

HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

SEARCH & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 03 February 2015

Membership: *M Prodger (Chair)
*M Coleman
R Locke
*K Spencer

** denotes present*

In attendance: D Sheridan, Clerk to the Corporation
R Lucas, Deputy Clerk to the Corporation

552 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from R Locke.

553 Declaration of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

554 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Search and Governance meeting held on 11 November 2014 were agreed and approved as an accurate record.

555 Matters arising from the minutes

555.1 Governor Training and Development Events (minute 547 refers)

K Spencer informed the Committee that it would not be appropriate for her to be paired with an individual team and that during the course of her work, she sees all the teams in action.

556 Membership of Harlow College Further Education Corporation

The Search and Governance Committee considered the register of membership and the governor attendance figures for 2014 – 2015, presented by D Sheridan, Clerk to the Corporation.

The Committee noted that Cllr Tony Durcan was appointed by the Corporation at its meeting on 11 December 2014 for a period of four years. The Committee agreed that he should be asked to consider joining the Audit Committee. The Committee approved M Prodger's request to move from the Audit Committee to the Standards Committee.

Governors discussed how to fill the remaining vacancy on the Board. The potential governor with links to the New Engineering Foundation has informed the Clerk that this is a role she is unable to take on at present. The Committee agreed that the

Clerk and Principal should explore possibilities of finding a governor with a link to the Advanced Manufacturing Centre or Stansted Airport.

The Committee noted that B Spencer's term of office expires in May 2015 and, having agreed his skills, commitment and values are acknowledged by the Board, agreed for the Clerk to approach him to see if he is willing to be reappointed.

Sarah Banks, student governor, had expressed an interest to join the Health and Safety and Safeguarding Committees. This will be followed up by Paul Marsh.

The attendance figures for 2014 – 2015 were discussed and noted by the Committee.

The Search and Governance Committee noted the paper.

557 Quality Improvement Plan for Governance 2014-2015

The Search and Governance Committee received and considered the proposed Quality Improvement Plan for Governance 2014-2015 which was tabled at the meeting, presented by D Sheridan, Clerk to the Corporation.

The following four areas for development were discussed and agreed:

1. *Corporation members should not be satisfied with quorate attendance at Corporation meetings but achieve more challenging attendance targets.*

It was agreed that facilities to join the meetings virtually should be adopted and that when a governor sends in apologies for a meeting, they should be asked if they could join the meeting remotely.

The covering letter sent with meeting papers could ask for those not attending to send it any comments on the papers in advance of the meeting.

It was agreed that governors' attendance figures would be shared at each Corporation meeting.

2. *Governors wish to develop more ways to understand the views of its learners and maintain interaction with student body.*

It was agreed that at least one governor should attend each College event. It will be necessary to ensure a wider circulation of College event details. There was a discussion around team celebration events and Paul Marsh was asked to look at this in more detail.

3. *Governors recognise the need to be familiar and informed of all aspects of the Ofsted inspection procedure.*

Governors noted a new inspection framework is being launched in September 2015, therefore governor training will be linked to this.

A new dashboard is being presented to the Standards Committee next week.

Feedback from governors' involvement in the self-assessment process has been positive.

4. *Governors recognise the need to be informed of the implementation of the Strategic Plan.*

Governors noted this area for development,

The Search and Governance Committee approved the Quality Improvement Plan for 2014-2015, subject to the minor amendments detailed above.

558 Academy Walk-Through / Pair Scheme

The Search and Governance Committee received an update on the academy walk-through and pair scheme, presented by K Spencer, Principal and D Sheridan, Clerk to the Corporation.

Governors were informed that Paul Marsh will be leading on the academy walk-through scheme. The Clerk and Deputy Clerk will obtain potential dates from governors to undertake their walk-through. Ideally a number of these would take place before Easter.

The process of the walk-through was discussed. Governors will be supplied with the team self-assessment report and quality improvement plan to enable them to choose the focus of their visit and to test that what is contained within these documents is valid.

The Search and Governance Committee noted the paper and asked for the academy walk-throughs to be confirmed with governors as soon as possible.

559 Strategic Planning Event

The Search and Governance Committee discussed the need for the Corporation to hold a strategic planning event.

The Search and Governance Committee agreed that such an event would be useful in the early part of the summer term, once the funding agreements and the outcome of the bid to the South East Local Enterprise Partnership for an Advanced Manufacturing Centre on campus are known.

The Search and Governance Committee agreed that the Clerk and Deputy Clerk should begin to look at potential dates and that late afternoon/early evening worked well at the last strategic planning event.

560 English Colleges' Code of Good Governance

The Search and Governance Committee received and considered the English Colleges' Code of Good Governance consultation documents, presented by D Sheridan, Clerk to the Corporation.

A general discussion was held around the documents and the mechanisms for responding to the consultation. Governors raised the following:

- There is not much focus on teaching and learning and more focus on financial management.
- Part 1 and Part 2 of the consultation documents do not really link and the key values and principles in part 1 are not replicated in part 2.
- Much of what is contained in the Code duplicates requirements and expectations contained within the Instrument and Articles, the Financial Memorandum and Joint Audit Code of Practice.
- There is a requirement for the College to publish a lot of information online, most of which is already done.
- In order for all governors to respond, the information needs condensing.

The Search and Governance Committee agreed that the Clerk will coordinate a response to the consultation on the English Colleges' Code of Good Governance.

561 Recent Developments in Governance

561.1 The Annual Report of the Further Education Commissioner

The Search and Governance Committee received and considered the Annual Report of the Further Education Commissioner, presented by D Sheridan, Clerk to the Corporation.

Governors noted that the Further Education Commissioner has worked with eleven colleges over the last year.

The "lessons learned" sections were looked at and discussed in detail, in particular the governing role of the clerk, governance, leadership and management, quality improvement and financial health.

A general discussion was then held around current work in the College and Governors noted the following:

- Student destinations are being reported in team SARs and the College has improved the way it collects this data.
- Senior staff are being asked to present papers to Corporation and Committee meetings and to increase their exposure to governors.
- Alan Philips has been appointed as the Director of Finance and is already in post.
- The College has been cautious in its recruitment and growth forecasts.
- Budgets for next academic year are still unknown, however planned reductions have been built into the College's budget.
- A review of higher education is being undertaken.
- The College has been approved by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) to run its own higher education provision, such as HNDs and HNCs.

The Search and Governance Committee noted the Annual Report of the Further Education Commissioner.

561.2 The BIS Review of Further Education Governance

The Search and Governance Committee received and considered the BIS Review of Further Education Governance, presented by D Sheridan, Clerk

to the Corporation.

Governors noted the following points:

- The Corporation reports on the composition, size and diversity of the Board in the annual accounts.
- The Corporation is continuing to search for co-optees to Committees and the possible use of advisory committees.
- Colleges should be more open and transparent.
- Open meetings were discussed
- Events currently held can be used to engage with the public, such as open evenings and staff recruitment evenings.
- Payment of expenses is always offered to governors when they attend training events, however few governors claim their expenses.

The Search and Governance Committee noted the BIS Review of Further Education Governance.

562 Any Other Business

There were no items of any other business.

563 Dates of future meetings

Summer Term Tuesday 02 June 2015 08.30am