



SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE AND STROUD COLLEGE
FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

Approved minutes of a meeting of South Gloucestershire and Stroud College
Further Education Corporation
Held on 22 February 2018
At Stroud Campus, Stratford Road, Stroud, Gloucestershire

Present:	John Huggett	(Chair)
	Laura Boutle	
	Mike Croker	
	Craig Dickinson	
	Phil Eames	
	Jack Gritt	
	Kevin Hamblin	(CEO & Executive Principal)
	Martin Jones	
	Dave Merrett	
	Richard O'Doherty	
Charlie Webb		
In Attendance:	Moira Foster-Fitzgerald	(Chief Group Services Officer)
	Jude Saunderson	(Chief Financial Officer)
	Andy Slaney	(Chief Operations Officer, Commercial & Estates)
	Sara-Jane Watkins	(College Principal)
	Sharon Glover	(Clerk)

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming Jack Gritt to her first Corporation meeting.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from David Benson, Joe Lamonby, Moyra Pascoe and Carrie Pickford. Roger Ellis did not attend the meeting.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

Martin Jones, Kevin Hamblin and Andy Slaney declared their interests, as Directors of SGS Commercial Services, in agenda item 12. Mike Croker declared his interest in minute 6 of the 8 Feb 18 Search Committee minutes.

3. **Other Items of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held 25 Jan 18 were approved and signed as a correct record.

5. **Matters Arising From Those Minutes**

a) Members monitored actions on the action log and updates were provided. The College Principal reported that a meeting has been scheduled with the Metro Mayor at the end of March to discuss capital funding so it was not considered to be appropriate timing to raise issues relating to apprenticeship funding. However, at this is a national issue it has been raised with the Association of Colleges.

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

Members noted that there was nothing to report at this meeting and that this item is to be carried forward to the next meeting.

7. **Principal's Report**

The College Principal reported on the following:

- a) **Financial position** – A significant amount of work on reforecasting the budgets has taken place. The same issues are faced each year, however, this year is more challenging due to changes in government funding methodology, which was explained in detail. When asked, confirmation was received that adult apprenticeships are not included in the adult budget.
- b) **Joint apprenticeship levy event** – A highly successful event led by SGS was held 9 February and served to evidence that there is confusion in the marketplace in relation to the complexity of apprenticeship reforms. However, the College is supporting the sector as much as possible.
- c) **Joint recruitment event** – The greatest challenge for Colleges within the region is the recruitment of staff. Therefore, a joint recruitment event was trialled with overwhelmingly positive feedback from College staff and attendees. The Chief Group Services Officer advised that this was predominantly an SGS event and the teams presenting and the marketing team should be commended. The result of

this event has led to a bank of potential staff and it was suggested that the approach should be repeated.

- d) Devolution – Positive meetings have been attended with the West of England Combined Authority on devolution and further information was appended to the Principal's report. The importance of achieving adult funding was raised, as this funding will be carried forward into devolution, otherwise local communities will be disadvantaged in the future. To date, the College has been encouraged by how closely WECA are working with the College on how the devolved Adult Education Budget could meet demand by providing greater flexibilities, compared to the current national funding methodology. Members questioned whether there would be a top slice to fund their management structure. The College has been led to believe that data is returned to the ESFA as current which is then passed to the WECA to ensure its being delivered. The Principal was asked if WECA were working more closely with SGS than other Colleges and members were advised that there is pro-active working with SGS and there is a positive relationship in place but it was unknown about relationships with other Colleges.
- e) The Chase – Due to the positive work with South Gloucestershire Council the local authority has committed to working with the College focussed on high needs catering and hospitality provision. The College has secured capital investment from the Council to develop the vacated engineering workshop at the Stroud campus and this project will be overseen by the Strategic Property Group.
- f) Student Exclusions – There have been no permanent exclusions to report. Based on comments made about behaviour in the Monday Memo members were surprised that no exclusions had taken place. Members were informed that exclusions are used sparingly although there have been suspensions. Members were informed of actions being taken to try and address particular behavioural issues. When asked if this behaviour was uniform across all campuses, members were informed that it was but that it was more prolific at Filton campus due to higher learner numbers.
- g) Appraisals – An update on appraisal completion was reported.

Members requested, and received an update, on applications for the Vice Principal vacancy. Members were informed that FE Associates have been appointed and weekly updates are provided. The interview date has been scheduled for 19 March.

The report was noted.

8. **Management Information**

- a) Management Accounts exception report – The Chief Financial Officer reported that the surplus outturn is slightly more than in the budget but is very tight and falls at the bottom end of “good” financial health. The need to achieve a surplus in order to retain “good” financial health was raised. The pay costs assume no vacancies are filled and there is still further work to do. Following meetings with budget holders they are clear on what is needed. The biggest concern being the cash flow forecast and the predicted dip in April, although it is predicted not to dip below £1m.

