



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

Approved minutes of a meeting of South Gloucestershire and Stroud College  
Further Education Corporation  
Held on 26 January 2023  
Conducted via Microsoft TEAMS

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

**In Attendance:** Rich Aitken (Head of Finance)  
Gavin Murray (Deputy Principal)  
Sara-Jane Watkins (College Principal)  
Sharon Glover (Clerk)

The Chair opened the meeting by reminding governors of the opening of Horizon 38 on 7 February, to which governors had been invited, and of his intent to hold 1-1s in February. When asked, there was no request to un-star any of the starred agenda item.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Sophie Green, Moira Foster-Fitzgerald and Jude Saunderson. Matt Davis and Khadija Nisar did not attend the meeting.

2. **Presentation – Curriculum Briefing**

The Principal presented a curriculum update, covering key changes for the next academic year, in preparation for the new Accountability Agreements. Members were

informed that a draft Accountability Agreement will be submitted to the April Corporation meeting outlining the key curriculum changes based on local, national, regional and skills needs.

Members were informed of the five key external organisations/bodies that have an impact on the portfolio reviews undertaken. The presentation also covered:

- Education Programmes for Young People
- Adult Curriculum planned changes
- Apprenticeships
- Higher Education

Members questioned how the curriculum areas are preparing their learners for employment. The Principal responded that every curriculum area is different and preparation is bespoke to each area. From the employer panel meetings attended, governors recognised that preparation for work is important and feedback had been provided on how course design could be enhanced. When asked if employment contract rights are covered with learners, members were informed that it is at some levels.

Members questioned whether the plans for the College curriculum are shared with other local Colleges and the impact should there be overlaps. The Principal confirmed that collaborative working had already taken place with some Colleges in relation to joint bids and that initial thoughts will be shared to ensure no conflicts occur and to ensure an alignment in curriculum offer. A key focus point of the Accountability Agreements will be to evidence how Colleges have worked collaboratively and the levels of engagement. Members raised the need to ensure that resources to deliver the curriculum are possible within the budget provision.

When asked, governors confirmed that, in advance of the presentation of the Education Strategy, there was clarity of the direction of travel for the curriculum and this was endorsed by members.

### 3. **Declarations of Interest**

The following declarations of interest were raised and noted by the Corporation:

- Douglas Blackstock:-
  - Interests lost as Trustee, Waldorf Learning Foundation and Board Member, Severn Valley School.
  - New interest added of joining the Advisory Board of Future Learn.

- Catherine Green:-
  - no longer a Director of WSP Solicitors Limited and is now employed by DAS Law.
- The interests of Louise Bright, Kevin Hamblin and Dave Merrett (as Directors of SGSCSL) were noted in part of the CEO & Executive Principal's report relating to SGSCSL.
- The interests of Lynne Craig, Phil Eames and Kevin Hamblin were noted in part of the CEO & Executive Principal's report relating to SGSAT and agenda item 17.
- The interest of Sophie Chester-Glyn in the Search Committee recommendation for a new Corporation Member.

#### 4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held 1 December 2022 were approved as a correct record, ready for signing by the Chair.

#### 5. **Corporation action log**

Members noted that all actions had been completed.

#### 6. **Strategic Presentation**

The CEO & Executive Principal presented a mid-year strategic review and a lookahead of issues being discussed by the Executive Team in advance of the Governors' strategy away day. Members were informed of the unprecedented economic environment with all Colleges facing many challenges. The greatest concern is whether turnover can be increased quickly enough, whilst maintaining standards. Members also raised that there are estates issues with budget constraints. With potential HE accommodation at WISE campus members questioned whether there was an opportunity to make digital and GREEN premium offers. The CEO & Executive Principal suggested that Berkeley would provide these opportunities and consideration could be given to the disposal of some parts of the Berkeley campus. Discussions are taking place with the University of Gloucestershire in relation to their disposal of the first floor of C11. There are also discussions taking place in relation to offering a digital training centre at Lyde Green, South Gloucestershire. The College is also working closely with SGS Berkeley Green UTC in relation to digital to ensure that there is no replication. The Chief Financial Officer is currently preparing budgets for the next couple of years and although there are no final figures available yet the year after next is proving a concern. Members concurred that there are difficult decisions ahead and the general political view is that the government has lost interest.

Members raised that although the delivery of 14-16 provision sounds positive it was questioned how much the College can afford to invest in this offer. The Principal reported that over 20 applications have so far been received with 126 families expected at the open day. A further update will be provided at the next meeting. The curriculum has been planned for next year and this provision will increase efficiency and footfall at the Stroud campus. Where possible, staff will infill and progress against the business plan is pleasing to date. There has been minimum capital investment needed, with the movement of the library to the ground floor being the main capital cost. Members were concerned that staff are recruited and then would have to be let go of if the growth doesn't materialise. Assurance was received that 14-16 is a growth area and an excessive amount of staff is not being taken on.

