



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

Present: David Hagg (Chair)
Douglas Blackstock
Louise Bright (joined via TEAMS)
Sophie Chester-Glyn
Lynne Craig
Phil Eames
Catherine Green
Kevin Hamblin (CEO & Executive Principal)
Dave Merrett
Irene Molodtsov
Gary Parsons

In Attendance: Rich Aitken (Head of Finance) (joined via TEAMS)
Stuart Evans (Assistant Principal - 16-18 Curriculum)
Moirra Foster-Fitzgerald (Chief Group Services Officer)
Gavin Murray (Vice Principal, Performance, Standards & Effectiveness) (joined via TEAMS)
Jude Saunderson (Chief Financial Officer)
Sara-Jane Watkins (College Principal)
Sharon Glover (Clerk) (joined via TEAMS)

The Chair opened the meeting by asking if the starred item is to be unstarred and confirmation was received that it was not. Reference was made to the College's support for the Pride event taking place at the weekend. Confirmation was received that HR would also have a presence at the event to try and attract additional staff.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Steph Brooks, Sarah Cartlidge, Mike Croker, Matt Davis, Sophie Green (Maternity Leave), Ben Short and Rick Sturge.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

The following declarations of interest were raised and noted:

- Louise Bright, Kevin Hamblin and Dave Merrett as Directors of SGSCSL in agenda items 9 and 13.
- David Hagg in agenda items 16 & 18.
- Sophie Chester-Glyn in item 18.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held 9 June 2022 were approved as a correct record, ready for signing by the Chair.

4. **Matters Arising From Those Minutes**

Actions on the action log were monitored and updates provided.

5. **Appointment of Student Governors**

The Clerk reported that two new Student Governors had been elected and put forward by the Student Union for Corporation approval.

It was resolved:

- To appoint Khadija Nisar as Student Governor from 1 August 2022 – 31 July 2023.**
- To appoint Lili Riley as Student Governor from 1 August 2022 – 31 July 2023.**

The Chair advised that he would be taking the agenda items in a different order.

6. **Student Union Constitution (Agenda Item 8)**

Members were presented with revisions to the Student Union Constitution for approval. Clarity was sought for the removal of certain officer posts i.e. Disability and Women etc. Reference was made to the wider role title of Inclusion Officer, intended to align with the College's Inclusion Committee.

It was resolved:

To approve the Student Union Constitution.

7. **SGS Commercial Services Limited (Agenda Item 9)**

Confidential Item.

8. **Teaching Staff pay scales review (Agenda Item 10)**

Confidential Item.

9. **Annual Voice of the Learner report, including review of the Stakeholder Engagement & Involvement Plan & Higher Education Students as Partners Strategy (Agenda Item 6)**

Following scrutiny of the report, Corporation members questioned whether students are supported in completing national surveys. Confirmation was received that completion of NSS is encouraged but there has been a low uptake due to students' focus on final assessments and a compressed window for responses. The NSS results are similar to College outcomes in that an overall reduction has been evidenced but the College still out performs other local Colleges and Universities. Feedback has been lower in relation to student union activity and a paid Higher Education Officer is now in place to improve student engagement. Members commented that the College has done well in the current environment and raised the importance of benchmarking against others.

Members were informed that historically recruitment to zoo management courses has been good but due to the transition from the Zoo to the Wild Place there are concerns with these changes. Assurance was provided that actions have been taken and some turmoil is expected which will impact on the learner experience and Corporation needs to be aware of this. The College continues to work closely with the Zoo in relation to this transition.

When asked why there needs to be cohorts of over 10 to feed into the NSS data, members were informed that this ensures that individuals cannot be identified. Members questioned the concerns raised about behaviour and conduct and whether this referred to a particular area of the College. Members were informed that following additional analysis the feedback related to the Filton campus. With the roll out of the new behaviour policy there was confidence that improvements will be evidenced with the additional expectations from SLT and teachers.

Members questioned whether the target for overall FE learner satisfaction was too high and the Vice Principal advised that any outcome outside of 3% target will show as red and the outcome wasn't necessarily negative, just set with a high expectation.

Appended to the report were revised Stakeholder Engagement and Involvement Plan and Students as Partners policy for Corporation review and approval.