There has been a re-focus on debt collection and although the position is better than this time last year it is not where the College would want it to be. When asked, it was confirmed that learner loans are received in chunks and profiled and that there is a revised allocation in March for apprenticeships.

Members questioned whether the College has an overdraft facility with the Bank. Although this facility was not available the College could contact the Bank if needed. Members questioned whether there was a cost to secure an overdraft facility and that some institutions have been denied this facility. Confirmation was received that there are costs involved and that some Banks will not support the sector. Members raised that the cash flow doesn't include SGS Commercial Services and a consolidated cash flow was requested for the future.

Members asked if the link between the new MIS and Finance systems has been completed. Members were informed that it is hoped that a link will be available at the end of March. In the meantime a work around had been developed but there is a backlog that the Finance Team are working through to reconcile.

Members questioned whether the financial extent of 16-18 under delivery has yet been modelled for next year. Although difficult to calculate at this stage, the College has been sent an allocation tool and based on the 2016/17 return and taking into account other factors it is showing an increase of £300k.

The report was noted.

- b) KPI report – The Principal reported that attendance in Maths and English remains the greatest challenge due to the number of learners, which are higher compared to other Colleges. Actions taken to try and increase attendance were shared with members. Members asked if learners had been interviewed to establish why they are not attending. It was confirmed that learners had been surveyed and the main outcomes were shared with members.

The Principal tabled benchmarking data for Value Added in order to contextualise against local competitors. When asked, the Principal agreed to establish the names of the Colleges at the top of the performance table. Members raised that the College had moved backwards in terms of its own rating. Members were informed that the College had been focused on improving pass rates and to contextualise

Foundation Art, of which SGS are the largest provider in the South West, are high performing learners. The Principal advised that at the next Curriculum Conference there will be discussion about reducing the number of 16-18 groups and increasing the class size so that learners receive a full time experience. When asked how Maths and English attendance compared with other Colleges, the Principal advised that she had not seen comparative data. The Student Member's views on this were invited and provided. The Principal advised that there is a direct correlation between attendance and achievement hence the College's focus on attendance. The College also provides free breakfast and this is widely advertised, although the Student Member was not aware of this. The need to further consider technology as part of learning and the layout of accommodation was raised. Reference was made to the layout of SGS Berkeley Green UTC and the Student Member's views on this were invited, should he have the opportunity to visit the UTC.

Members then discussed the usefulness of Moodle and the Principal invited the Student Member to become involved in College working parties relating to this. As Moodle is an industry standard members questioned whether the issues lie with its application rather than the platform itself. The Principal advised that there are off the shelf packages that save time and money in developing as alternatives to Moodle. It was suggested that when considering the design of College buildings that student engagement is sought at Strategic Property Group meetings.

Members questioned the data under the level of individualised and personal development as the data did not correlate with the report, the number of red KPIs in relation to Pro-Monitor was raised and the Income Targets in the Finance and Resources KPIs also required review. The Principal agreed to investigate and report back.

The report was noted.

Action: College Principal.

9. **Teaching, Learning and Assessment Report**

The Principal presented the report which provided a more accurate positioning of teaching, learning and assessment following the external review and joint lesson observations. A new teaching, learning and assessment policy has been developed to support staff and all staff have action plans to share best practices. Members questioned whether there was confidence that outstanding/good levels can be maintained. Members were informed that graded observations have only just been re-introduced but the approach is now more rigorous. When asked, confirmation was received that managers have been trained and work has been undertaken with all curriculum managers to ensure correct judgements are made. It was suggested that the report is updated to reflect this position. When asked, confirmation was received that all staff had received training on how to challenge difficult and poor behaviour. When asked, confirmation was received that the member of staff appointed to manage health and safety would not be exclusive to the Construction area.

A detailed discussion then ensued in relation to appraisal completion. Members were advised of the intent to deploy an online appraisal process. Members suggested that it would be useful for members to receive a short presentation of the new appraisal process. It was estimated that 80% of appraisals had been completed for the full time cohort and the Principal offered to present further data of FTE staff completion rates if helpful. The need for appraisals to link to pay progression/reward was raised and to ensure a simplistic process is in place. The importance of the quality of appraisal discussion was raised by members, followed by completion of the paperwork. The need to identify the worth of the appraisal process was raised so that staff can buy into it. Currently the appraisal documentation was considered to be confusing. Members asked how staff views are sought and were advised via the staff forum. The importance of holding ongoing conversations was raised. Members asked that the data in section 1 of the report is double checked.

