

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE

Minutes of the meeting of the Search and Governance Committee held on

Monday 17 November 2025 at 5.15pm via Microsoft Teams

PRESENT

Mr Mike Hastings (Chair)

Ms Louise Fall

Mr Simon Evans

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs Alison Buick, Head of Governance

01/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (ITEM 1)

Apologies were received from John Bradford. Amanda Tomlinson had recently resigned as a Board member, which created a vacancy for this committee.

There were no declarations of interest.

02/26 MINUTES (ITEM 2)

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2025 were approved.

03/26 MATTERS ARISING (ITEM 2)

Governors considered the previously agreed actions. These related to sharing information on Governor vacancies and potential contacts and were now complete.

04/26 GOVERNANCE REPORT (ITEM 3)

The Head of Governance referred to her written report and the contents were discussed.

Board Membership, Vacancies and Terms of Office

There were currently seven vacancies for independent Governors, which was a high and unprecedented number. As noted above, Amanda Tomlinson had recently resigned. This created vacancies for several committees and also as a Vice Chair.

The college had engaged with Peridot to support recruitment of two new Governors, and activity for this had been ongoing in the previous half term. Shortlisting and interview meetings were scheduled later in November.

There had been further general social media adverts for the vacancies. Two individuals known to the Chair had also been contacted.

At this time there were four other individuals at different stages of the process, in addition to the Peridot work:

1. One had met with the Principal and Head of Governance and was waiting for a date to meet the Chair. They were a former student and lived in Wolverhampton.
2. One had recently met the Head of Governance and a meeting had been scheduled with the Principal. They were a lecturer in HE and lived in Wolverhampton.
3. Ronnie Robinson had met with the Principal and Head of Governance and was proposed to be recommended for Board approval in December. Ronnie was Managing Director of a property agency in Wolverhampton. As a local

business owner, he was felt to have skills and knowledge that would complement the existing Board members.

4. Susan Lawrence had also met the Principal and Head of Governance. She was a qualified and experienced accountant with a background in a diverse range of roles, including having been a Governor at the college for five years previously. She had expressed interest in returning to the role. Given that the Board now had both an Audit and a Finance & Resources Committee, and had recently lost members with accountancy experience, Susan had skills, knowledge and experience to add to the Board. It was proposed that she also be recommended for Board approval in December.

Committee members discussed the prospective Governors and agreed to recommend the appointment of Ronnie Robinson and Susan Lawrence as external Governors for four year terms of office. This would be proposed at the Board meeting in December 2025. Action: Chair.

There would be continued engagement with the other two individuals and a report back to the next meeting in March.

It was hoped that the outcomes from the Peridot recruitment process would be able to be reported to the Board in December.

The Chair noted that his term of office was due to end on 31 July 2026 and that succession planning was needed.

The Head of Governance also noted that Dionne Barrett's term of office was due to end in February and that she was willing to be re-appointed, subject to Board approval. Dionne's contribution as Safeguarding Link Governor was noted and it was agreed to recommend her re-appointment for a further four year term at the Board meeting in December. Action: Chair.

Attendance

Information about attendance to meetings in 2024/25 and against national averages had been provided in the written report. Board attendance was below the college target and the national average. Several factors had contributed to this. A number of Governors had since left.

EDI Update

The current Board make up was noted and would be considered when making new appointments. The gender and age profiles were broadly balanced but the ethnic mix did not currently reflect the student or local population.

It was agreed to re-issue the EDI questionnaire in the spring term once some new appointments had been made. Action: Head of Governance.

Annual Report – Use of the College Seal. Chair's Action and Confidential minutes

The written report was noted for information.

05/26 EXTERNAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW ACTION PLAN UPDATE (ITEM 4)

The written update was noted. Most actions were complete but some were in progress. These related to Governor recruitment, streamlining papers, setting up a Board portal and improving Governor challenge. Clear actions were evident in all of these areas although they were not yet fully complete.

06/26 GOVERNANCE SAR AND QIP (ITEM 5)

The Head of Governance outlined the requirement for an external review every three years and an internal self-assessment in other years. A self-assessment had been completed for 2024/25 and comments invited initially from the Chair and Vice Chairs. Amanda Tomlinson had provided some feedback prior to her resignation, and her comments around Board assurance and risk management had been added. The self-assessment had been based on feedback from a range of Governor activities. All Governors had been given opportunities to provide feedback and comments.

The Head of Governance also explained changes to the college's SAR validation processes this year, which had added a meeting to review the QIP for each of the business support areas, including governance. The governance meeting was on 27 November. Mark Taylor would attend to represent the Board.

The Committee members discussed whether CPD may be required to support Governors in asking challenging questions, the extent to which Governors read papers and contributed to meetings, the length of papers and whether questions should be submitted in advance of meetings.

The contents of the SAR were agreed. The Head of Governance would complete the QIP and submit the documents for the validation meeting. Action: Head of Governance.

07/26 GOVERNANCE UPDATES

The Head of Governance referred to her written report, which covered the following:

- Updates to the AOC's Senior Postholder Remuneration Code
- New FE Commissioner
- Policy Landscape
- Stone King and University of Sunderland report.

Governors noted the updates provided.

08/26 CONFIDENTIALITY

No items discussed were agreed as confidential.

09/26 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 2 March 2026 on Teams.

The meeting ended at 5.55pm.