



**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 July 2021, via Microsoft Teams

|                       |                   |   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|---|
| <b>Present:</b>       | David Hagg        | (Chair)   |
|                       | Louise Bright     |   |
|                       | Lynne Craig       |   |
|                       | Mike Croker       |   |
|                       | Matt Davis        |   |
|                       | Carly Dyson       |   |
|                       | Phil Eames        |   |
|                       | Roger Ellis       |   |
|                       | Catherine Green   |   |
|                       | Kevin Hamblin     | (CEO & Executive Principal)                                 |
|                       | Dave Merrett      |   |
|                       | Rick Sturge       |   |
| <br>                  |                   |   |
| <b>In Attendance:</b> | Rich Aitken       | (Head of Finance)   |
|                       | Steph Brooks      | (Student Governor Designate)                                |
|                       | Izzi Cosh         | (Student Governor Designate)                                |
|                       | Gavin Murray      | (Vice Principal, Performance, Standards<br>& Effectiveness) |
|                       | Gary Parsons      | (Staff Governor Designate)                                  |
|                       | Jude Saunderson   | (Chief Financial Officer)                                   |
|                       | Sara-Jane Watkins | (College Principal)   |
|                       | Sharon Glover     | (Clerk)   |

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming the Staff and Student Governors designate to the meeting and confirmed that they would be in attendance.

As this was the last meeting of Roger Ellis, Staff Governor, the Chair extended thanks on behalf of the Corporation for his commitment and dedication and Roger was wished well for the future. Thanks were also extended to Alicia Chappell and Nicole Clark as the current Student Governors.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Alicia Chappell, Sophie Chester-Glyn (maternity leave), Nicole Clark, Moira Foster-Fitzgerald, Sophie Green and Ben Short.

2. **Election of Chair and Vice-Chair**

The Clerk reported that nominations had been received for David Hagg to continue as Chair of the Corporation and Sophie Green to continue as Vice-Chair of the Corporation.

- a) Lynne Craig proposed and Phil Eames seconded David Hagg's appointment as Chair of the Corporation and David Hagg was unanimously elected.
- b) Carly Dyson proposed and David Hagg seconded Sophie Green's appointment as Vice-Chair of the Corporation and Sophie Green was unanimously elected.

The Clerk reported that at last year's meeting it was agreed to keep the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair of the Corporation position open and to revisit at this meeting. Members' views on the appointment of a 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair were invited. It was agreed to keep the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair of the Corporation position as vacant and appoint, if needed.

**It was resolved:**

- a) **To re-appoint David Hagg as Chair of the Corporation, with effect from 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2022.**
- b) **To re-appoint Sophie Green as Vice-Chair of the Corporation, with effect from 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2022.**
- c) **To keep the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chair of the Corporation position as vacant and appoint, if needed.**

3. **Declarations of Interest**

As Directors of SGS Commercial Services, declarations of interest were noted for Carly Dyson, Kevin Hamblin and Dave Merrett in agenda item 9.

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

4. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held 10 June 2021 were approved as a correct record, ready for signing by the Chair.

5. **Matters Arising From Those Minutes**

Actions on the action log were monitored and confirmation was received that all due actions had been completed.

6. **Annual Voice of the Learner report, including review of the Stakeholder Engagement & Involvement Plan & Higher Education Students as Partners Strategy**

The Vice Principal reported that, although learner satisfaction levels remain high, there has been a reflection on processes with a refresh planned next year. Voice of the Learner will feature heavily in next year's improvement plan. Therefore, reapproval of the SGS Stakeholder Engagement and Improvement Plan 2018-2022 and the SGS Higher Education Students as Partners Strategy 2018-2022 was sought.

Members noted the good responses received but questioned why students felt that there weren't sufficient healthy food options provided by the caterers. Members were informed that there was an improvement prior to lockdown but the impact of Covid-19 had meant limited options were available. Assurance was provided that College staff are working closely with the caterers and that Filton Campus appears to be the main area of learner dissatisfaction.

Members also noted the positive improvement in feedback relating to online lessons. The Vice Principal informed that at the start of lockdown there was a dip in satisfaction levels which then subsequently improved. Staff have engaged well and have worked hard to make their lessons interactive. One of the Staff Governors raised that the results had been impressive and that students appreciate the efforts made by staff. Members were amazed that the College has done so well and wanted their congratulations and thanks to be passed onto staff in a formal manner. Members also recognised the positive feedback relating to English and Maths Extra and questioned whether there were any transferable learnings. Members were informed that due to lower group sizes this allowed a more focused delivery and with the investment into new teaching studios this will further improve remote delivery.

Following governor attendance at this years' Voice of the Learner meetings, the Clerk raised that she had circulated the Voice of the Learning meeting windows for the next academic year and the Chair encouraged as many governors as possible to participate.

On behalf of the Corporation, the Chair extended thanks to the Vice Principal and asked that, together with the College Principal, thanks were extended to all staff and that their good work has been recognised.

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

**To reapprove the SGS Stakeholder Engagement and Improvement Plan 2018-2022 and the SGS Higher Education Students as Partners Strategy 2018-2022.**

7. **Progress against the Improvement Plan, including Higher Education Improvement Plan**

The Vice Principal presented progress updates relating to the Further Education and Higher Education Improvement Plans.