The challenge is attracting and retaining staff across certain areas of the curriculum, which will result in a lack of growth and risks need to be weighed up. Members asked what political engagement the College has. Members were informed that although the College works closely with WECA the previous strong support from local MPs is not as strong as it was hoped. The Head of Finance reported that high level budget modelling is being undertaken and it is getting more challenging to balance the budget and growth of the College was seen as the way forward.

Members raised the lack of visibility of the financial contributions of the various curriculum areas across the College and that the Principal and Chief Financial Officer had been asked to develop a report to be presented alongside the financial plan for next year.

The Chair summarised that there are many uncertainties with grim prospects ahead to face. The risks of different growth areas and issues need to be considered. Higher Education growth is also of concern and business cases for each of the growth proposals will need to be presented to Corporation in order to understand risks, benefits and contribution so that informed decisions can be taken.

## 7. **College Strategy**

Members were presented with a revised College strategy and thanks were provided to those governors involved in steering its development. Members were informed of the key changes made to the Strategy, which included a streamlining of the overarching strategic priorities, inclusion of outcome measures and more relevant values and ethos. The next stage will be a consultation with staff and learners in advance of the Governors' Strategy Away Day. Members also raised the need to consult with external stakeholders as well. Members concurred that the revised strategy had been an improvement; provided a clear direction of travel; and looked forward to receiving feedback following consultation.

**It was resolved:  
To approve the Strategic Plan 2022/23-2026/27.**

**8. Diversity, Equity Inclusion & Belonging (DEIB)**

- a) DEIB 2021/22 Annual Report – The Deputy Principal presented the report and raised a correction on the graph on page 7, which will be amended on the final version. Members questioned the benefits that the partnerships with Bristol Pride and the Carnival will bring to students. Members were informed of the links with the community and education and these partnerships have increased the College's presence in the community. Members noted that these partnerships were Bristol focused and questioned engagement in other communities served by the College. Members were informed that this was due to less activity taking place in other communities. It was reported that the Principal and Deputy Principal attend South Gloucestershire's Equality Group and the College has signed up to their Charter to gain access to other organisations. The College is always seeking opportunities to increase what it does and the Voice of the Learner is used as a means of establishing what more can be done. Members discussed the equality objectives, which are set every 4-years and are difficult to change the focus once these have been set and published.

Members questioned whether the Inclusion Committee report into the Executive Team. Confirmation was received that it does and also the Senior Leadership Team depending on sign-off requirements. It was suggested that members of the Inclusion Committee are invited to present to the Corporation.

- b) DEIB policy – Minor revisions to the policy were presented. Members sought assurance that systems are in place to record mandatory training and the impact of non-compliance. Members were assured of the reporting processes in place and that non-compliance could lead to disciplinary action.
- c) DEIB Strategy – Members were presented with a draft overarching strategy that demonstrates how DEIB is embedded across the College. Members raised that further work was needed to define DEIB in the strategy and suggested that the College would benefit from external consultancy to provide a SWOT analysis and independent review to benchmark the College's progress. Members were informed that the DEIB annual report was a statutory report to demonstrate compliance and the strategy was intended to demonstrate the means in place to achieve the strategy. The College is on a journey to equity and goes beyond the statutory requirements. The Principal confirmed that there are also success measures relating to diversity objectives in the strategic plan, which will be monitored. Members were informed that the cost of consultancy needs to be taken into consideration against current financial pressures. The Chair suggested a further conversation about the engagement of external consultants takes place offline and the DEIB Strategy re-presented at a future meeting.

- d) Feedback from the Child Protection, Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs & Disability, Equality & Diversity Advocates was invited. Having completed training for the Advocate role and having conversations with College staff there was a level of confidence that the College is meeting and exceeding statutory responsibilities with good practices in place.

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

- a) To note the DEIB 2021/22 Annual Report, subject to change raised.
- b) To approve the DEIB policy.

## 9. **Voice of the Learner report**

Members received the Voice of the Learner report, including outcomes from the 2022/23 First Impressions survey, indicating that both the overall satisfaction in teaching, learning and assessment and generally with the College remains high. Appended to the report were the headline survey results.

Members were informed of a Voice of the Learner meeting that had taken place earlier that day and how impressive and articulate the learners and campus representatives were. The learners felt supported but the lack of social space at Filton and WISE campuses needs further consideration. However, it was acknowledged that both of these sites are at full capacity.

