

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE

Minutes of the meeting of the Search and Governance Committee of the Board of Governors held on Monday 27 November 2017 at 5.00pm in the Principal's Office, Paget Road

PRESENT

Mr B Picken (Chair) Mr C Crosdale
Ms C Boliver

Ms S Meddings (Clerk)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE & DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Mr J Crockett and Mr T Johnson.

There were no declarations of interest.

18/17 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING – 2 OCTOBER 2017

Resolved:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 October 2017 be approved as a correct record.

19/17 MATTERS ARISING – CURRENT AND FORTHCOMING VACANCIES

Arising on Minute No 14/17, in response to a request from the Committee that the Clerk research best practice in recruiting for diversity, the Clerk distributed a AoC/ETF Guidance note on “Diversity of the College Governing Body” which covered recruitment and succession planning. The Guidance note would be forwarded to the Committee members who had not been able to attend the meeting.

20/17 BOARD OF GOVERNORS AND ITS COMMITTEES – CURRENT AND FORTHCOMING VACANCIES

In respect of the current membership of the Board of Governors and its committees, the Committee noted that there were three vacancies for Independent members on the Board, two vacancies on the Audit Committee and one vacancy on the Remuneration Committee. One of the two vacancies on the Audit Committee could be filled by an external co-opted member.

The Committee further noted the forthcoming vacancies as at 31 March 2018 when the terms of office of four Independent members were due to expire, namely Mr Barry Picken, Mr Jon Crockett, Mrs Tonia Campbell and Mr Tim Johnson.

It was noted that by 31 March 2018, Mr Picken and Mr Johnson would have served one term of office, Mrs Campbell would have served two terms and Mr Crockett would have served two terms plus an additional year.

The Clerk reminded the Committee of the re-appointment process, which included an expression of interest by the Governor on serving a further term of office together with the completion of a re-appointment questionnaire. Re-appointments would be considered by the Committee in the context of the skills requirements of the Board, the equality and diversity profile of the Board and an evaluation of the existing Governor's contribution and attendance.

In respect of the current skills mix on the Board, the Committee reiterated that it was imperative to recruit a governor with a background in finance not only to address the skills deficit on the Board but also for succession planning for the role of Audit Committee Chair. Discussions ensued on how best to identify prospective governors with a finance background and a number of actions were agreed for Committee members and the Clerk to follow up.

The Committee were also mindful of the need to seek potential Governors with a background in Education (Further or Higher) at a senior level.

The Committee then considered two applications from prospective Governors, EB and OH and agreed that both applicants should be invited into College for exploratory discussions with the Chair, Principal and Clerk.

21/17

GOVERNOR PERFORMANCE 2016/17

The Committee received a report on Governor Performance which included:

- The summary return of the Governors' annual self-assessment questionnaires completed by governors in respect of the 2016/17 academic year, together with benchmarking data providing a comparison with 14 other colleges.
- The summary return of the annual Audit Committee self-assessment for 2016/17.
- Summary feedback from a review of the Governor Links programme.
- A summary of training and development activities undertaken by Governors and the Clerk during the 2016/17 academic year including an evaluation of the Strategic Planning Forum held on 28 June 2017.
- The aggregate Governor attendance figure for 2016/17 together with the attendance figures for the Board and the Board's Committees.

Self-Assessment 2016/17

The 2016/17 Governors' self-assessment was based on the questionnaire first used for the 2015/16 review, which was framed around the areas of evaluation which would be examined by Ofsted under the current Ofsted Inspection framework. The questionnaire also included statements on current topics such as the "Prevent Agenda" and English, maths and functional skills".

The summary return was based on 10 completed questionnaires (out of 12 requested). All comments were reproduced verbatim and anonymised.

It was noted that the overall assessment of the College's governance arrangements was graded by 7 Governors as "Good", by 2 Governors as "Outstanding" and by 1 Governor as "Requires Improvement".

As part of the annual self-assessment, Governors were also requested to provide feedback on their experience of the Governor Links programme which was piloted in 2014/15 and was now in its 4th year.

In addition, members of the Audit Committee undertook a review of the Committee's effectiveness in 2016/17, the outcomes of which would be reported to the Board within the Annual report of the Audit Committee to the Board.

In considering the self-assessment summary return, the Committee focused on the areas where Governors had "disagreed" with the statements, i.e. "the effectiveness of the College's governance arrangements" and "the profile of governors with regard to race, gender, age and disability". The Chair also drew attention to the response to the statement "Governors receive reports and understand how the College actively promotes British values".

Following discussion, it was agreed that it was timely that the effectiveness of the "Carver" model of Governance (introduced in 2015/16) should be the subject of an external independent review. It was also agreed that a session on Prevent and British Values would be built into the Programme for the Strategic Planning Forum in February 2018.

The Clerk reported that a recent Internal Audit review of the College's governance arrangements had recommended that Governor appraisal should be reintroduced. When used previously, this had been effective in picking up and addressing individual Governor's comments and concerns and identifying any training and development needs.

In respect of the equality and diversity profile of the Board, it was noted that there was currently no Asian representation on the Board. The Committee discussed ways in which this could be addressed and agreed on actions to be taken forward.

In considering the feedback on the Governor Links programme, the Committee agreed that it was a valuable programme which, with further refinement, could add more value to the Board. It was agreed to include a review of the Links programme in the external independent review of the Carver model.

The Committee also agreed that the external review should look at the Board's complaints mechanisms.

Training and Development

The Committee noted the summary of training and development activities undertaken by Governors and the Clerk during the 2016/17 academic year. The Chair commented that he was pleased with the breadth of development activities undertaken.

Governor Attendance

The Committee were pleased to note that the aggregate Governor attendance figure for 2016/17 was 81% which was not only above target but also compared well with a survey of Governor attendance for 2016/17 based on figures from 111 colleges which calculated average attendance as 80.48% (highest was 95%, lowest 68%).

The Committee gave consideration to the target aggregate attendance figure to recommend to the Board of Governors for 2017/18 and agreed to recommend a target of **80%**.

Resolved:

That the Search and Governance Committee recommends to the Board of Governors that the Board approve a target for aggregate governor attendance for the 2017/18 academic year of 80%

22/17

ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE REGISTER OF CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

The Committee noted the outcome of the review of the 2015/16 register of confidential items undertaken by the Chair of the Board of Governors and the Clerk.