

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE

**Minutes of a Special meeting of the Search and Governance Committee of the Board
of Governors held on Monday 29 November 2021 via Microsoft Teams.**

PRESENT

Ms Emma Bull (Chair)
Mr Clarence Crosdale
Mr Mike Hastings

Mr Mal Cowgill
Mrs Amanda Tomlinson

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs Elizabeth Ball – Head of Governance

11/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (ITEM 1)

Apologies were received from Mr Mark Taylor.

There were no declarations of interest.

12/21 MINUTES (ITEM 2)

The minutes of the meetings held on 16 June 2021 were approved as a correct record.

13/21 MATTERS ARISING

Governors DBS

The Head of Governance reported that she had contacted HR to find out whether Governors as volunteers could make use of the DBS update service.

It was noted that most Governors had been subject to a DBS check only recently but that where some time had passed the intention was to repeat these. A decision could then be made whether to use the updating service (if available) or set a period of time after which they need to be renewed.

14/21 GOVERNANCE REPORT (ITEM 3)

1. Terms of Office, Succession Planning and Recruitment

The Head of Governance reported that at 31 July 2022 there would be at least one vacancy on the Board and unless there was a view that the size of the Board should be reduced it will be necessary to undertake a Governor recruitment process.

The Committee took the view, that having undertaken a careful process to appoint Governors to improve the diversity of the Board and to ensure that there was a very high level of skills and expertise there should not be a reduction in the size of the Board at this stage.

It was also agreed that consideration of staggering the end dates of the terms of office of the seven new Governors appointed in March 2021 should be deferred to a future date as there may be future changes in membership.

The Committee noted that the vacancy that would arise, would also result in a vacancy for one of the Vice Chair positions. They emphasised the importance of ensuring that equality and diversity is considered as part of the process of appointing the Chair and Vice Chairs.

2. Skills and Expertise Audit

The Committee noted the Skills and Expertise Audit as at November 2021 which was appended to the report. The Head of Governance confirmed that all Governors had now completed the audit.

The Committee considered that the Board of Governors overall had a high level of skills and expertise in all areas but agreed that it should remain subject to review.

The Committee also agreed that in accordance with the view of the FE Commissioner, experience in FE should form part of the essential skills section.

3. Equality and Diversity

The Head of Governance presented the updated Equality and Diversity data as at November 2021. This had been updated following the appointment of the Student Governor and whilst it evidenced that the Board was much more diverse, this would remain a focus when appointing future Governors.

4. Attendance

The Committee considered the full year attendance statistics for 2020/21 and the data for those meetings that had taken place in 2021/22.

Governors considered that overall levels of attendance were high, particularly in view of the impact of the pandemic in 2021/22 and noted the circumstances that had led to reduced levels of attendance for one Governor.

It was noted however that the position would continue to be monitored.

The Committee wished it to be formally noted that the staff governor had attended every meeting of the Board of Governors and the Campus Transformation Oversight Group, despite this being outside of working hours.

They considered that the staff governor made a particularly important contribution to the Board and wanted this to be recognised.

5. Training and Development

The Committee considered the report on Governor Training and Development and the requirement for Governors to undertake mandatory training in relation to safeguarding and prevent.

It was noted that additional development requirements will be established as part of the Board self-assessment process.

Confidential minute:

6. Governor links

The Committee noted that Governor links are now being developed with Governors attending SAR validation sessions in November 2021. Governors have also been invited to attend at Quality Board in January and in March/April 2022.

The Committee also noted the feedback from Governors that had attended the SAR validation sessions which evidenced how useful these were and that link Governors and managers were arranging follow up activity.

The Committee noted the report.

15/21 CODE OF CONDUCT (ITEM 4)

The Committee noted that the Board of Governors has adopted the Code of Conduct issued by Eversheds as part of their Governance Service since 2002 (as revised from time to time.)

The Head of Governance reported that a new version of the Code had recently been published and was attached at appendix 1 for consideration by the Committee and recommendation to the Board.

The main changes which were highlighted in a comparison copy were identified in the report and the Committee questioned whether it was appropriate simply to refer Governors to the Funding Framework instead of providing information within the Code itself, particularly as the Government Website was difficult to navigate.

It was noted however that using links can be helpful where information is likely to change regularly.

The Committee also asked about the reference to the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 as Governors were unlikely to be familiar with these provisions in relation to Data Protection.

The Head of Governance advised that in each case proper consideration would be given as to whether personal data should be disclosed including whether there was an exception within those regulations.

It was noted that the Code of Conduct would be updated to include the relevant information for City of Wolverhampton College before being presented to the Board of Governors for adoption.

It was resolved that the Code of Conduct for Corporation Members – Seventeenth Edition – Further Education Colleges version be recommended to the Board of Governors for adoption.

16/21 ANNUAL REPORT AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

The Committee considered the draft annual report to the Board of Governors and the report on the assessment of performance by the Committee members.

The Committee endorsed the annual report and agreed that the performance of the Committee should be rated as good.

It was resolved that the Annual Report be approved for submission to the Board of Governors for adoption.

17/21 CONFIDENTIALITY

It was resolved that the report on Equality and Diversity and the Confidential minute relating to Training and Development should not be made available for public inspection.

18/21 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

28 March 2022 at 5pm