



SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE AND STROUD COLLEGE
FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

Approved minutes of a meeting of South Gloucestershire and Stroud College
Further Education Corporation
Held on 28 January 2021, via Microsoft Teams

Present: David Hagg (Chair)
Louise Bright
Alicia Chappell
Sophie Chester-Glyn
Nicole Clark
Lynne Craig
Matt Davis
Carly Dyson
Phil Eames
Roger Ellis
Sophie Green
Kevin Hamblin (CEO & Executive Principal)
Dave Merrett
Ben Short
Rick Sturge

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

The Chair opened the meeting by welcoming those present and reporting that he would be bringing forward agenda item 13 as it was a good lead into the CEO & Executive Principal's report.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Mike Croker, Moira Foster-Fitzgerald and Jude Saunderson. The Chair wished Mike Croker a speedy recovery.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

The following declarations of interest were raised and noted by the Corporation:

- Lynne Craig as a Trustee of SGS Academy Trust.
- New declarations of interests raised by Rick Sturge.
- The removal of interest for Kevin Hamblin as Director of SGS Group Services.
- Lynne Craig, Phil Eames and Kevin Hamblin's interests as Trustees of SGSAT in:
 - The item in the CEO & Executive Principal's report relating to SGSAT.
 - Item 15: SGS Academy Trust
- Rick Sturge as Director of Grafton LSR in agenda item 12 relating to Heads of Terms for ABC Limited.
- Due to being under 18, Alicia Chappell's interest was declared in relation to item agenda item 12: Property leases.
- David Hagg's interest in agenda item 14 relating to the appointment of the new candidates for Corporation and SGS Commercial Services membership.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held 3 December 2020 were approved as a correct record, ready for signing.

4. **Matters Arising From Those Minutes**

- a) Members noted the final signed Annual Report and Financial Statements and Letter of Representation.
- b) There was one action on the action log and confirmation was received of its completion.

5. **College Self-Assessment Report 2019/20 (including HE & CIPs)**

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal for the very informative presentation provided, before the start of the Corporation meeting, highlighting the key points of the College Self-Assessment Report and that he was very proud to be associated with the College.

The Vice Principal reported that the College Self-Assessment Report is self-explanatory and there is confidence that the College is outstanding with clear action plans in place to continue driving forward improvements.

The Chair thanked the Vice Principal for his report and asked that his presentation slides are circulated to all Governors.

**The report was noted and it was resolved:
To approve the 2019/20 College Self-Assessment Report and to note the cross-College Improvement Plan.**

6. **Voice of the Learner**

The Vice Principal presented the report. Following members' feedback, at the presentation of the last report, attention was drawn to the improvement in the percentage of learners who say their online lessons have been interactive and interesting.

Members were informed of the actions taken that had contributed to the improvement in this result. However, it was recognised that there is no substitute for attending lessons in person. Members praised staff for the incredible improvement and asked for the overall response rate. Members were informed that 3000 learners had been targeted with an approximate response rate of 2700, which was 20% higher than last time. Members concurred that this was a good response but raised concern about the others that hadn't responded. The Vice Principal confirmed that it was difficult to contact these learners and that focus groups and Voice of the Learner are also held in order to capture feedback.

One of the Staff Governors, on the teaching staff, stressed his satisfaction with the increase in this percentage as it is challenging to deliver online lessons with additional hours of work being put in. He has picked up a new tutor group from a colleague and he has never seen the faces of this group so to see an increase in learner satisfaction was very pleasing.

The Vice Principal reported that learner walks have been undertaken that week with many joined by Corporation Members. Feedback was provided by those Corporation Members that had attended a learner walk. Members were appreciative of the challenges faced by teaching staff. In particular learner engagement as many learners do not want to turn on their cameras and, in some classes, trying to teach over 20 students remotely. It was recognised that teachers are working hard in challenging circumstances. The Principal advised that new learners have not formed friendship groups that there is a lack of confidence and are fearful of speaking out. Members also raised that there are new governors on the Corporation that have not been met in person.

The Chair invited feedback from the Student Governors. Members were informed that the teaching staff and engagement has been great and that different classes can invoke different student reactions. One Student Governor was in her second year so her class had already built a bond with each other and with the teachers. The teachers have been very supportive and she could appreciate the challenges faced by new learners and the mixed reactions for having their cameras turned on/off. There could be an element of learner embarrassment of what they look like or the setting of where the call is being made.

