SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE AND STROUD COLLEGE
FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

Approved minutes of a meeting of South Gloucestershire and Stroud College
Further Education Corporation
Held on 9 June 2022
At WISE Campus, New Road, Stoke Gifford, Bristol

Present: David Hagg   (Chair)
                          Douglas Blackstock (joined via TEAMS)
                          Louise Bright
                          Steph Brooks (joined via TEAMS)
                          Sarah Cartlidge (joined via TEAMS)
                          Sophie Chester-Glyn
                          Lynne Craig
                          Mike Croker
                          Phil Eames
                          Catherine Green (joined via TEAMS)
                          Kevin Hamblin   (CEO & Executive Principal)
                          Irene Molodtsov
                          Gary Parsons
                          Ben Short (joined via TEAMS)
                          Rick Sturge (joined via TEAMS)

In Attendance: Rich Aitken   (Head of Finance)
                          Gavin Murray   (Vice Principal, Performance, Standards
                                                           & Effectiveness) (joined via TEAMS)
                          Sara-Jane Watkins   (College Principal)
                          Sharon Glover   (Clerk)

When asked by the Chair, there was no request received to un-star any starred agenda item.

As this would be the last meeting of the Student Governors, on behalf of the Corporation, the Chair sincerely thanked them for their contributions and wished them well for the future.

1.   **Apologies for Absence**

       Apologies were received from Moira Foster-Fitzgerald, Sophie Green (Maternity Leave), Dave Merrett and Jude Saunderson. Matt Davis did not attend the meeting.

2.   **Presentation – Behaviour Management**

The Assistant Principal Academic was welcomed to the meeting and invited to update members on Behaviour Management changes following his presentation at the Curriculum Conference.

Members were informed that the aims of changes to behaviour management were to fundamentally create a College culture and ethos of inclusive positivity promoting success with the setting of clear expectations and support for staff. Regular census points for staff to record progress of their student cohorts and promote success will also be introduced, together with a parent portal. The College being a national leader of the latter. The Chair invited feedback from the staff and student governors on the new behaviour management policy and were informed that the new policy was a simplification of expectations. Student Governors were concerned that staff are already under pressure and this would cause additional workloads. Assurance was provided that if behaviours improve there will be less intervention and improve staff efficiency. Having previously consulted widely, the intent will be to roll out the policy in order to equip staff with strategies to deal effectively with student behaviour, supported by the roll out of comprehensive training and focus on this topic at staff development days.

Members questioned how the checks and balances can be compared to ensure consistency. Although it was recognised it is difficult to roll out a process that is 100% fit for purpose, managers can apply context to the department and will have data rich behaviour information. Members also questioned whether funding support is available and whether the title of the policy should include the word "positive". Members were informed that many titles had been suggested but the current one was considered to be as good as any.

It was acknowledged that behaviour is complex and that some students have complex needs. The policy is intended to provide an early trigger to identify any issues and to help to reduce withdrawals and improve well-being.

It was suggested that a review takes place in a year's time with regular reporting as part of KPI reporting. Members discussed exclusions and were informed that these were last resort and required approval by the Principal. The Principal offered to report this data to the Corporation. It was also raised that other College policies i.e. the Inclusion policy covers the areas not tolerated by the College.

The Assistant Principal Academic was thanked for his update and was invited to provide a future update on the success of its deployment.

At this point the Assistant Principal Academic left the meeting.

3.   **Declarations of Interest**

As Trustees and CEO of SGSAT, declarations of interests were declared for Lynne Craig, Phil Eames and Kevin Hamblin in the CEO & Executive Principal's report relating to SGS Academy Trust.

4.   **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held 28 April 2022 were approved and signed as a correct record.

5.   **Matters Arising From Those Minutes**

Actions on the action log were monitored and updates provided.

6.   **Appointment of Student Governors**

The Clerk reported that this item is to be carried forward to the next meeting.

Due to the early departure of Rick Sturge (member of SPG) the Chair brought forward agenda item 14.

