i.e. success rates, learner destinations and the need for individuals to feel valued.

Members summarised that the College is being pro-active in detecting higher learning needs that have gone undetected at school and are a beacon to support learners and

transforming lives. It was recognised that there are many issues with the schools' systems and of the need to understand the make-up of the student body and how it is changing and thereby creating greater challenges for staff. Staff were commended on the growing reputation and referrals to the College and of the need to see how, going forward, the work of the College reflects in learner destinations and employability.

At this point the three presenters were thanked for their presentation and invited to leave the meeting.

3. **Declarations of Interest**

The Corporation carried out its annual review of declarations of interests made by Governors, the Clerk and members of staff with significant financial responsibilities. The Clerk reported that she had emailed the Register of Interests to Corporation Members and Co-Opted Members for the annual review in advance of the meeting and the following changes were raised:

Douglas Blackstock

- Change to existing declaration of interest in relation to International quality consultant, in that he is advising on quality assurance for QAA and others.
- Wynstones Ltd has changed its name to Waldorf Learning Foundation.
- Stroud and Cotswold Alternative Provision School has changed its name to Severn Valley School.
- New declaration of interest added – Board Member, British University in Egypt from 12 October 2022.

Louise Bright

- No longer a member of the Board of Governors at USW.
- New interest added - Has become a Director of the Centre for Advanced Power Systems Engineering (CAPSE) as of 1 September 2022.

Sophie Chester-Glyn

- New interest added - Sits on the Board of Trustees of the Care Worker's Charity.

Rick Sturge

- Resigned from Business in the Community – South West Region – Chairman of the Advisory Board.
- West of England Combined Authority – post COVID recovery taskforce – Taskforce now disbanded.
- Resigned from Almondsbury Sports & Community Centre – Joint Chairman.
- New interest added – JBP – part time Senior Counsel role.

The following declarations of interests were also declared in agenda items at the meeting:

- Item 10, CEO report re: SGSAT: Kevin Hamblin as CEO of SGSAT and Lynne Craig and Phil Eames as Trustees of SGSAT.
- Item 16b SGSCSL risk registers and item 23: Kevin Hamblin as MD of SGSCSL and Dave Merrett as Director of SGSCSL.
- Item 8, 14-16 Stroud Campus: Douglas Blackstock declared his interest as a Trustee of Waldorf Learning Foundation and Board Member of Severn Valley School and the possible cross-over with 14-16 provision. Douglas offered to leave the room for this item if felt needed by the Corporation.

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held 7 July 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Clerk reported that Sophie Chester-Glyn would not be standing as a second Vice-Chair but would be content to continue as interim Vice-Chair until the return of Sophie Green on 1 December 2022.

The Chair explained that, as this was the first meeting of the new academic year, there was an exceptional number of starred items. There was no request received to un-star any item.

5. **Corporation action log**

Members received an update on the action log.

6. **Safeguarding Learners & Child Protection**

Members received the Safeguarding Annual report and policy, Staff Code of Conduct and a new Online safety policy and action plan. The Chief Group Services Officer reported a tremendous growth in safeguarding concerns, placing additional demands on staff, who were commended for the well handling of these concerns.

Following scrutiny of the annual report, members discussed the use of the Together All service as it seemed to be predominately used by females. Members were informed that further promotion of the system is taking place as there are many helpful resources available and to try and overcome the perception that there is weakness in seeking support. The Chief Group Services Officer agreed to share with members a link to a case study.

Members were alarmed at the number of safeguarding concerns that staff are expected to deal with. Due to the lengthy waiting lists for mental health support the College is seen as a means of obtaining support with College staff acting as social workers for learners. Members asked how staff were feeling about their welfare as a balance needed to be reached. Members were informed of the many challenges faced by staff in relation to behaviour management, not helped by staff shortages and increased safeguarding compliance requirements each year. The Principal reported that there had been an investment in supervision and staff are provided with the option to meet with a counsellor if needed.

Members were informed of the reality that there isn't sufficient funding available and College accommodation, especially at the Filton campus, is not conducive for the number of learners and their needs. The College attracts learners from a wide catchment area and there is a lack of triangulation of data between the Local Authorities and Schools so the College will not know the history of the learners upon enrolment.