**The report was noted.**

## 10. **KPI Report**

Members received the KPI dashboard. Following its scrutiny, governors questioned whether the development team is large enough to provide support for tutors or whether they are being stretched. The Deputy Principal confirmed that additional resource had been requested to support more targeted requests for tutor support. In addition, further support has been secured from the Ofsted Inspector the College had engaged to provide continuous improvement. As a Corporation, support for further investment in staff development was endorsed.

Members discussed Prevent training data and were informed that revised training is soon to be rolled out and a further update can be provided at the next meeting. Further clarification was sought and received in relation to the meaning of substantive and claims training. Governors will also be invited to complete Prevent training. Members asked the actions taken if individuals do not complete KCSIE and were informed that there are risk assessments in place and that the reports include everyone on the system but some individuals shouldn't be on there and the Chief Group Services Officer is looking into data cleansing. A further update on data will be provided at the next meeting.

Members discussed the retention and attendance data and actions taken to improve attendance. The impact of staff sickness and vacancies on teaching and course delivery was raised. Members were informed that the highest number of vacancies

were in High Needs provision and English and Maths and there is a recruitment issue in construction. Assurance was provided that actions are being taken to minimise impacts.

**The report was noted.**

**Action: Deputy Principal.**

11. **ONS Reclassification**

A report providing a summary of the position regarding the ONS Reclassification of Colleges and their subsidiaries into the central government sector, together with potential impacts, was received.

**The report was noted.**

12. **Management Information**

The Head of Finance presented the management accounts exception report covering 31 December 2022. Members were informed that although the forecast surplus is higher than the budgeted surplus the financial pressures still remain. Members were informed of the allocation of two additional capital bids that need to be spent by 31 March 2025 and will be considered as part of the financial planning process and estates strategy work.

**The report was noted.**

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

Members received the report and Phil Eames raised the need for absolute confidentiality in relation to the update on SGS Academy Trust.

**The report was noted.**

14. **Principal's Report**

Members received the Principal's report and questions were invited. The Chair referred to Operation Christmas, which had been a great success and credit was attributed to staff.

The Principal reported that in preparation for an impending Ofsted inspection, the College had engaged a recent Ofsted Inspector to assist with continuous improvement and understanding of the inspection process. Many strengths have come from this engagement together with areas that require rapid focus. In particular, a detailed action plan has been developed to focus on high needs and this was shared with

governors. One governor raised that they had participated in a deep dive and had also picked up on this area. The Principal confirmed that a lot of progress has been made and invited this Governor to attend the weekly Assistant Principal meetings in order to provide governor oversight and assurance of progress being made. Sophie Chester-Glyn also expressed an interest in attending these meetings. The Corporation welcomed the engagement of the Ofsted inspector in order to receive fresh, impartial feedback which was also considered to be good staff development. Members were reassured that action plans are in place and the College was congratulated on taking this course of action.

The Principal reported concerns with adult funding/WECA as funding going backwards. With a new campus opening at Horizon 38, this had been no small undertaking.

**The report was noted.**

15. **John Huggett Engineering Hall (JHEH), Berkeley**

This item was included as part of the CEO & Executive Principal's report.

16. **Search Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held 11 January 2023 were noted and recommendations presented:-

- a) The re-appointment of Sophie Green, at the end of her current 4-year term of office, for a further 4-year term was recommended.

**It was resolved:**

**To re-appoint Sophie Green, at the end of her current 4-year term of office, for a further 4-year term of office.**

- b) Confidential Item.

17. **SGS Academy Trust**

The SGSAT Annual Operational Report and the Annual Report and Financial Statements were noted.

18. **Governor Development Event**

Members noted the report of the Governor Development Event held 12 January 2023.



19. **Post Implementation Reviews**

Reports on the Post Implementation reviews of the Growth Hub at Stroud campus and the Brunel building at WISE campus were received.

**The reports were noted.**

20. **Assessment of meeting**

A summary of feedback in relation to the meeting held 1 December 2022 was received.

21. **Items of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

22. **Confidentiality**

Members agreed that due to business and personal sensitivities, CEO & Executive Principal's report (item 13), confidential Search Committee minutes (item 16), SGSAT (item 17), Post Implementation Reviews (item 19) and minute 16b should be treated as confidential.

23. **Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 23 March 2023 at 5pm, WISE Campus.

The Chair suggested that Governors may wish to arrive early to view the facilities.

The meeting commenced at 4.00pm.

Douglas Blackstock joined the meeting at 4.28pm (during item 2).

Gavin Murray left the meeting at 6.20pm (after item 11).

Rich Aitken left the meeting at 6.32pm (during item 14).

Rick Sturge left the meeting at 6.35pm (during item 14).

The meeting closed at 6.39pm.

The meeting was quorate.