



SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE AND STROUD COLLEGE
FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

Approved minutes of a meeting of South Gloucestershire and Stroud College
Further Education Corporation
Held on 8 June 2023
Berkeley Campus, Gloucestershire

Present:	David Hagg	(Chair)
	Matt Atkinson	(Vice-Chair)
	Douglas Blackstock	
	Louise Bright	(Joined via TEAMS)
	Sophie Chester-Glyn	(Joined via TEAMS)
	Lynne Craig	
	Mike Croker	
	Phil Eames	
	Paul Farrell	
	Kevin Hamblin	(CEO & Executive Principal)
	Irene Molodtsov	
	Gary Parsons	
	Rick Sturge	

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

The Chair informed members of the resignation of Matt Davis (Staff Governor), which would be covered in more detail as part of agenda item 8. Members were also informed that requests had been made to un-star agenda items 13 and 14. No other requests were received to un-star any other agenda items

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Rich Aitken, Moira Foster-Fitzgerald, Dave Merrett and Khadija Nisar.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

The Clerk reported and Corporation noted the following declarations of interests:-

- As Trustees and CEO of SGSAT; Lynne Craig, Phil Eames and Kevin Hamblin in the CEO report relating to SGSAT.
- As Directors of SGSCSL; Louise Bright, Kevin Hamblin and Jude Saunderson in the CEO report relating to SGSCSL.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held 27 April 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. **Student Governors**

The Clerk reported that two new Student Governors had been elected and put forward by the Student Union for Corporation approval. Members were keen to understand their motivation for putting themselves forward for this role and ways in which they can be welcomed into the role. The Principal suggested that their manifestos are shared with the Corporation and offered to meet with them, alongside the Deputy Principal.

It was resolved:

- To appoint Viridian Joseph as Student Governor from 1 August 2023 – 31 July 2024.**
- To appoint Joe Griffin as Student Governor from 1 August 2023 – 31 July 2024.**

Action: Clerk.

5. **Annual Teaching, Learning, Assessment & Feedback report and review of the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy & policy**

Members noted that this item is to be carried forward as it will be considered by the Learning and Quality Committee in the first instance.

6. **KPI report and review of KPIs for 2023/24 (including targets)**

Members noted that this item is to be carried forward as it will be considered by the Learning and Quality Committee in the first instance.

7. **Learner Destination Data and Progression (including HE)**

The Principal presented the report and confirmed that the HE data is not yet available and will follow. It was reported that outcomes were similar to previous years, however, there were some areas that required further investigation and these were shared with the Corporation.

Members questioned the number of learners that progress to Higher Education and were informed 21%. Members considered this to be a low percentage and questioned the reasons behind this data and the number that may have progressed into Higher Apprenticeships. Members were informed that other alternative routes to Higher Education are presented to learners and Corporation suggested that further analysis is needed. Members also questioned the number of learners that progress from L3, Year 1 to Year 2 and that this would be useful to include in future reports.

Members questioned whether the College were aware of individual destination data and confirmation was received that the Learning Area Managers would have this information. Members also questioned how many learners from construction, plumbing, hair and beauty progress into secure employment. Members were informed that for some trades there aren't extensive job opportunities so the College aims to provide learners with sufficient skills to progress into other relevant types of occupation. The Staff Governor added that the employer engagement panels also provide an opportunity to identify aspects of the curriculum for future employment needs. Members raised that self-employment is also a good option and that this destination should be reported upon. It was confirmed that this data can be provided to the Corporation/Learning & Quality Committee.

Members discussed the data and as there were no targets or benchmarking information it was hard to tell whether the data was good or not. It was also concerning that training is being provided but there is limited availability of jobs thereafter. Members were informed that it is challenging to set targets as the choice of career is down to each individual learner but curriculum delivery does also focus on employability and skills transfer. However, there is an aim that 100% of learners achieve a positive destination. The Principal agreed to investigate the availability of benchmarking data as an external data collection company is used by the College.

Members questioned the Apprenticeship data as there had been a decrease in data for employment (not Apprenticeship based) and asked if there was any explanation for this or trend analysis. Members were informed that there was no trend analysis as 3-years of data was needed but the Principal agreed to investigate further.

One member raised that having worked in the Higher Education sector to achieve over 90% was considered to be very good level of success. When asked if the positive data was used to attract new learners via use in marketing materials and publication on the College website confirmation was received that it was. Members were informed that destination data is not timely and that there is a lot of granular data that sits beneath what has been reported with outcomes feeding into the College Self-Assessment Report.