7.   **Strategic Property Group (Agenda Item 14)**

Members were informed that the Strategic Property Group had been established as a task and finish group primarily to oversee capital development programmes. As there are no current capital development programmes it was proposed that the SPG is dissolved and in its place the formation of a small informal development group who meet as and when needed. This group would not be a formal committee and would not have any decision-making powers. This approach will provide the CEO & Executive and Principal with an informal discussion group prior to any proposals being presented to Corporation for consideration. The Corporation were in favour of this approach.

The minutes of the last SPG meeting held were approved by those SPG members present. As the Chair of SPG was no longer a Corporation member, it was agreed that Lynne Craig (SPG member) should sign the minutes as a correct record.

It was resolved:
To disband the Strategic Property Group.

8.   **Annual Teaching, Learning & Assessment report & Review of the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy (Agenda Item 7)**

The Vice Principal confirmed that teaching staff have been visited and learning walks completed. Following analysis of data, 9 points against the learner journey have been

developed that teaching staff can benefit from. Following this, the policy has been updated accordingly. Members questioned the increase in percentages for those teachers requiring support and the reason behind this. Members were informed that the turnover and level of inexperience of staff is the driver and assurance was provided that no staff member is on a formal competency plan and the position is being monitored closely.

Members questioned the success rates of staff that go onto be good teachers. The Vice Principal advised that generally an improvement is expected in six weeks. Action plans are produced which are re-checked in six weeks, with support provided by the Quality department. Many are new teachers to the sector with no face-to-face experience due to the pandemic. When asked, confirmation was received that it is a mixture of behaviours and technical skills related. Members praised the structured intervention planned to support staff together with the positive levels of staff satisfaction.

Members questioned the strategy to re-engage learners to catch up on their education and were informed that pedagogy is considered and how to work with students to progress them. Currently, the College is consulting on the SEND and Inclusion policies so that work can be undertaken with staff to understand each learner's start point.

The report was noted and it was resolved:
To approve the Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Feedback Policy 2022-2025.

9. **Learner Destination Data and Progression (including HE) (Agenda Item 8)**

The Principal reported that the overall position was positive, despite the pandemic. Of concern are the apprenticeship learner numbers as there has been a national dip. Members were informed that employers are approaching learners with employment opportunities, which is to the detriment of the College. Members paid tribute to staff for the positive outcomes and were informed that the Principal is speaking with the Minister of Skills, who has been responsive and there is a good relationship in place with the College.

Following scrutiny, members raised an error in the data for further review and requested that the equality and diversity data included all categories for comparison purposes. Members also questioned whether there is any external benchmarking data available. The Principal agreed to take forward these requests.

The report was noted.

Action: Principal.

10. **KPI report and review of KPIs for 2022/23 (including targets) (Agenda Item 9)**

The Vice Principal presented the KPI report and reported a reduction in retention, which was not extraordinary, due to the buoyant employment market. Also presented were the 2022/23 KPI targets, which had not been hugely modified following work with the AoC, with modifications at programme level.

Members were informed that the College is experiencing challenges with cancellation of public transport for some learners and they are struggling to travel to College. This could have an impact on recruitment for next year and the Principal is discussing further with the WECA Mayor.

The report was noted and it was resolved:
To approve the 2022/23 KPI targets.

11. **Management Information (Agenda Item 10)**

Confidential Item.

12. **CEO & Executive Principal's Report (Agenda Item 11)**

Confidential Item.

13. **Principal's Report (Agenda Item 12)**

The Principal reported on the following:-

a) <u>Staffing</u>– The biggest concerns relate to staffing and there are challenges to fill vacancies, especially in construction, IT and academic. A proposal for pay progression will be presented at the July Corporation meeting. The Corporation welcomed discussions about the pay framework. It is envisaged that there will be further national strikes by teachers. Members questioned at what point there would be concern that provision can't be provided. The Principal confirmed that the College is doing as much as it can to recruit through its curriculum planning and budgets allocation. The concern being that staff are less experienced and there are also concerns in the non-teaching areas. The possibility of reviewing terms and conditions for some staff is being considered. Flexible approaches i.e. working from home, have been introduced. Members were informed that the 14-16 consultation feedback had been helpful but in light of staffing difficulties it was questioned whether the College has a plan of how to deal with staffing in an already challenging area. Members were informed that staff recruitment is easier in Stroud. One member asked whether there is a corporate programme for assisting Ukraine refugees into College jobs. It was agreed that the Principal and the Corporation member would discuss further outside of the meeting.

b) <u>Tenders</u> – Positive news received that the College had been successful with its Strategic Economic Development Fund project. This relates to supporting new teachers and staff. The Principal and College staff were congratulated on the bid outcomes.

