



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

Approved minutes of a meeting of South Gloucestershire and Stroud College  
Further Education Corporation  
Held on 4 June 2020, via Microsoft Teams

**Present:** Martin Jones (Chair)  
Sophie Chester-Glyn  
Lynne Craig  
Mike Croker  
Matt Davis  
Carly Dyson  
Phil Eames  
Roger Ellis  
Sophie Green  
David Hagg  
Kevin Hamblin (CEO & Executive Principal)  
Joe Lamonby  
Dave Merrett  
Ben Short

**In Attendance:** Gavin Murray (Vice Principal, Performance, Standards & Effectiveness)  
Jude Saunderson (Chief Financial Officer)  
Sara-Jane Watkins (College Principal)  
Sharon Glover (Clerk)

In the absence of Moyra Pascoe, Martin Jones (Vice-Chair of the Corporation) informed that he would be chairing this meeting.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Moyra Pascoe and Moira Foster-Fitzgerald. Charlotte Argust and Juno Sharrock did not attend the meeting.

## 2. **Declarations of Interest**

The following declarations of interest were raised:

- As Trustees of SGSAT, Phil Eames and Kevin Hamblin declared their interests in the SGSAT item as part of the CEO & Principal's report (item 7) and in SGSAT Statement of Assurance (item 14).
- As Directors of SGSCSL, David Hagg, Kevin Hamblin and Martin Jones declared their interests in SGSCSL 5 year review (item 15)

## 3. **Other Items of Urgent Business**

There were no other items of urgent business received.

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

The minutes of the meeting held 30 April 2020 were approved for signing.

## 5. **Matters Arising From Those Minutes**

- a) Actions from the action log were monitored and updates provided. The College Principal reported that SGS are continuing to work with the Police and that due to the confidential nature of this concern it is not possible to share further details.

The Principal clarified absence level reporting by explaining that one member of staff decided to continue working from home with COVID-19 symptoms. Confirmation was received that the primary risk register had been updated and that the action regarding the Voice of the Learner forums is ongoing.

## 6. **Student Governors**

The Clerk reported that following Student Union elections two candidates have been appointed as Head Rep of the Student Union and HE Officer and will also fill the two Student Member positions on the Corporation. Corporation approval of their appointments as Student Members was sought.

**It was resolved:**

**To approve the appointment of Alicia Chappell and Nicole Clark as Student Members with effect from 1 August 2020 until 31 July 2021.**

## 7. CEO & Executive Principal's Report

The CEO & Executive Principal reported on the following:

- a) COVID-19 and re-opening – Members were presented with the Health and Safety policy, developed by Ellis Whittam, together with Risk Assessments for Corporation approval. Members raised that the Health & Safety policy makes reference to staff who continue to be furloughed and it was confirmed that the wording is to be changed as no staff are furloughed. Also raised was reference to schools rather than College. The CEO & Executive Principal advised that this was a template policy by Ellis Whittam and agreed to raise these changes with them.
- b) Brunel build – Willmott Dixon are working on site and, due to COVID-19, the build is currently 2.5 weeks behind schedule.
- c) Challenger and WISE development – Due to the impact of COVID-19 and the future economic impact there are now two elements to consider in relation to the College's ability to cope with demand – the growth in employability courses and reskilling together with natural growth. Members received a discussion paper that was presented to WECA in relation to the concept of "pop-up" Colleges to cope with the future growth of all post-16 providers in the region and not just SGS. Although the Challenger discussions still need to be continued this was considered to be a medium to longer term plan with the priority of having short term capacity for growth.
- d) SGS Academy Trust – Following the issues with the Forest High School estate, as previously reported, funding has now been awarded by way of a grant and loan. Trustees will be discussing further at their July Board meeting.
- e) Interserve – The current contract was set up 3 years ago on a 1+2+2 basis. This is now at the point of having to make a decision regarding the final 2 years, with effect from 1 September 2020. Members were informed of the work undertaken to review the costings and consider the risks and alternatives. The outcome of the review is to change the remaining term of the contract to a 1+1 thereby continuing the contract for the next 12 months and potentially give notice in May 2021.