Members were pleased with the excellent progress made and the tremendous feedback on the 1st impressions survey during very challenging times. Members were impressed with the care and support provided by staff to their learners and that staff should be very proud. The Corporation asked that their thanks be passed onto staff for all their efforts in very challenging circumstances.

The report was noted.

7. **Management Information**

- a) Management Accounts exception report – The Head of Finance presented the report. It was reported that the December 2020 Management Accounts are forecasting a break even position, close to budget with a modest surplus. A full reforecast has been undertaken with regular monitoring meetings taking place.

Adult funding poses the greatest risk, although forecast to hit target there is an element of risk. The Principal informed that a lot of support had been previously provided by WECA/ESFA for this provision last year but this year 100% allocation is expected. The College is currently 5% under profile with plans in place to hit this target with continued close monitoring taking place.

There has been £100k reduction in apprenticeship funding but the College is looking at other areas to compensate this reduction. Pay is adverse to budget but as the year progresses it is predicted that this position will improve.

There is now confirmation of the Teachers' Pension Scheme Grant, until July 2022, and will therefore provide certainty for next years' budget and therefore this risk has not materialized.

The report was noted.

- b) Primary Risk Registers (including SGSCSL) – Questions were invited and none raised.

The report was noted.

8. **Ethical Investment**

The Head of Finance presented the report in response to a request from the Corporation to consider whether there should be any ethical, social or environmental references in the College's investment and purchasing policies. An example wording for inclusion in both policies was presented and endorsed by the Corporation as this was felt to set out the intent of the College.

The report was noted.

Due to the early departure of Sophie Chester-Glyn, the Chair informed that he would be bringing forward the Principal's report (agenda item 10).

9. **Principal's Report (Agenda item 10)**

The Principal reported on the following:

- a) Staff had worked hard throughout the Christmas period to ensure lateral flow testing was in place at all sites combined with a staggered start, both of which were directives by Government, to find that Government then imposed a national lockdown from 4th January 2021.
- b) The College continues to offer provision to over 150 vulnerable learners compared to 30 during the first lock down. The greatest challenge remains engaging with staff to come onto site to support with this delivery.
- c) Work continues with local MPs, Public Health England and the AoC to prioritise the vaccination of teachers. An update on the number of COVID cases was included in the report. It was reported that 1000 people had been tested during the lateral flow testing pilot with less than 5 people testing as positive. This testing has now been rolled out to all campuses.
- d) Minor changes were presented to an updated Annex to the Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy for Corporation approval. The Chair informed that Sophie Chester-Glyn, current Child Protection, Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs & Disability, Equality & Diversity Advocate, will be taking some maternity leave following the birth of her child in March and Corporation approval was sought for Carly Dyson to provide interim cover in Sophie's absence. Sophie Chester-Glyn confirmed that she would arrange to brief Carly on the role and identify any training needs. On behalf of the Corporation, the Chair wished Sophie well with the remainder of her pregnancy and the birth of her child.
- e) The first Learning Excellence Week of 2021 commenced 25th January and Corporation Members were thanked for their attendance, which is valued by staff.
- f) Attendance during the first term averaged out at 89% compared with an all-England average of 85%. However, it is proving challenging to retain learner engagement, especially in practical areas of provision. Some Higher Education learners have now left to re-start in September and some learners need part-time jobs to financially help support their families. Although working towards 8th March 2021 re-opening the College is looking at inviting small groups of learners into the College after half term.
- g) Assurance was provided to the Corporation of ongoing compliance with the expectations related to the quality, quantity and accessibility of the College's degree-led provision during the current lockdown. There is a growing level of discontent with HE provision with learners looking for refunds. The College is working closely with the University of Gloucestershire in this respect. Appended to the report was full assurance in relation to communication from the Director of Regulations at the Office for Students.
- h) The Colleges first major funding return was submitted early December with an 18.2% increase in growth and the College is currently forecasting 3.54% over allocation at the end of the year. This should provide confidence of a positive funding settlement in 2021/22 for 16-18 year olds.

- i) Members were informed of the bids being considered for tender. External investment is being sought, most likely from WECA, to progress Talent West with the City of Bristol College.
- j) The FE White Paper, now named Skills for Jobs: Lifelong Learning for Opportunity and Growth, has been published. The Principal agreed to circulate a high level summary she'd produced with a view to having a more detailed discussion at the next meeting.