Members raised the need to give thought to future data collection and reporting in order to report on the number of learners that progress into the LSIP priority areas. Having been involved with employer panel meetings, governors were struck how certain aspects had been raised that would feed into the curriculum. The Principal provided examples of how the curriculum had been adapted to take on board employer feedback.

The report was noted.

Action: Principal.

8. **Staff Governor Election Process**

Following the resignation of one of the Staff Members, the Clerk presented the report, including the Staff Member election procedure. Following detailed discussion, it was agreed that there should remain two Staff Member positions on the Corporation and that a replacement is to be sought.

It was agreed that, as the current Staff Member was an academic member of staff from the Filton campus, appointment from a non-academic member of staff from either Stroud or Berkeley campuses should be strongly encouraged in order to provide a different mix on the Corporation. When asked, the current Staff Member was content to discuss their experience of the role with any interested candidates.

The Chair also invited expressions of interest, to the Clerk, in fulfilling the Careers and Employability Advocate role.

It was resolved:

- a) **To note the resignation of Matt Davis as Staff Member and Careers and Employability Advocate, with effect from 10 May 2023;**
- b) **That a replacement should be sought for Matt Davis and that nominations are strongly encouraged from non-academic staff from the Stroud/Berkeley based campuses;**
- c) **That the Staff Member appointment is to be for a four-year term of office;**
- d) **To approve the Staff Member election procedure;**
- e) **To invite expressions of interest, to the Clerk, in fulfilling the Careers and Employability Advocate role.**

9. **Management Accounts exception report**

The Chief Financial Officer presented the executive summary from the 30 April 2023 Management Accounts. It was reported that the forecast outturn was better than the budgeted surplus, maintaining “Good” financial health, albeit at the lower end. Members were informed of the changes that had contributed to the budget changes.

Members noted low student ratios to staff members and questioned whether growth will be managed by the existing workforce. Members were informed that as part of curriculum planning the aim had been to factor in larger class sizes but the College is restrained by the current accommodation structures meaning that there may be some inefficiencies. There is high efficiency at the Bristol campuses that counter the inefficiencies at the Stroud campus. Members were informed that no further analysis has been done with other Colleges, however, SGS sub-contract very little compared to other Colleges. No two Colleges are the same and all have different ways of working which means that comparisons are not straight forward. Members raised the need to

be cautious that if carrying a large number of vacancies this can misrepresent the real costs of running the College, especially as finances are a challenge going forward. When asked, members were informed that agency staff are shown in the Admin and Central Services pay line, which means that the true staffing costs are not being received. Assurance was sought, and received, that the finances are being tightly managed and, to date, the College has a positive track record in this regard, especially in light of the challenging financial environment. However, it was recognised that there may be areas of inefficiencies across the College that need to be investigated further.

The Chief Financial Officer reported that the Corporation had previously approved to renew the loan facility with SGS Commercial Services. Following the ONS reclassification, the Chief Financial Officer has taken advice from the DfE as to whether their approval was required to the loan facility and was informed that their approval was not required. However, the ESFA raised the need to consider if this transaction was considered to be novel, contentious or repercussive. The loan facility has been progressed with the lawyers and ideally the loan documentation should be presented to Corporation in the first instance for approval and then to the Board of SGSCSL. Due to timeframes involved there will be the need to present the loan agreement to the Board of SGSCSL in the first instance and for approval to be subject to Corporation and DfE approval. The Chief Financial Officer apologised that this hadn't been explained in her report, which was due to the timing of information received from the ESFA. Members asked if the views of the external auditors had been sought and were informed that SGS has a debenture in place so could take the assets from SGSCSL. This will be discussed further with Bishop Fleming in relation to year end and the impact on the signing of the Financial Statements should this transaction be considered as repercussive and should there be any default on the loan.

The report was noted, together with the position about the loan to SGSCSL.

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

The CEO & Executive Principal reported the following:

- a) SGSCSL - A proposal is to be presented to the Board of SGSCSL relating to the possibility of the disposal of some/all of the Berkeley site and the College properties. Following the recent successful Skills Development Fund and Stroud Economic Development Fund bids confirmation was received that these projects can still be delivered if disposal is an option. Members were informed that, should the Corporation decide to dispose of C11, there is the possibility that the DfE could ask for a return of £150k SDF funding.
- b) Construction facilities in Filton – Following meetings with South Gloucestershire Council and WECA, WECA are commissioning another report to establish the future demand for construction skills and the need (or not) of a regional construction skills centre in Filton. A meeting has also been

arranged with YTL to discuss the airfield development and the possible availability of land. Members raised that construction at Filton campus is the number one educational concern as there is sub-standard accommodation for students. When asked, confirmation was received that the Estates strategy will cover the full extent of the College's estate, with packages of different estates projects for consideration, and will not just be a masterplan for Filton campus. Confirmation was received that the strategy will be available at the beginning of the new academic year. Members raised the importance of having shovel ready projects as other Colleges are receiving grants where these projects are available.