In her Safeguarding Advocate role, Sophie Chester-Glyn's views were invited. Members were informed that the College is building its brand and the data and case studies bring the challenges faced to life. Statutory requirements are constantly changing and the College is evolving and performing well.

Members questioned whether any data analysis across the sector is taking place by the AoC. The Chair suggested that this is raised with the AoC and to suggest that data analysis takes place if not already done so.

The report was noted and it was resolved to approve:

- a) **The Safeguarding Learners and Child Protection Policy and Procedure.**
- b) **Staff Code of Conduct.**
- c) **Online Safety Policy.**

Action: Chief Group Services Officer.

7. Teaching Staff pay scales review

Following consultation with staff and Union representatives, members received a follow up report with the final pay progression framework for noting as it was unchanged to the one presented at the 7 July 2022 Corporation meeting. Members were informed that the College had been the only one in the West of England not to have suffered strike action and this was attributable to the positive feedback received from the Unions in relation to the pay scales review. Members of the Executive Team were congratulated on the outcome of this review.

The report and final pay progression framework were noted.

8. **14-16 Stroud Campus**

Confidential Item.

9. **SGS Academy Trust**

Members were informed that this item is to be covered as part of the CEO & Executive Principal's report.

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

Confidential Item

11. **Principal's Report**

The Principal reported the following key points:

- a) Staffing concerns – The challenge to fill vacancies continues whilst also experiencing high absences.
- b) Learner recruitment – 16-18 recruitment is strong and secure allocation will assist future growth. Full details contained in the report.
- c) Positive behaviour policy update – there is challenging behaviour to deal with, especially at the Filton campus. The Staff Governors raised the lack of social and study space at Filton campus, which is having an impact on the surrounding neighbourhood, resulting in residents' complaints. There is a lack of funding to develop the campus and additional space is needed. Rick Sturge offered to discuss further outside of the meeting.

There are different levels of students, with more displaying anti-social behaviour. The new positive behaviour policy is having a positive impact on the majority of learners but staff time continues to be spent on managing learners and high-profile exclusions. The Deputy Principal informed that it was not uncommon for behavioural issues to be expected at this time of year. Learners and their needs are unknown until they arrive at College and there is a lot of vocational provision at Filton campus. Members asked if the College was able to secure the support of the local council, community police and other support agencies. Members were informed that the College has a good relationship with the community police. Members raised that Filton campus was behind on estates development, which is increasing the divide between the other campuses.

The Chair congratulated the College on the impressive scale and success of bids being applied for.

The report was noted.

12. **DfE: Review how well the education or training provided meets local needs**

Members received a report providing an update on the College's response to the new duties around assessing whether a College meets local needs. Appended to the report, and with hard copies available at the meeting, was a Stakeholders and Skills position statement document. The document provided a comprehensive overview of the work the College does with all stakeholders from an employer, community, civil and educational provider perspective.

Members were informed that the annual Stakeholder Engagement report would be presented at the next meeting. Members were impressed with the breadth of engagement and the College was congratulated. Members suggested that it would be helpful as part of the Stakeholder Engagement report to provide further information on "how" the College engages with its stakeholders.

The report was noted.

13. **Annual Governance Report**

Members received revisions to the Standing Orders and arrangements for obtaining the views of staff and students on the determination and periodic review of the educational character and mission of the College and oversight of its activities.

Members were also invited to re-appoint/confirm Committee membership and appoint the Chair of the Audit Committee. Members were informed that Ben Short would need replacing on Audit Committee and in addition the Committee has asked for a further Corporation member to join. The Chair of the Audit Committee (Mike Croker) advised that individuals with an enquiring mind, business knowledge and prepared to challenge were sought as there were already qualified accountants sitting on the Committee. Expressions of interest were to be directed to the Clerk. Members also concurred that Mike Croker should be re-appointed as Chair of the Audit Committee.

The Clerk advised that Louise Bright had asked to step down from some of her Committee commitments and expressions of interest in replacing her on the Search Committee were invited. Rick Sturge put himself forward. The Clerk also confirmed that upon return of Sophie Green from maternity leave, Sophie Chester-Glyn was content to remain on the Remuneration Committee to allow Louise Bright to step down.