The report was noted.

Action: College Principal

10. **Quality Strategy and Quality Improvement Framework**

The Principal presented amendments and additions to the 2018-20 Quality Strategy. The proposal being to simplify the framework and refocusing quality improvement to align with the revised College Improvement Plan and the three core improvement outcomes. Following scrutiny, members raised that reference to the former Quality Strategy journey and Improvement framework/map at the back of the document was confusing and requested their removal.

It was resolved:

To approve the Quality Strategy 2018/2020, subject to changes discussed.

11. **Community Engagement Report**

Members received a report on community learning provision. Reference was made to the College winning a national award with the Festival of Learning for Project of the Year in relation to their Refresh 2 Impress programme. Members questioned whether community provision is subject to Ofsted inspection. Confirmation was received that where there are funded qualifications or where Maths and English skills are embedded then that provision would be subject to inspection. When asked why there was no full cost language provision in Bristol members were informed that this was due to a lack of demand.

The Principal reported that much of the community provision is Stroud based and that there would be more opportunity, post devolution, to grow community provision in the West of England, should the provision be embedded with other qualifications. Members also asked how this provision is marketed to attract learners and the Principal provided examples of how marketing takes place, based on a very limited marketing budget.

Members raised that community engagement is an important aspect of the College, which can easily be overlooked, and asked that their thanks are passed onto the Business Development Manager for a very good report which demonstrates how the College is adding value to its communities.

The report was noted.

12. **SGS Commercial Services Limited**

Confidential Item.

13. **Search Committee**

In the absence of the Vice-Chair of the Search Committee, the Chair of the Corporation reported the following:

At this point Mike Croker was invited to leave the meeting.

- a) Following consideration of Mike Croker's attendance and contribution, the Search Committee recommended his re-appointment at the end of his first year of office.

It was resolved:

To approve the re-appointment of Mike Croker, at the end of his first year of office, for a further 3 years to complete his 4 year term of office.

At this point Mike Croker re-joined the meeting.

- b) Applications were considered for the Audit Committee Co-Opted Member and although one was stronger than the other both candidates will be invited to meet with the Search Committee.
- c) Confidential.
- d) Confidential.
- e) Succession planning for the Chair of the Corporation was discussed and a review of the job description will be undertaken. Following Mike Cogger's departure there are vacancies on the Audit and Remuneration Committees. Recommendations were presented for Dave Merrett to join the Audit Committee and Jack Gritt to join the Remuneration Committee. Subject to Corporation approval, both members have agreed to sit on the respective Committees. Laura Boutle has also requested to step down from the Strategic Property Group after the next meeting on 1 March but would be happy to be in attendance at future meetings, as and when able.

It was resolved:

- a) **That Laura Boutle steps down as a member of the Strategic Property Group, following the next SPG meeting, and for future meetings will be in attendance as and when able.**
 - b) **To appoint Dave Merrett to the Audit Committee, with immediate effect.**
 - c) **To appoint Jack Gritt to the Remuneration Committee, with immediate effect.**
- f) Following review of the Skills Audit Form, revisions were presented to Corporation for approval.

It was resolved:

To approve revisions to the Skills Audit Form.

14. **Code of Conduct for Corporation Members**

Members received an updated version of the Code of Conduct for Corporation Members, based on the fifteenth edition of Eversheds Sutherland's Code of Conduct.

It was resolved:

To approve the Code of Conduct for Corporation Members.

15. **2018/19 Calendar of Meetings**

Members received a schedule of Corporation and committee meetings covering September 2018 – July 2019.

It was resolved:

To approve the 2018/19 calendar of Corporation and Committee meetings.

16. **Governors' Strategy Away Day**

Members received a report on the strategy away day held 30 January 2018.

The report was noted.

17. **Confidentiality**

Members agreed that due to business sensitivities the SGS Commercial Services report (item 12), confidential Search Committee minutes (item 13) and confidential appendix accompanying the Governors' Strategy Away Day report (item 16) and minute's 12a-i, 13c and 13d are to be treated as confidential.

18. **Assessment of meeting**

A summary of feedback in relation to the meeting held 25 Jan 18 was received. The Clerk distributed forms to members so that an assessment of the Corporation meeting could be undertaken.

19. **Any Other Business**

Members were reminded of the Curriculum Conference scheduled for 1 March. The Principal also reported that the College, in partnership with the University of Gloucestershire, are holding an Ambitions Plus evening, for Level 3 learners and above, on 7 March to which members were invited.

20. **Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 22 March 2018 at 5pm, Filton Campus.

The meeting commenced at 5.05pm.

The meeting closed at 7.00pm.

The meeting was quorate.