

MINUTES

**South Essex Colleges Group
Meeting of the Full Corporation Board
Tuesday 12 December 2023**

Date and timings:	16.50 to 20.27
Location:	The Backstage Centre Ltd, Purfleet.
Present (Governors):	Rick Olver (RO) (Chair) Roland Anderson (RA) Gerry Bender (GB) Denise Brown (DB) (CEO and Principal) Lee Freeman (LF) Sue Leonard (SL) Paul Gribbon (PGr) (via MS Teams) Aaron Thompson (AT) Seye Awolusi (SA) (via MS Teams) Steve Collins (SC) Jodie Curtis (JC) (HE Student Governor) (via MS Teams) Jo Brooker (JB) (Staff Governor- Academic)
Clerk to the Corporation	Lana Jackman (LJ)
College Group Clerking And Policy Officer	Carrie Brown (CB)
In attendance	Adam Fahey (AF) Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality Zed Mohammed (ZM) Interim Executive Director for Finance David Hughes (DH) Chief Organisation Officer Jayne Sheehan (JS) Vice Principal Innovation Ansar Mahmood (AM) Vice Principal MIS, IT and Marketing 1 x vacancies for FE Student Governor Brian Warrens (BW) Director of The Backstage Centre Ltd.
Apologies	Roney Brooks (RB)

The meeting was quorate.

Item	Action lead
0.00 Agenda	
Creative People and Places. Brian Warrens gives a presentation to the Corporation Board on the Creative People and Places project which SECG has been asked to lead on. BW details the risk areas regarding taking the lead on the project including the sustainability of taking this on for the existing SECG departments including but not exclusive of Finance, Contracts, Governance and HR. BW notes the complex logistics in taking on the project.	

DB details the pros of the project including building links in Basildon, building brand equity and building in an external costs base.

ACTION: Item to be referred to the Audit and Risk Committee.

1.00 Chair's Welcome and Introduction.

The Chair welcomes everyone to the meeting.

2.00 Preliminary Items.

2.01 Apologies for absence and declarations of interest.

Apologies for absence from Roney Brooks were received in advance of the meeting.

There were no other new declarations of interest other than those already standing ⁱ(*in accordance with the requirements of section 177 of the Companies Act 2006*).

2.02 Urgent business notified in advance.

Permission to Use the College Seal- Capital Funding for the IoT- **APPROVED**.

3.00 Minutes and matters arising.

3.01 Minutes of meeting held on 31 October 2023.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2023 were accepted and **APPROVED** as an accurate record. The Minutes will be filed in the Approved Minutes Folder.

3.02 Matters Arising.

The following matters arising were discussed from the minutes:

- Reserves Policy- this was forwarded to Governors after the last Audit and Risk Committee.

4.00

Principal and CEO report.

The Corporation Board **NOTE** the Principal and CEO report.

4.01 Strategy Project update.

DB gives a update on the Employee Engagement Project and Learning+ Project noting that these projects are going well and positive progress is being made. DB details the work that is taking place to address staff concerns about communication and what exactly staff are missing in terms of communication.

DH details the positive feedback from the staff survey and the actions that have taken place from this survey including the work with Middle Managers. DH notes the systematic approach that SECG is taking place to address the issues raised within the staff survey. DB adds that staff morale and communication can be linked and should the actions not give a positive result improvement in staff morale made lift this.

MT notes that Learning+ Project is moving forward at a pace which will give more objective and swift results.

4.02 Centre for Innovation.

JS details the wide remit for the Centre for Innovation (which has an income of £8m) including AEB, IoT, Apprenticeships and subcontracting noting the SECG retention issues particularly for apprenticeships due to COVID19. JS notes the work that SECG is doing to reduce the learners Past End Date (PED). JS reviews the pathways that SECG is developing from HTQs (the new HNC/HND) to T Levels. JS adds that SECG is building on its commercial course offer.

SL asks about the wave 1 HTQs noting that the Community Coaching did not recruit to target enquiring what are the lessons learnt from this? JS responds that the course was a late offer and wasn't full marketed.

SC asks if conversations are being had with the manufacturing sector? JS details that this has been reviewed but larger companies tend to have in house training that they move forward with.

DB notes that SECG is one of the few Colleges that have been successful in terms of the Bootcamp Bids.

4.03 ESFA meeting update.

DB gives a update on the SECG recent meeting with the ESFA, Termly Performance Review Conversation- which is a new request from the ESFA. DB details the lack of challenge from the ESFA is this meeting however SECG has a new area officer who maybe more challenging in future meetings.

DB emphasis the importance of 16-18 provision and apprenticeships improvement for Ofsted.

4.04 SAR 2022-2023

The Corporation Board **NOTE** the SECG SAR 22-23. DB asks for comment to emailed to her directly outside of the meeting.

AF details that the SAR is going to Executive Board every two weeks so that this continues to be reviewed.

5.00 Finance update.

5.01 Year End accounts audit update 2021-22.

Moved to confidential.

5.02 Draft annual report and accounts for July 2023.

The Corporation Board **APPROVE** the draft annual report and accounts for July 2023.

5.03 Q1 Accounts.

The Corporation Board **NOTE** the Q1 Accounts.

DH notes that the SECG cost pressure is around staffing costs- this is without giving a pay award. DH details that the increase in the National Minimum Wage will cost SECG an additional £400k. DB adds that this is a significant pressure as this erodes the bottom of the pay scale.

6.00 Employer Engagement and Innovation.

The Corporation Board **NOTE** report.

