

**South Essex Colleges Group
Meeting of the Full Corporation Board
Tuesday 23 January 2024**

Date and timings:	12.30 to 16:55
Location	Orsett Hall, Princes Charles Avenue, Orsett, Essex
Present (Governors):	Rick Olver (RO) (Chair) Roland Anderson (RA) Gerry Bender (GB) Denise Brown (DB) (Group CEO) Lee Freeman (LF) Sue Leonard (SL) Paul Gribbon (PGr) Aaron Thompson (AT) Seye Awolusi (SA) Steve Collins (SC)
Clerk to the Corporation	Lana Jackman
College Group Clerking and Policy Officer	Carrie Brown
In attendance	Adam Fahey (Deputy CEO Curriculum and Quality) David Hughes (Chief Operating Officer) Jayne Sheehan (Vice Principal Innovation)
Apologies	Vacancy – FE Governor Vacancy- HE Governor

The meeting was quorate.

Item

- 00.00** Agenda
- 01.00** **Chairs welcome and preliminary items.**
RO thanked LJ and CB for the support in organising the day.
- 01.01** **Apologies for absence and declaration of interest.**
None.
- 01.02** **SAR validation.**
The Corporation Board **APPROVE** the South Essex Colleges Group SAR.
- 01.03** **CFFR sign-off.**
No longer required- CFFR sign off is now annual.
- DH confirms that the 21-22 Audit Accounts have now been signed off and forwarded to the ESFA.
DH notes that the 22-23 should be signed off by the end of February as the audit is moving forward at a pace.

The Board congratulated DH and this team for the hard work on the Audit.

DH gives an update on the SECG pay offer (which will be presented to the Trade Unions next week) and the step by step progress of the pay strategy including raising the lecturer starting salary and increases with the National Living Wage.

AF noted that SECG offered a 4% pay award last year and with the offer going to the Trade Unions, should this be accepted, staff will have received a 10% pay award over two years.

DB details that the SECG creditor balance is reducing.

02.00 Governance Structure.

DB reflected on the SECG structure noting that the current Governance Structure does cover the regulatory, financial and strategy well it does not serve the staff, students, local communities and employers as well as hoped. DB presented a new Governance Structure that reflects the SECG local college structure. DB reflected on the small size of the Board and how all Board members should be updated on finance and quality matters. DB notes that each College campus Local Council would have an SLT lead (DB- Southend, DH- Basildon, AF- Thurrock). Each Local Council would include more student, staff and employer representation.

Governors feedback:

- like the Local aspect of the new structure
- can include the local Councils
- meetings to have a sector focus to encourage employer engagement
- subsidiaries were discussed in detail to see how they are channelled into the structure
- regulatory discussed also at the main meeting
- Corporation Board meetings all day meetings three times a year
- Local Councils to have their own sustainability agenda
- from next academic year
- concern raised about the levels of paperwork

The Corporation Board **APPROVE** the principles in the proposed Governance Structure.

The Corporation Board **AGREE** to look into having three whole day Corporation Board meetings as part of the review and the Board reflect positively on this idea.

03.00 External Board Review.

LJ gives a presentation on the External Board Review process which includes group work around the importance of challenging questions in a Board setting.

04.00 Careers Leadership Training.

Deferred.

05.00 Plenary- including evaluation feedback.

The Corporation Board gave the following feedback from the session:

- Useful session and the Governance Structure is very important with learners more engaged in the structure.
- Enabling environment.
- Enjoyed the session and felt it was very transparent.
- Improvement in the face to face meetings and Executive Board very open to challenge.
- Felt that the day was more static and less interactive than the meeting at The Backstage Centre.
- Discussion had around the Governance Structure and the process for this and how new Governors felt they needed more background of where the structure developed from.
- Challenge of the thinking of Governors- very challenging session.
- Governance Structure gives more scope for student/governor/staff/local engagement interaction.
- Value it getting together outside of the Corporation Board meeting.
- External Board Review presentation was valued to move the Board out of 'the cozy zone'.
- Finance summary at the beginning of the meeting was very useful.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 16:55.

Signed.....Dated.....