It was resolved to:

- a) **Approve revisions to the Standing Orders for the Corporation and its Committees;**
- b) **Approve revisions to the arrangements for obtaining the views of staff and students on the determination and periodic review of the educational character and mission of the College and the oversight of its activities;**
- c) **Appoint Rick Sturge to the Search Committee, with immediate effect, in place of Louise Bright;**
- d) **Appoint Sophie Chester-Glyn as a permanent member of the Remuneration Committee and that Louise Bright steps down from this Committee upon Sophie Green's return from maternity leave;**
- e) **Re-appoint Mike Croker as Chair of the Audit Committee;**
- f) **Confirm current membership of all Committees.**

Action: Corporation Members.

14. **Audit Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held 20 Sept 22 and ESFA Regularity & Propriety Questionnaire were noted.

It was resolved to approve the:

- a) **Group Freedom of Information Policy.**
- b) **Data Privacy and Protection Policy.**

15. **Search Committee**

Minutes of the meeting held 21 Sep 22 were noted.

It was resolved:

To approve the re-appointment of Irene Molodtsov, at the end of her current first year term of office, for a further 3-years to complete her first 4-year term of office.

16. **Management Information**

- a) The management accounts exception report was noted.
- b) The Risk Management report, including full risk registers for SGS and SGSCSL, were noted.

17. **Annual Health & Safety Report**

Members received the annual Health & Safety report and revisions to the Health & Safety policy for review and approval.

The report was noted and it was resolved:

To approve revisions to the Health and Safety policy and delegate authority to the Chair of the Corporation and Group CEO & Executive Principal to sign page 9 of the Health & Safety policy: “Health & Safety Policy Statement”.

18. **2021/22 Compliments, Suggestions & Complaints Annual Report**

Members received the report and a request to re-approve the Compliments, Complaints and Appeals policy and procedure.

It was resolved:

To approve the Compliments, Complaints and Appeals policy and procedure.

19. **SEND policy**

Members received the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities report and policy for review and approval.

It was resolved:

To approve the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities policy.

20. **Subcontracting Policy**

Members received an updated Subcontracting policy and a revised Subcontracting Contract for review and approval.

It was resolved:

To approve the Subcontracting policy and Subcontracting Contract.

21. **Assessment of meeting**

A summary of feedback in relation to the meeting held 7 July 2022 was received.

22. **Items of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business raised.

At this point, the Chair invited members of the Executive Team to leave the meeting.

23. **SGS Commercial Services Limited**

Confidential Item.

24. **Remuneration Committee – Part Restricted Access**

Minutes of the meeting held 8 September 2022 were noted. Members received the Senior Post Holder Remuneration Policy, External Interest Policy and Remuneration Annual Report to the Corporation for review and approval together with endorsement of the SGS Emergency Succession Plan.

It was resolved to:

- a) **Approve the Senior Post Holder Remuneration Policy.**
- b) **Approve the External Interest Policy.**
- c) **Approve the Remuneration Annual Report to Corporation.**
- d) **Endorse the SGS Emergency Succession Plan.**

At this point the Staff Governors were invited to leave the meeting.

- e) Confidential Item.
- f) Confidential Item.
- g) Confidential Item.

25. **Confidentiality**

Members agreed that due to business sensitivities, 14-16 Stroud campus (item 8), CEO report and appendices (item 10), Management Accounts (item 16), SGSCSL report (item 23), Remuneration Committee items 24e-g and minutes 8, 10a-f, 23 and 24e-g should be treated as confidential.

26. **Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 3 November 2022 at 4pm, via Microsoft TEAMS.

The meeting commenced at 5.05pm.

Catherine Green left the meeting at 6.50pm (during item 10)

Lynne Craig left the meeting at 7.07pm (during item 11)

Moira Foster-Fitzgerald, Gavin Murray, Jude Saunderson and Sara-Jane Watkins left the meeting at 7.20pm (after item 22).

Matt Davis and Gary Parsons left the meeting at 7.25pm (during item 24)

Kevin Hamblin left the meeting at 7.26pm (during item 24)

The meeting closed at 7.28pm

The meeting was quorate.