**The report was noted and it was resolved:
To approve the Stakeholder Engagement and Involvement Plan and Students as Partners policy.**

10. **Progress against the Improvement Plan, including Higher Education Improvement Plan (Agenda Item 7)**

The Vice Principal presented progress to date on the improvement plans, with the final updates to accompany the College self-assessment report. Members were informed that this had been an iterative process with positive staff engagement and a wider scope of ideas. The intent will be to continue this approach next year.

Members suggested that it would be helpful for the plans to be RAG rated and the Vice Principal agreed to look into this further.

The report was noted.

Action: Vice Principal.

11. **Management Information (Agenda Item 12)**

The Head of Finance reported a positive forecast, which remains on track above the budgeted surplus. The budget for next year is predicated on this level of surplus to ensure Good Financial Health in 2022/23.

Staff were thanked and congratulated on the good performance.

The report was noted.

12. **Financial Planning (Agenda Item 11)**

a) Confidential Item.

b) Confidential Item.

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

Confidential Item.

14. **Principal's Report**

The Principal reported that since the report was published the number of staff vacancies has increased and the aim is to secure new staff for the start of the academic year. Regular meetings had taken place with the former Skills Minister, who has now been replaced, and appended to the report was a letter sent outlining the challenges faced in the sector. Members congratulated the Principal on the relationships she has

been building with government ministers and at the recent AoC Chairs and Principal's meeting others had been impressed with the networking undertaken. It was suggested that an introductory letter is sent to the new minister from the Principal and Chair with an invitation to continue conversations.

Members were informed that progress has been made with bids/tenders with positive news expected imminently. Members questioned whether funding from bids was paid up front and were informed that it was dependent upon the bids but the College looks to maximise funding as much as possible.

Reference was made to the additional destination data requested by the Corporation and the positive outcomes demonstrating that ethnic minority groups were outperforming.

Members noted that safeguarding issues continue to place a huge strain on the College. Credit was attributed to the Vice Principal and his team for their support during a challenging period. Governors asked that their thanks be passed onto staff and for the Executive to let governors know how they could further lend their support.

The report was noted.

15. **Governors' Strategy Away Day / College Strategy 2022/23-2026/27**

The CEO & Executive Principal presented revisions to the College strategy for Corporation approval. The Chair proposed that the strategy is agreed on an interim basis and for a small group of governors to consider the format of the strategy, reporting mechanism, its use and intended audience, ensuring the appropriate focus is given to stakeholders.

Members also received a breakdown of the various key plans/strategies in support of the College strategy. Following review of the breakdown, the development of a Stakeholder Engagement Plan and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging strategy were agreed.

It was resolved:

- a) **To approve the 2022/23-2026/27 College Strategy, on an interim basis pending review.**
- b) **To approve the development of a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy and Stakeholder Engagement Plan.**

16. **Search Committee**

Minutes of the meeting held 14 June 2022 were noted. Sophie Chester-Glyn (Vice-Chair of the Search Committee) reported the following:

At this point David Hagg left the meeting and Sophie Chester-Glyn took over as Chair.

- a) The Committee were focused on succession planning, in particular for the Chair of the Corporation. David Hagg's re-appointment is due 30 September 2022 and he has offered to extend his term of office by a further year to support his succession planning. Ben Short has indicated that he will not be standing for re-appointment at the end of his term of office on 30 November 2022 but has offered to act as a critical friend to the College, if needed.
- b) The Committee is recommending the re-appointment of David Hagg, at the end of this current term of office, for a further year, subject to review thereafter.

At this point David Hagg re-joined the meeting and resumed as Chair.

- c) The Committee is recommending the re-appointment of Laura Boutle (Search Committee Chair), at the end of her current term of office, for a further 4-year term of office.
- d) Following review of the Procedure for the Appointment, Reappointment, Induction and Training of Corporation Members, the Committee is recommending its approval to Corporation.

It was resolved:

- a) **To approve the re-appointment of David Hagg, at the end of his current term of office, for a further year, subject to review thereafter.**
- b) **To approve the re-appointment of Laura Boutle, at the end of her current term of office, for a further 4-year term of office.**
- c) **To approve revisions to the Procedure for the Appointment, Reappointment, Induction and Training of Corporation Members**

17. **Audit Committee**

Minutes of the meeting held 16 June 2022 were noted. Phil Eames (Vice-Chair of the Audit Committee) reported the following:

- a) The new external auditors attended the meeting to present their audit plan. The Chief Financial Officer confirmed that KPMG have now resigned and Bishop Fleming appointed as external auditors and tax advisers.
- b) Positive internal audit reports were presented and thanks provided to the auditors and staff involved.
- c) The Internal Audit needs assessment, strategic plan and 2022/23 annual plan were discussed and, following the meeting, revisions were made to the plan. Clarification of these revisions was provided by the Chief Financial Officer.