The report was noted.

14. **2021/22 Governance Self-Assessment Report process (Agenda Item 13)**

The Clerk presented a report with recommendations in order to progress the development of the 2021/22 Governance Self-Assessment report. The Clerk reported that these were the same questionnaires and approach as used last year.

It was resolved to approve the:
a) **Governor Self-Assessment questionnaire for use in the 2021/22 Governance Self-Assessment Report process.**
b) **Executive Team questionnaire.**
c) **Chair's Performance Review questionnaire.**

15. **Fees, Charges and Refunds Policy 2022/23**

Members received the Fees, Charges and Refunds Policy 2022/23 for approval with delegated approval sought for the Chief Financial Officer to amend the tuition fee level in section 7.4.1.3 once information received. The Chair advised that he is liaising with the Chairs from other local Colleges in order to lobby WECA about the inequitable funding arrangements.

It was resolved:
To approve the Fees, Charges and Refunds Policy 2022/23 and delegate authority to the Chief Financial Officer to amend the tuition fee level in section 7.4.1.3 once information received.

16. **Financial Statements Auditor Letter of Engagement**

Members received the Letter of Engagement with Bishop Fleming for approval.

It was resolved:
To approve the Letter of Engagement with Bishop Fleming and authority was delegated to David Hagg (Chair of the Corporation) to sign the letter on behalf of SGS College.

17. **Partnership Proposals 2022/23, including Sub-Contracting policies**

Members received a report on partnership proposals 2022/23 and other partnership activity which is not a sub-contract arrangement but is of strategic importance.

It was resolved:
a) **To confirm that all subcontracting delivery is high quality and low risk. Where subcontracting organisations are not rated financially as low risk, mitigation measures are sufficient to reduce the risk level to acceptable.**
b) **To approve the proposed subcontract partnerships for 2022/23 as appended to the report.**

18.   **Behaviour Policy**

Members received the Behaviour Policy for approval.

It was resolved:
To approve the Behaviour Policy.

19.   **Digital Services Advocate Role Description**

A Digital Services advocate role description was presented for approval.

It was resolved:
To approve the Digital Advocate role description.

20.   **Corporation/Audit Business Plans 2022/23**

Members received the Corporation and Audit Committee Business Plans 2022/23.

It was resolved:
To approve the Corporation and Audit Committee Business Plans 2022/23.

21.   **Items of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business raised.

22.   **Confidentiality**

Members agreed that due to business sensitivities the confidential SPG minutes (item 7), management information (item 11), CEO & Executive Principal's report (item 12), External Auditor's Letter of Engagement (item 16), and minutes 11 and 12a-c should be treated as confidential.

23.   **Assessment of meeting**

A summary of feedback in relation to the meeting held 28 April 2022 was received. The Clerk reported that actions had been taken in relation to feedback provided.

The Chair invited feedback on Corporation meetings going forward and whether they should be held face-to-face, via TEAMS or a mixed approach. There was a variety of responses and it was agreed that the Clerk should email Corporation members and invite feedback outside of the meeting.

24.   **Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 7 July 2022, at 5.00pm, Stroud Campus.

The meeting commenced at 5.05pm.
Douglas Blackstock joined the meeting at 5.17pm (during item 2)
Catherine Green joined the meeting at 5.35pm (during item 2)
Steph Brooks left the meeting at 6pm (after item 7)
Louise Bright left the meeting at 6.20pm (after item 9)
Rick Sturge left the meeting at 6.25pm (during item 11)
Douglas Blackstock and Sarah Cartlidge left the meeting at 7.10pm (after item 16)
The meeting closed at 7.17pm
The meeting was quorate.