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

- a) **To approve the Health & Safety policy, subject to changes raised, and COVID-19 Risk Assessments.**
- b) **To note the change to the Interserve contract.**

**Action: CEO & Executive Principal.**

## 8. Principal's Report

The College Principal reported on the following:

- a) Safeguarding update – Appended to the report was the latest safeguarding report. Since Easter it has been harder to retain the engagement of learners. Members received data of contact with learners and referrals to Children's Social Care.
- b) Staff well-being – Staff absence levels remain low. A staff questionnaire has been issued via Monday Memo to understand staffs' preparedness to return to work and any limitations on their return. To date over 700 responses have been received with overwhelming positivity about their return to work. The survey is also being used to risk assess individuals.
- c) Vulnerable learner provision – Throughout lockdown the College has maintained provision for learners identified as vulnerable. An update was provided on the provision offered at Filton and Stroud campuses for these learners and those with Education Health Care Plans and for the dependants of critical workers. The College is looking to increase numbers and risk assessments are in place together with social distancing.
- d) Annual Conversations – Over 70% of staff have completed the employee element with 30% having fully completed their annual conversation.
- e) Level of engagement of learners – Engagement through TEAMS has averaged at 75% of all SGS learners in weekly activities, and the experience of using TEAMS has received 4 out of 5 stars. There has also been higher engagement and attendance for hard to reach learners.
- f) Qualifications and achievements update – Over the next 3 weeks the College will be focused on getting qualifications through to the awarding bodies and moderating GCSE and A level scores for over 3000 learners. The current focus is on vocational qualifications. Communication has just been received for licence to practice qualifications and there may be a requirement to bring all construction learners back to sit assessments and the College is considering how this can be accommodated.
- g) SEND learners – There is potential for growth next year and work is being planned for the transition of new starts.
- h) Apprenticeships – There has been an increase in apprentices that have been furloughed and the College continues to provide training in line with amended funding guidance. New guidance has also been received this week that apprentices can return to work if it is safe. The College is forecasting 72% success, but with less certainty than usual, but this outcome was considered to be great progress.

- i) Higher Education – Correspondence from the Office for Students is being reviewed to ensure the College is compliant with requirements. The focus is on enrolling learners and working with the University of Gloucestershire.
- j) Budgets 2020/21 – Work has been taking place to prepare the budgets for the July Corporation meeting. It is predicted that the College will retain “good” financial health but further sensitivity analysis is required.
- k) Funding concerns – There will be no final reconciliation of funding for the Adult Education Budget and therefore 100% of AEB is secured for this year. The College has put in place distance learning measures which has enabled the College to recruit substantial numbers of new learners (over 3,600). Adult online distance learning is being led by Matt Davis (Staff Governor) and he was congratulated on its success. There is a concern of the impact on the College of new learners from September and the ESFA are looking into allowances that may be made.
- l) Application numbers – Application numbers remain ahead of last year and acceptances also continue to look very positive. The Fully Prepared bridging programme for applicants is also live and to date 1,044 applicants have logged onto TEAMS and commenced learning activities.
- m) Apprenticeship Recruitment for 2021 – It is anticipated that the economic recession will impact on employer recruitment of apprentices and growth in this area is not expected.
- n) T Levels – The College has been successful in its submission to deliver certain T Level routes from September 2022.
- o) Confidential Item.

Members noted that the College has provided support to the NHS and asked whether there is any support the College/learners can provide to Social Care. The Principal reported that many learners in Health and Social Care continued their placements and that learners had also sent postcards/letters to Care Homes.

Members noted that funds had been set aside for Health and Safety changes to College accommodation and questioned whether this amount was sufficient. The Principal advised that planned capital expenditure had been suspended and the Executive Team are considering how to reprioritise this funding and caution is being exercised but funding has been set aside.

On behalf of the Corporation, the Chair recorded their thanks to the Executive Team and management for all that they are doing to plan against uncertainty.

