

Meeting of Search & Governance Committee
Tuesday 4th April 2017 at 5.00 pm
Seminar Room 4
MINUTES

Present: Michelle Clement, Cath Dutton, Jon Thedham (Chair), Rebecca Sandham, Gordon Watson, Graham Wilkinson

In attendance: Carole Drury (Clerk)

331 **Apologies for Absence**
Fra Cooke

332 **Declarations of Interest**
There were no declarations of interest

333 **To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 31st January 2017**
The minutes of the last meeting were approved and signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

334 **Matters Arising from the Minutes & Action Plan**
There were no matters arising not included in the action plan which was presented with updated positions against each action.

335 **Governor Development Programme and Link Governor programme**
The Committee reviewed the updated programme, noting poor attendance at the last curriculum visit. An invite had already been sent out to Board members to ascertain interest in the next scheduled visit on 4th May with 3 members confirming their availability to attend. The Committee reviewed the programme, suggesting that an 0830 start with a meeting with the Head of School, may be preferable. It was agreed to trial this proposal for the 2017/18 programme and to include a briefing sheet provided to governors in advance on key curriculum statistics for the school being visited. A larger overall curriculum visit could also be incorporated into the annual training event.
(Action: Clerk)

In respect of the governor link programme, it was noted that two presentations had now taken place. It was felt that the links established to date were working well and would continue after the presentation to enhance links over key strategic priorities and risks.

Other proposals considered included putting in place an expectation of governor CPD with a list of potential activities such as e-learning, webinars and reading that would be reviewed as part of the annual performance review of governance. It was agreed that the Clerk would draw up a new plan for 2017/18 to encompass these ideas for recommendation to the Board. (Action: Clerk)

336 **Attendance, Terms of Office & Committee membership**
An average attendance at board meetings was reported as 83.5% with 100% at Audit & Risk Committee.

Terms of office of members was considered, noting that there had been no new nominations for staff governor to date and Michelle Clement seeking re-appointment. The closing date for applications was Friday 7th April and a final reminder would be sent

out to staff. Committee members agreed that the two current student members were probably the best we had had for a few years but recognising that Alastair Speed would be finishing at the end of this year. The importance of recording the impact of student governor contribution was discussed. It was agreed that the two student governors would be invited to meet with Jon Thedham as part of their review process. (Action: Clerk and Chair)

Committee membership was considered, particularly in respect of new members who had joined the Board in March. It was reported that all had confirmed their acceptance of the appointment and would be undergoing induction in the next few weeks. No issues under registrations of interests had been noted.

In respect of Committee Membership, it was agreed that an additional member would be sought to join Audit & Risk Committee but noting that the preference was to allow new members to complete their probationary period before being invited to join a committee. However, due to low committee membership, it was agreed that all members would be invited to attend the next Audit & Risk Committee meeting on 9th May to see how the committee operates. (Action: Clerk)

337 **Succession Planning** (Senior Postholder – confidential item)

The Clerk presented a proposed timeline for the expected recruitment of a Principal within the next year. The Principal indicated that he would be likely to give notice of one year to allow the process to be put in place in the Autumn Term with recruitment to have been completed by March 2018 with an announcement to be made to staff at the end of the summer term. The Chair of the Corporation would also attend the staff briefing.

It was agreed that a Task & Finish Group be set up to manage the process, membership to include Jon Thedham, Cath Dutton, Fra Cooke, Gordon Watson and Rebecca Sandham, supported by the Clerk.

Proposals for an application pack had been put forward by the Clerk and further additions had been recommended. It was agreed that an emphasis on lifestyle choice should also be included along with consideration of a relocation package to attract the right candidate.

Other considerations discussed by the Committee included:

- Managing change including both internal staff and external stakeholders
- Staff focus groups lead by Jon Thedham and Cath Dutton
- Communication strategy
- Overlap between current and next principal
- Use of agencies to recruit although it was agreed that the preference would be to use the expertise on the Board
- Allocation of budget to support recruitment including advertising costs, travel expenses
- Importance of checking references and backgrounds of applicants (AoC support)
- Conflicts of interest to be effectively managed

338 **FE Commissioner's Letter – March 2017**

The recent letter, sent to Principals and Chair from the new FE Commissioner, was considered. In particular, the letter outlined some features and serious difficulties evidenced from colleges as part of the Area Based Review, along with evidence of good performance that made particular reference to the role of the Board and Clerk.

The Chair agreed that it would be important to benchmark the Board's performance against the characteristics reported for successful colleges. The Clerk suggested using the features to measure performance in the governance self-assessment report.

The Committee talked about preparation for Ofsted and agreed it would be useful to collect evidence of what the College was most proud of, recognising that some key memories were at risk of being forgotten with a change of principal going forward.

It was agreed that the letter should be shared with all Board members (Action: Clerk)

339

Instrument & Articles of Government – update

The Clerk presented proposed amendments to the Instrument & Articles following a review of the existing ones based on changes in section 49 and paragraph 43 of Schedule 12 Education Act 2011 which came into force on 1st April 2012. The modification provided the opportunity to update the Instrument & Articles and make them more fit for purpose for the Board.

The Committee considered amendments and made further proposals as follows:

- Insert “by exception” under reference to the use of video and tele-conferencing
- Propose a maximum membership of 16 for the Board
- Retain 2 staff and 2 student governors
- Make provision for up to 2 Vice Chairs to be appointed
- Remove references to parent governors
- Rename the Clerk as Director of Governance
- Retain the clause on public access to meetings to maintain transparency
- Move the requirements for a Search Committee to the Standing Orders
- Retain the requirement for an Audit Committee
- Remove the restriction of the Principal to delegating powers only to holders of senior posts and extend to members of the Senior Management Team
- Amend reference to CE of Skills Funding to “Funding Authorities”
- Change “rules and bye laws” to “policies and procedures”

It was agreed that the amendments in line with the modification order be put into a new format and recommended to the Board for approval. (Action: Clerk)

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Date of Next Meeting

Tuesday 19th September 2017