Further Education Improvement Plan - Good progress has been made, with only two amber improvement areas of focus. The changes in government announcements about the cancellation of examinations and the time taken for their consultation on alternative approaches had a negative impact on learner satisfaction.

HE Improvement Plan - There was no HE student that has not been impacted this year and were disgruntled with the University of Gloucestershire's No Detriment Policy, with concerns being escalated by SGS to UoG. The Chair advised that the UoG is following up the complaint received from SGS.

The Vice Principal reported that the end of year award boards are in preparation and the NSS results awaited. Assurance was provided that there was nothing in the improvement plan that isn't being worked upon.

Staff were thanked for completing a great job.

**The report was noted.**

8. **Student Union Constitution**

Members were presented with revisions to the Student Union Constitution. When asked if the constitution was based on the NUS Student Union Constitution the Clerk confirmed that fundamentally it was, but adapted for SGS purposes. Members were informed NUS had been consulted in relation to the revisions proposed.

Members questioned the number of Officers for each role and the Clerk explained that for certain roles there were no numbers set to try and encourage more student engagement.

**It was resolved:**

**To approve the Student Union Constitution.**

9. **SGS Commercial Services Limited**

Confidential Item.

10. **Financial Planning**

Confidential Item.

11. **Management Information**

- a) Management Accounts exception report – The Head of Finance reported the updated forecast surplus for the Group; which was higher than the budgeted surplus. Confirmation was received that a staff pay award has been accounted for in the figures.

Members questioned why the current ratio was showing as amber. Confirmation was received that there are no concerns and the Chief Financial Officer agreed to review outside of the meeting. Members questioned how far this target would need to drop to have an impact on the Financial Health rating. Although the financial impact was unknown, assurance was provided that data is modelled monthly and being reviewed on a weekly basis. Members asked that narrative is included in the next Executive Summary to reflect the updated position.

Members noted the healthy financial position presented.

**The report was noted.**

**Action: Chief Financial Officer & Head of Finance.**

- b) Risk Management report – The Chief Financial Officer apologised that only the severe and major risks should have been reported, as opposed to the full risk registers received. Following Corporation approval of revisions to risk reporting the new format will be introduced in the new academic year.

**The report was noted.**

12. **Lettings Policy**

Members were informed that this item is to be carried forward.

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

The CEO & Executive Principal reported on the following:

- a) Confidential Item.
- b) NLEA – NLEA have asked for a further extension to their exclusivity agreement until the end of December 2021. The CEO & Executive Principal is seeking a financial deal for SGS to consider and it has been made clear to NLEA that there is no funding support for their project from the College.
- c) Confidential Item.

#### 14. **Principal's Report**

The Principal reported on the following:-

- a) Staff – There has been an increase in staff absence, since the College opened for face to face education, mainly due to Covid and side effects of the vaccination. The focus is on making sure staff take leave in order to rest up in advance of the new academic year.
- b) Safeguarding – There has been an increase of 30% in safeguarding concerns for the same period in 2019/20. Learners have felt unable to make bonds and the aim will be to return to normal in the new academic year.
- c) Catch up Education Fund – allocation is still awaited and there is a greater delay now until autumn. There has been a small amount estimated in the budget and once received the funding will be used for enrichment activities.
- d) Teacher Assessed Grades – This has been a focus for staff and they should be congratulated as deadlines were achieved and sample judgements supported.

Appended to the report was a confidential provisional analysis of GCSE English and Maths TAG data, which is subject to moderation. Improvements in English and Maths are expected, even in light of the pandemic, and demonstrates the positive impact of the Maths and English strategy. Members noted that the College's challenge has been with the high numbers of learners that disengaged and questioned what will be done differently next year. Members were informed that the strategy is for learners to be back on site, as easy to disengage when online, and many of these learners are the most vulnerable and do not want to resit English and Maths. Once back in the classroom it will be important to keep the learners engaged. The College has invested in a system that will help to diagnose learners' starting points, especially as the learners next year will have missed so much education. Members asked for an update in the new academic year and the Principal agreed to also provide an update to governors following exam results day. Members raised that the nature of staff care and support is reflected in the provisional results and compares well to other Colleges and staff were thanked.

- e) Subcontracting Policy – The policy has been updated to reflect national guidance and was presented for Corporation approval. Members questioned whether the College subcontracts with any Band C (high risk) partners and whether the short notice quality assurance visits are unannounced. Members were informed that DiSE was the only subcontracted area and the Assistant Principal – Apprenticeships is considering whether the partners on Fencing require DfE/ESFA approval. There are three full time staff undertaking quality

assurance and the Principal agreed to clarify how quality assurance is undertaken.

- f) Bids – Reference was made to the bids submitted, however, the government has imposed unrealistic timeframes with the outcome of bids being delayed due to government decision making processes. A response to the outcome of the Post-16 Capacity Fund bid is awaited and the timeframe has moved from July to the end of the autumn. This has an impact on build timeframes as there is an expectation that any build is completed by August 2022. There is a huge disconnect between the DfE bids versus treasury funding. A lot of work has been invested into the development of the bid in tight timeframes but it is now questionable whether the College will be successful.