- d) Following review and updating of the Whistleblowing Policy, the Committee was recommending its approval to Corporation.
- e) Following review of the latest Post-16 Audit Code of Practice, revisions to the Audit Committee Terms of Reference were presented for approval.
- f) Confidential Item.

It was resolved to approve:

- a) **the Internal Audit needs assessment, strategic plan and 2022/23 annual plan.**
- b) **the Whistleblowing policy.**
- c) **revisions to the Audit Committee Terms of Reference.**

18. **Election of Chair and Vice-Chair**

The Clerk reported that nominations had been received for David Hagg to continue as Chair of the Corporation and Sophie Chester-Glyn to continue as interim Vice-Chair of the Corporation and Sophie Green to continue as Vice-Chair upon her return from maternity leave.

Chair of the Corporation

At this point David Hagg left the meeting and Sophie Chester-Glyn (Vice-Chair) took over as Chair.

Phil Eames proposed and Dave Merrett seconded David Hagg's appointment as Chair of the Corporation and David Hagg was unanimously elected.

At this point David Hagg returned to the meeting and resumed as Chair.

Vice-Chair of the Corporation

The Clerk reported that Sophie Chester-Glyn was prepared to continue as the interim Vice-Chair. The Chair of the Corporation raised that he had discussed with Sophie Chester-Glyn whether she would like to continue beyond the interim period and for there to be two Vice-Chairs appointed. Should this be a permanent arrangement it will be decided at the next meeting.

David Hagg proposed and Lynne Craig seconded Sophie Chester-Glyn's appointment as interim Vice-Chair to cover Sophie Green's maternity leave and that Sophie Green's appointment as Vice-Chair of the Corporation continues upon her return from maternity leave. Sophie Chester-Glyn and Sophie Green were unanimously elected.

It was resolved:

- a) **To re-appoint David Hagg as Chair of the Corporation, with effect from 1 August 2022 to 31 July 2023.**
- b) **To re-appoint Sophie Green as Vice-Chair of the Corporation, upon her return from maternity leave until 31 July 2023.**
- c) **To appoint Sophie Chester-Glyn as interim Vice-Chair of the Corporation until Sophie Green's return from maternity leave.**

19. **Careers and Employability Report**

Members received the annual report on careers and employability.

The report was noted.

20. **Items of Urgent Business**

As a member of SGSAT, acting on behalf of the Corporation, the Chair informed of receipt of a recent letter from the DfE in respect of a termination warning notice relating to Forest High School. This will be an agenda item for discussion at the next Corporation meeting.

23. **Confidentiality**

Members agreed that due to business sensitivities SGSCSL report (item 7), pay scales review (item 8), financial planning (items 12a & b), CEO & Executive Principal's report (item 13), confidential appendix of the Principal's report (item 14), Strategy Away Day notes (item 15), Audit Committee confidential minutes (item 17) and minutes 7, 8, 12a & b, 13a, b & c and 17f should be treated as confidential.

24. **Assessment of meeting**

A summary of feedback in relation to the meeting held 9 June 2022 was received.

25. **Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 6 October 2022, 5pm, WISE Campus.

Taking on board feedback from governors whether meetings should be held face-to-face or via Teams, the Chair proposed a blended approach for the next academic year, with 5 Corporation meetings being held face-to-face and 3 via Teams.

On behalf of the Corporation, the Chair extended his thanks to members of the Executive Team.

The meeting commenced at 5.00pm.

Louise Bright joined the meeting at 5.03pm (after item 2) and left the meeting at 7.35pm during item 16)

Gavin Murray joined the meeting at 5.25pm (during item 8)

Moirra Foster-Fitzgerald left the meeting at 5.38pm (during item 9)

Stuart Evans left the meeting at 6.17pm (after item 12a)

Rich Aitken left the meeting at 7.14pm (after item 12b)

The meeting closed at 7.53pm

The meeting was quorate.