7.00 Curriculum, Quality and Learner Experience.

RO gives the following feedback from the CQC meetings:

- the position of SECG in the Final Learner Performance 2022-2023 and how this needs to improve.
- additional meetings for CQC.
- E&M staff shortages and the impact of this.
- positive validation with UAE and increased enrolment.

GB asks where SECG is on the E&M diagnostics testing, HP responds that SECG hasn't had as much progress as hoped in this area. DB notes that this is due to the issues with staffing in E&M and the number of supply teachers in this area.

7.01 Minutes of the meeting 21 November 2023.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2023 were accepted and **APPROVED** as an accurate record. The Minutes will be filed in the Approved Minutes Folder.

7.02 Final Learner Performance 2022-2023.

The Corporation Board **NOTE** the Final Learner Performance 2022-2023 report.

7.03 QIP- Progress to Date.

The Corporation Board **NOTE** the QIP- progress to date report.

AF details the increased monitoring that SECG has put in place and the additional pressure to ensure that actions are followed through. AF adds that attendance is being reviewed as a key performance measure over retention.

8.00 Joint Policy & Resources and Audit & Risk Committee.

PGr gives the following feedback from the Joint Policy & Resources and Audit & Risk Committee meeting:

- finance and update
- update on the minuted conversation with Price Bailey and the requirement from the Auditors.
- PGr details the positive feedback from Scrutton Bland and the good audit culture at SECG.

8.01 Minutes of the meeting 28 November 2023.

The Corporation Board **APPROVE** the minutes of the meeting 28 November 2023.

8.02 Risk register, assurance mapping and dashboard.

The Corporation Board **NOTE** the Risk Register, assurance mapping and dashboard.

DH notes the requested updates on the Risk Register will be made in the New Year. DH notes that the risks for each committee which will be reviewed by each specific relevant committee in addition to the Risk Register holistically being reviewed by Audit and Risk Committee.

8.03 Terms of Reference for Audit and Risk Committee.

The Corporation Board **APPROVE** the Terms of Reference for Audit and Risk Committee.

8.04 Finance and Audit Chairs AoC Briefing.

The Corporation Board **NOTE** the presentation from the Finance and Audit Chairs AoC briefing.

Policy ratification.

8.11 Financial Regulations.

The Corporation Board **APPROVE** the Financial Regulations.

9.00 Governance and Remuneration.

SL gives the following feedback from Governors and Remuneration Committee:

- Discussion around the training of new Governors.
- Student Governor required for FE and the plans that will aid with the recruitment for this.
- Mentoring system for Governors.
- Committee accepted the recommendations of the Vice Chairs Recruitment review.
- SEND achievements are higher than those from other backgrounds. An Annual Report will review holistically all the SEND data under one umbrella.
- Governors Mandatory Training- will be chased individually with Governors.

AT asks if the Governors were satisfied with the plan moving forward for the FE Student Governor, if enough work is going into this and offered to assist with the recruitment of this role. LJ details the work that has been done with Unloc to progress the FE Student Governor recruitment.

9.01 Minutes of the meeting 5 December 2023.

The Corporation Board **APPROVE** the minutes of the meeting 5 December 2023.

9.02 Roland Anderson Term of Office Extension to 9 July 2024.

The Corporation Board **APPROVE** the Term of Office Extension for Roland Anderson to 9 July 2024.

9.03 Sue Leonard Term of Office Extension to 21 March 2028.

The Corporation Board **APPROVE** the Term of Office Extension for Sue Leonard to 21 March 2028.

10.00 Governance Matters- Update.

LJ gives a verbal update on Governance matters noting that the AoC 6 Principals have been updated.

SL notes the mentoring programme papers have been uploaded to GovernorHub. The Corporation Board **AGREE** that the mentoring programme should be adopted.

SL details that the Directors Note will be circulated to the Corporation Board.

11.00 Any Other Business.

AT asks that acronyms and abbreviations could be minimized in reports.

AT asks what SECG is doing on EDI and Sustainability? DB notes that a lot of work is going on in these areas but these need to come together in more coherent reports to Governors. BB echoes this.

SA asks does SECG have strong policy around related party transactions? DH responds that SECG avoids these however some do happen. An example DB is on the Board for High House Productions, which The Backstage Centre Ltd sits on so this is apart of business practice.

12.00 Dates of future events and forthcoming meetings.

23rd January 2024- Board Development Day

26th March 2024

11.00-16.00hrs Strategic Leadership, Behaviour and Culture Workshop (Part 3 Induction)

18.00-20.30hrs Corporation Board Meeting

16th April 2024 - Chairs Forum

11th June 2024 - Board Development Day

9th July 2024 - Corporation Board

13.00 Motion of Confidentiality.

Motion of Confidentiality [THAT, because of its nature, the business to be conducted be treated as confidential and not for publication]

Staff in attendance, staff and student governors left the meeting at 19:05.

Item	Actions	Deadline	Lead	Status
Actions from 12 December 2023				
0.00	Creative People and Place project to be review by the Audit and Risk Committee.	June 24	LJ/PG	Scheduled for June agenda
5.01	Chair of Policy and Resources Committee and Chair of Audit and Risk Committee should write to Price Bailey regarding the External Audit issues.	Jan 24	DH/PG/L F	Completed

14.03	The strategic aim column is completed on the SPH targets.	ASAP	RO/DB	Completed
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ⁱThe code of conduct for Governors requires governors to be honest and open with regard to conflicts of interest (either real or perceived). Governors must not use their position for personal gain in business, political or social relationships. Therefore, a governor who has, or may be perceived to have, such a personal interest in a particular matter under consideration should declare that interest, withdraw from all discussions relating to it and take no part in any vote on such matter.