The report was noted and it was resolved:

- a) **To approve the Annex to the Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy.**
- b) **To appoint Carly Dyson as interim Child Protection, Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs & Disability, Equality & Diversity Advocate during the absence of Sophie Chester-Glyn.**

Action: Principal.

At this point the Chair suggested a 5 minute break.

10. **Strategic Property Group (Agenda item 12)**

Confidential Item.

11. **CEO & Executive Principal's Report (Agenda Item 9)**

Confidential Item.

12. **COVID-19 update (Agenda Item 11)**

This was included as part of the Principal's report.

13. **Property Leases (Agenda Item 12)**

Confidential Item.

14. **Search Committee**

The minutes from the Search Committee meeting held 14 Jan 21 were noted.

In the absence of the Vice-Chair of the Search Committee (Sophie Chester-Glyn), the Chair of the Corporation presented the recommendations of the Search Committee.

- a) The re-appointment of Mike Croker for a further 4-year term of office, at the end of his current term of office was recommended.
- b) Confidential Item.

It was resolved:

To re-appoint Mike Croker for a further 4-year term of office, with effect from the end of his current term of office.

15. **SGS Academy Trust**

The SGS Academy Trust Annual Report and Financial Statements and Operational Review report were noted.

16. **Governor Development Event**

Members noted the report of the Governor Development Event held 16 January 2021.

17. **Confidential Minutes and Documents Review**

Members received a report covering the review of minutes and documents that had previously been deemed confidential. In accordance with the Standing Orders for the Corporation and its Committees, the Chair of the Corporation and the Chairs of each committee had undertaken a review and made recommendations to the Corporation in order that, where appropriate, minutes and documents now deemed non confidential can be released for the public record, including the publication of minutes on the College website.

It was resolved:

To approve the Chairs' recommendations of those minutes and documents now deemed non confidential to be released for the public record.

18. **Items of Urgent Business**

There was no items of urgent business.

19. **Remuneration Committee**

The minutes from the Remuneration Committee meeting held 11 Jan 21 were noted by those members entitled to receive them.

- a) Senior Post Holders' Performance Management Cycle – the Chair of the Remuneration Committee presented an updated SPH Performance Management Cycle to reflect changes in the timing for objective setting and to combine the appraisal process rather than split between the September and January Remuneration Committee meetings.

It was resolved:

To approve the Senior Post Holders' Performance Management Cycle.

The Chair extended his thanks to the Group CEO & Executive Principal, College Principal and the Clerk for their excellent performance during the year.

At this point the Staff and Student Governors, College Principal, Vice Principal and Head of Finance were invited to leave the meeting. The Group CEO & Executive Principal was invited to remain in the meeting.

b) Senior Post Holders' Appraisals 2019/20 – Confidential Item.

20. **Confidentiality**

Members agreed that due to business/personal sensitivities the following items are to be retained as confidential: Appendices to the CEO & Executive Principal's report (item 11), Property leases report and appendices (item 13), SPG minutes (item 10), Search Committee confidential minutes (item 14b), SGSAT Operational review, Trustee skills and audit (item 15), Confidential minutes and documents review (item 17), Remuneration Committee minutes (item 19) and item 19b together with minutes 10, 11a-e, 13, 14b and 19b.

Members also questioned whether the content of the CEO & Executive Principal's report should be treated as confidential especially the SGSAT update. The Clerk agreed to clarify.

Action: Clerk.

21. **Assessment of meeting**

A summary of feedback in relation to the meeting held 3 December 2020 was received.

22. **Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 25 March 2021 at 4pm via Microsoft TEAMS.

The meeting commenced at 5.00pm

Sophie Green joined the meeting at 5.12pm (during item 5)

Ben Short joined the meeting at 5.16pm (during item 6)

Sophie Chester-Glyn left the meeting at 6pm (after item 9)

Rich Aitken, Alicia Chappell, Nicole Clark, Matt Davis, Roger Ellis, Gavin Murray and Sara-Jane Watkins left the meeting at 6.35pm (after item 19a)

Kevin Hamblin left the meeting at 6.37pm (during item 19b)

The meeting closed at 6.43pm and the meeting was quorate.