- c) Estates strategy – There has been a delay to the development of the strategy whilst further data is provided. The current thinking is the replacement of R and S blocks at Filton campus with the displacement of car parking. An approach has been made to Airbus with the request for additional car parking on their site. Any such disposal of the Berkeley campus could then support match funding if any funding opportunities were to arise.
- d) SGSAT – The current chair is retiring at the end of the current academic year and the services of Peridot are being used to assist with finding his replacement. Any possible disposal at Berkeley could impact on SGS Berkeley Green UTC and their future expansion plans/student social space. Any request for additional land would need to be sorted prior to any possible disposal.

The report was noted.

11. **Principal's Report**

The Principal reported on the following:

- a) Confidential Item.
- b) 16-18 ESFA Business case – The College has been unsuccessful and the College budget is getting ever challenging.
- c) Employer Conference – Being held 30th June 2023 with over 100 acceptances to date. The Corporation were asked to share the invite with their networks.
- d) SGS Create – 92 acceptances to date with 20% of learners having EHCPs. Members were also updated on key staff recruitment.
- e) Tenders – Members were informed of Local Skills Improvement Fund bids and of two projects that the College has in mind.
- f) Safeguarding – reference was made to the Safeguarding report appended to the Principal's report.

The report was noted.

12. **2022/23 Governance Self-Assessment Report process**

Members noted that this item is to be carried forward, pending receipt of the new AoC Code of Good Governance.

13. **Partnership Proposals 2023/24, including Sub-Contracting policies**

Following receipt of the report and subcontracting policy, Members asked for further clarification on quality monitoring in relation to who is responsible for assuring the quality of provision. Members were informed that there is a dedicated team of assessors and the standard verification has been positive together with positive reports from the Internal Auditors, which have also provided reassurance.

Members raised that London Irish have gone into administration and were informed that one of the other governors had raised this directly in an email to the Principal, together with other questions. The Clerk was asked to circulate the questions and responses to all members.

It was resolved:

- a) **Approve the Subcontracting Policy;**
- b) **Approve the ESFA sub-contracting arrangement with Nelson Trust;**
- c) **Approve the 2023/24 DISE subcontracting work, appended to the report;**
- d) **Accept and support the mitigation around potential risks associated with some DISE, NGOs based on controls in place.**

Action: Clerk.

14. **Corporation/Audit Committee /Learning & Quality Committee Business Plans**

Members received the 2023/24 Corporation/Audit Committee/Learning and Quality Committee Business Plans. The following changes were raised:

- To include the top 5 areas of concern as an agenda item at each Learning and Quality Committee meeting.
- To add the Financial Development Group meetings and areas of focus.

It was resolved:

To approve the 2023/24 Corporation/Audit Committee/Learning and Quality Committee Business Plans, subject to changes raised.

15. **Fees and Refunds Policy 2023/24**

Members received the Fees and Refunds policy 2023/24.

**It was resolved:
To approve the Fees and Refunds policy 2023/24.**

16. **Professional Development Policy**

Members noted that this item is to be carried forward as it will be considered by the Learning and Quality Committee in the first instance.

17. **Corporation action log**

Members noted that all actions had been completed.

18. **Assessment of meeting**

A summary of feedback in relation to the meeting held 27 April 2023 was received. The Chair encouraged all governors to complete the meeting assessments.

19. **Governors' Strategy Away Day**

Confidential Item.

20. **Items of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

21. **Confidentiality**

Members agreed that due to business sensitivities, the confidential part of the Principal's report and confidential appendix (item 11), the Governors' Strategy Away Day notes (item 19) and minutes 11a and 19 should be treated as confidential.

22. **Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 6 July 2023 at 5pm, Stroud Campus.

Rick Sturge provided his apologies for this meeting.

The meeting commenced at 5.00pm.

Louise Bright left the meeting at 6.00pm (during item 9)

Sophie Chester-Glyn left the meeting at 6.41pm (during item 19)

Kevin Hamblin, Gavin Murray, Jude Saunderson and Sara-Jane Watkins left at 6.41pm (during item 19)

The meeting closed at 7.28pm

The meeting was quorate.