**The report was noted.**

9. **Re-opening the College**

The Principal updated the Corporation on the national position and presented the plans for a staged approach to re-opening the College from 15 June 2020, with learners on site from 17 June 2020. Members were informed that the College has developed a shared framework planning spreadsheet, based on the framework produced by the DfE, and this was appended to the covering report. Planning is also being shared with the Unions; who are content with the proposals. Bi-weekly COVID-19 meetings between the Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Corporation, CEO & Executive Principal, College Principal and the Clerk continue to take place. The CEO & Executive Principal is undertaking site visits with Ellis Whittam and the Unions. Confirmation was received that PPE had been delivered and will be distributed next week. Members concurred that very comprehensive planning has been undertaken.

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

- a) **That the Corporation and Kevin Hamblin, in his role as Executive Officer for Health & Safety, endorses the approach for reopening the College post lockdown and that the College is using the framework produced by the DfE as the basis of their plan for re-opening the College.**
- b) **That authority is delegated to the Group CEO & Executive Principal, College Principal and the Executive Team to oversee the implementation of the plan, with any strategic risks being reported to the Corporation.**
- c) **That the Chair or in the Chair's absence, the Vice-Chair(s), approve any amended policies with formal endorsement at a later Corporation meeting.**

10. **Management Information**

- a) Management Accounts exception report and Exceptional financial report in light of Covid-19 - The Principal reported that the financial reporting has been reviewed in light of national changes. An outturn of between £800k-£1m surplus is forecast for this year but next year is not looking as positive. Where possible, the College is trying to move next year's expenditure to this year to help with next year's financial situation. Members commented that the cash flow is being well managed by the College and questioned how the College compares with other Colleges. Members were informed that previously Colleges have been encouraged to be more commercially focused and to reduce their reliance on government funding. SGS is in a strong position as it doesn't have the high level of exposures other Colleges have. However, if adult provision and apprenticeships had not been supported then this would have had a negative impact on the College's financial position.

Members asked whether government guidance had been supportive and the Principal advised that the College had taken action prior to lockdown to escalate concerns over adult provision and MPs had been lobbied over apprenticeship provision. The AoC has also been supportive in their lobbying on behalf of Colleges. Moving forward, with high unemployment forecast, there will be a capacity and space issue for the College, especially as only 25% of learners can be on site at any one time so accommodation is a big consideration. The biggest issue is that there is not a great deal of space for learners if funding is cut and a lower class size will impact on efficiency. The College doesn't have the space to grow itself out of this issue as there are accommodation constraints versus the growth of learner numbers. There is a need for more accommodation to enable larger class sizes.

**The report was noted.**

11. **Annual Teaching, Learning & Assessment report & Review of the Teaching, Learning & Assessment Strategy**

The Vice Principal presented the report and advised that in consultation with the Unions the College temporarily shifted focus from conducting formal lesson observations to training and preparing academic and corporate staff to shift the vast majority of all planned learning activity onto the College's Digital Learning Platform; TEAMS. This has largely been successful, however there are areas for continued improvement and these were reported. In the light of the demands of the current environment and uncertainties it was proposed to extend the current Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy until November 2020 to allow time for further review of this Strategy.

Members asked about the quality of online delivery and were informed that some lesson observations had taken place with mentors assigned and meetings held via TEAMS. It was currently challenging to undertake deep dives but some work has been scrutinised online. Some staff struggle with online teaching and the Unions have asked for more information on expectations. In response, webinars are being rolled out next week on how to prepare for the next academic year. Members were informed that Ofsted remain open to a review of their inspection framework and the College has offered to be part of any pilot as this would help to inform the development of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy.

Members asked whether online delivery is recorded and were informed that webinars are recorded but 1-1s are only recorded with both parties consent. Members also asked whether lessons can be hacked into as there have been reports that Zoom can be hacked. The Vice Principal explained that the College doesn't use Zoom because its servers are based in China (which doesn't have an EU GDPR adequacy decision). Staff and learners can still use it personally but its use is discouraged and the reasons

for this were shared with members. Until the College can find a way to make it safe the preference was the use of Microsoft TEAMS.

Members questioned the actions taken by the College to support those learners that feel isolated. The Vice Principal advised that there are referral processes in place to ensure that all individuals are followed up and considered on a case by case basis.