The Chair extended his thanks to the Principal and Executive Team for the work undertaken in relation to Teacher Assessed Grades and the continued focus around Maths and English and for the support provided to learners. The Chair referenced a video, used in a recent Principal's presentation to staff, looking back over the last year and all governors were encouraged to view it.

**The report was noted and it was resolved:  
To approve the Subcontracting Policy 2021/22.**

**Action: Principal.**

15. **Governors' Strategy Away Day / College Strategy 2021/22-2025/26**

Members were informed that this item is to be carried forward, in light of a follow up Strategy Away Day scheduled for 22 July 2021.

16. **Information Security Advocate role**

Members received a draft Information Security Advocate role for approval. The Clerk also informed that Louise Bright had put herself forward to share the Child Protection, Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs & Disability, Equality & Diversity Advocate role with Sophie Chester-Glyn.

**It was resolved:**

- a) **To approve the Information Security Advocate role, to be filled by Ben Short.**
- b) **To approve that Louise Bright shares the Child Protection, Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs & Disability, Equality & Diversity Advocate role with Sophie Chester-Glyn.**

17. **Carbon Footprint Report**

The CEO & Executive Principal presented the report, which sets out the College's base position in terms of its carbon footprint. Members were informed that the full consultant's report is available in the Document Library on Convене.

Members were informed that sector benchmarking is limited due to no centralised collection of data. However, suggested KPIs were proposed in order to report on measures annually for compliance with Streamlined Energy and Carbon Reporting requirements. In due course the Sustainability Plan will be presented to Corporation and this will be integrated with the Estates Strategy. Members concurred that benchmarking is impossible at the current time therefore the internal inspection is the right way forward.

The CEO & Executive Principal also proposed revisions to the wording of Priority six in the College Strategy, in order to reference "sustainability", for Corporation consideration at their Away Day on 22 July.

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

- a) **To consider proposed changes to the wording of Priority six of the College Strategy, to include reference to "sustainability", at the Governors' Strategy Away Day on 22 July 2021.**
- b) **To endorse the draft KPIs, to be overseen by the Sustainability Committee and reported annually to the Corporation.**

18. **Audit Committee**

The minutes of the meeting held 21 June 21 were noted. Mike Croker (Chair of the Audit Committee) reported the following:

- a) Positive outcomes were noted for the RSM reports and thanks were provided to staff.
- b) The outcome of a critical Office for Students audit was considered and good explanations were provided of the issues raised. The Audit Committee has requested that a follow up audit is undertaken by RSM.
- c) The 2021/22 Internal Audit Plan was discussed by the Committee and, as a result of these discussions, revisions were made to the draft plan presented. The updated plan is being recommended to Corporation for approval.
- d) Following consideration of KPMG' Financial Statements Audit Plan 2020/21 the Committee was content to endorse the plan. However, changes in ESFA's provision of funding assurance to auditors was noted and that this will have a consequential increase in auditing costs to Colleges.
- e) Following review of the Financial Regulations, Risk Management and Assurance Policy, including changes to risk appetite, and Audit Committee Terms of Reference; these were being recommended to Corporation for approval. Members noted that one of the major changes to the financial regulations was an increase in the threshold for Corporation approval from

£300k to £500k. Also noted was the proposal to exclude Health and Safety from the Committee's remit as the Corporation receives a comprehensive Health and Safety report.

f) Confidential Item.

**It was resolved:**

- a) **To approve the Internal Audit needs assessment, strategic plan and 2021/22 annual plan.**
- b) **Risk Management and Assurance Policy.**
- c) **Financial Regulations.**
- d) **Audit Committee Terms of Reference.**

19. **Careers and Employability Report**

Members received a report providing an overview of careers and employability activities that have taken place during the current academic year, their impact and future plans, together with a report on progress of the College's impartial careers guidance to its learners. Thanks, were provided to Matt Davis (Staff Governor) for fulfilling the Careers and Employability Advocate role.

**The report was noted.**

20. **Other Items of Urgent Business**

There was no other business raised.

21. **Confidentiality**

Members agreed that due to business sensitivities the SGSCSL report (item 9), Financial Plan (item 10), Appendix 2 of the Principal's report (item 14), Audit Committee confidential minutes (item 18) and minutes 9, 10, 13a & c, and 18f should be treated as confidential.

22. **Assessment of meeting**

A summary of feedback in relation to the meeting held 10 June 2021 was received.

23. **Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 7 October 2021 at 4pm via Microsoft TEAMS.

The Chair proposed that the future conduct of meetings is discussed at the Governors' Strategy Away Day on 22 July 2021.

The meeting commenced at 4.03pm

Dave Merrett joined the meeting at 4.33pm (during item 7)

Rick Sturge joined the meeting at 4.43pm (at the start of item 9)

Carly Dyson left the meeting at 4.57pm (after item 9)

Izzy Cosh left the meeting at 5.15pm (after item 10)

The meeting closed at 6.25pm.

The meeting was quorate.