The Principal asked the Staff Governors for their feedback of online delivery from a staff perspective. One Staff Governor has been delivering webinars and these had gone better than originally thought and had found it uplifting. The Vice Principal raised the importance of developing the analytics on TEAMS to help improve planning.

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

**To extend the current Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy until November 2020, when the next Teaching, Learning and Assessment report is due to be presented to Corporation.**

12. **Targets 2020/21 & Review of KPIs for 2020/21**

The Vice Principal reported that, pre COVID-19, the metrics suggest that the College was on track for its 5<sup>th</sup> year of improvement trends. In light of the current situation, for class room based learners, it is proposed to hold targets steady but to not reduce any target in order to maintain ambition. For apprentices and work-based learners a 4% reduction in the overall achievement target is proposed in recognition of national trends. There is also a change in focus for English and Maths GCSE to the progress made between grade boundaries and positive progress made. Members questioned whether there will be an impact on the Estates KPI due to social distancing requirements and confirmation was received that there would likely be an impact. The Principal advised that the ratio of onsite delivery versus digital delivery is being investigated.

Members also questioned whether the higher satisfaction target was ambitious. The Vice Principal advised that having discussed this target with curriculum managers it was agreed that staff should be challenged as learners still need to have a positive experience no matter how lessons are delivered. Members noted that financial and HR targets are included within the management accounts and it was suggested that in the medium term there is a need to review their appropriateness. It was agreed that a complete review of the suite of KPIs is needed but that this should be a medium term objective as now was not considered to be the right time for this review.

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

**To approve the targets contained in Appendix 1 of the report.**

13. **Fees, Charges and Refunds Policy 2020/21**

Members received revisions to the Fees, Charges and Refunds Policy and the College Principal reported the key changes being made.

**It was resolved:**

**To approve the Fees, Charges and Refunds Policy 2020/21.**

14. **SGS Academy Trust Statement of Assurance**

The CEO & Executive Principal presented the report for the approval of a Statement of Assurance for 2020/21 regarding reporting on related party transactions.

Members raised that there should be further clarity in section 1 of the pro-forma about the College connection with the Trust in that Kevin Hamblin is CEO of both SGS College and SGSAT and that Phil Eames is also a SGSAT Trustee as well as a Corporation member. The CEO & Executive Principal agreed to raise this revision with the Chief Financial Officer. Members also sought clarification in the covering report which made reference to the College not being able to charge a profit which was at odds with detail within the pro-forma. When asked, members agreed to approve the Statement of Assurance subject to clarification of points raised.

As Trustees of SGS Academy Trust, Phil Eames and Kevin Hamblin refrained from the following resolution.

**It was resolved:**

**To approve the SGS Academy Trust Statement of Assurance, subject to clarification of points raised.**

**Action: CEO & Executive Principal.**

15. **SGS Commercial Services Limited – 5 year review**

Confidential.

16. **2019/20 Governance Self-Assessment Report process and review of Governance Strategy**

The Clerk presented a report with recommendations in order to progress the development of the 2019/20 Governance Self-Assessment report. The Clerk reported that revisions had been made to the questionnaires this year, taking into account Ofsted's new Education Inspection Framework. Also received were proposed revisions to the Governance Strategy.

Following discussion members agreed that the Governance Strategy should include reference to COVID-19 in the "Where are we now" section and the priority this is being given by the Corporation.

**It was resolved to:**

- a) **Approve the Governor Self-Assessment questionnaire for use in the 2019/20 Governance Self-Assessment Report process.**
- b) **Approve the Executive Team questionnaire.**
- c) **Approve the Chair's Performance Review questionnaire.**
- d) **Approve the Governance Strategy, subject to changes agreed.**
- e) **Approve that the Chair, Vice-Chairs and Clerk draft the 2019/20 Governance Self-Assessment Report and action plan for Corporation consideration.**

**Action: Clerk.**

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

Members were informed that outcomes for 16-18 are positive, Apprenticeships are static and Higher Education are incredibly positive. However, learners classified as having Education Health Care Plans and those with High Needs were lower than the overall destination data results and are areas that will be investigated.

Members raised that the target percentages for destination data had not been included. The Vice Principal reported that this had been discussed with the Assistant Principal Corporate Development however the Vice Principal was interested in the characteristics of the impacts and there was a need to obtain more granular data to see how it is influenced. When asked, confirmation was received that headline targets have been developed and curriculum staff have been tasked to look at the intent of the provision and whether it has been achieved with a view to mapping against that in future years. The College Principal reported that a drop in outcomes is expected due to future unemployment, furloughing of staff, redundancies etc but members were assured that the College will do all that it can.

**The report was noted.**

18. **Strategic Property Group**

Minutes of the meeting held 6 May 20 were noted. Martin Jones reported that an update on the Brunel build at WISE campus had been included as part of the CEO & Executive Principal's report. Revisions to the SPG terms of reference were also presented for approval. Following discussion with David Hagg (Corporation Chair designate), the Clerk also questioned whether membership of the Chair of the Corporation should be mandatory or whether the position of the Chair of the Corporation had the option to be included as one of the 3 Corporation members. It was agreed that there was no specific requirement for the Chair of the Corporation to join this Committee and that the membership should be duly updated.

Members were informed that Moyra Pascoe had temporarily stood in as Chair of SPG and members were informed that Carly Dyson was happy to put herself forward to take over as Chair of SPG, subject to Corporation approval.

**It was resolved:**

- a) **To remove specific reference in the SPG Terms of Reference to the Chair of the Corporation being a member of this Group and to approve revisions to the SPG Terms of Reference, subject to this further amendment.**
- b) **To appoint Carly Dyson as Chair of SPG, with immediate effect.**

19. **Audit Committee Group**

The minutes of the meeting held 14 May 20 were noted. Mike Croker (Chair of the Audit Committee) reported that the Committee had requested and received an update on how the financial controls have been maintained during COVID-19. There were some concerns with the audit opinions of the reports presented at the meeting and further audit work is to be undertaken to look to improve upon these opinions in order to receive the usual positive end of year audit opinion.

Due to COVID-19 the Committee are recommending, for Corporation approval, that the re-tendering of Internal Audit Services is deferred from 2020 until 2021. Also following detailed review of the Risk Management and Assurance Policy and risk criteria, revisions to this policy were presented to Corporation for approval.

**It was resolved:**

- a) **To defer the re-tendering of Internal Audit Service from 2020 until 2021.**
- b) **To approve the Risk Management and Assurance Policy.**

20. **Partnership Proposals 2020/21, including Sub-Contracting policies**

Members received a report on partnership proposals 2020/21 and other partnership activity which is not a sub-contract arrangement but is of strategic importance.

**It was resolved to:**

- a) **Confirm that all subcontracting delivery is high quality and low risk. Where sub-contracting organisations are not rated financially as low risk this is acceptable to the College due to the track record, contingency plan and oversight with the sport National Governing Bodies.**
- b) **Approve the subcontract arrangement with Nelson Trust.**
- c) **Agree to continue working with existing partners in 2020/21.**
- d) **Agree to pursue the collaborative partnership with City of Bristol College.**

21. **Corporation Business Plan 2020/21**

Members received the Corporation and Audit Committee Business Plans 2020/21.

**It was resolved:**

**To approve the Corporation and Audit Committee Business Plans 2020/21.**

22. **Confidentiality**

Members agreed that due to business sensitivities the confidential appendix 2 of the Principal's report (item 8), SGSCSL report (item 15), SPG minutes (item 18), SGS Commercial Services report, and minutes 8(o) and 15 are to be treated as confidential.

23. **Assessment of meeting**

A summary of feedback in relation to the meeting held 30 April 2020 was received. The Chair reminded Governors to complete and return these forms to the Clerk.

24. **Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 2 July 2020 at 4pm via Microsoft Teams.

The meeting commenced at 4.09pm

Ben Short joined the meeting at 4.11pm (during item 5)

Phil Eames joined the meeting and Jude Saunderson left the meeting at 4.18pm (during item 7)

Sophie Green left the meeting at 5.11pm (during item 11)

The meeting closed at 6.18pm

The meeting was quorate.