

# HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

## SEARCH AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the meeting held on MS Teams at 9.30am on Thursday 12 February 2026

Membership                      \*Ray Levy  
   \*Lily Lin (Chair)  
   \*Karen Spencer  
   \*Ian Tompkins

\*denotes present

In attendance                      Paul Whitehead, Deputy Principal  
   Simon Boyce, Vice-Principal  
   Deanne Morgan, Executive Director – Finance.  
   Ruth Lucas, Head of Governance

#### **1 Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

#### **2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the Search and Governance Committee meeting held on 07 October 2025 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

#### **4 Matters Arising from the Minutes (not mentioned elsewhere on the agenda)**

There were no matters arising.

#### **5 Register of Membership**

The Search and Governance Committee received and considered the Register of Membership, presented by Ruth Lucas, Head of Governance.

Governors were reminded that Rod Bristow is stepping down from the Corporation once a replacement has been appointed and this was discussed in further detail in the next agenda item.

The Committee noted that Lily Lin's second term of office expires at the end of this academic year and that Ed Whittle and Stephen Isherwood's first terms of office expires in Autumn 2026.

Karen Spencer and Ruth Lucas reported that they are meeting with an individual after half term who had been in contact, expressing an interest in becoming an FE Governor.

The Search and Governance Committee noted the Register of Membership.

## **6 Membership of Harlow College Further Education Corporation**

The Search and Governance Committee received an update on membership of Harlow College Further Education Corporation, presented by Ruth Lucas, Head of Governance.

The Search and Governance Committee considered Richard Smith's biography. Karen Spencer reported that Richard's background is in working for the qualification and curriculum development authorities, vocational qualifications in STEM and the aviation and construction sectors, in addition to his work with Talentview Aviation.

The Committee unanimously agreed that Richard would be an asset to the Corporation.

The membership of Committees was discussed and it was agreed that the Committee would recommend Richard to sit on the Audit Committee and that there is the opportunity for a member of the Audit Committee to join the Standards and Curriculum Committee.

The Committee also agreed to approach Richard Smith about the role of the Careers Lead Governor, in line with the Gatsby requirements.

The Search and Governance Committee noted the update on the membership of Harlow College Further Education Corporation and recommended the following to the Corporation for approval at its meeting on 26 March 2026:

- The appointment of Richard Smith as a Governor of Harlow College Further Education Corporation for a period of four years from 1 April 2026, for him to sit on the Audit Committee and for him to be approached about the Careers Lead Governor role.

## **7 Governance KPIs and Improvement Plan 2025 – 2026**

The Search and Governance Committee received and considered the Governance KPIs and Improvement Plan 2025 – 2026, presented by Ruth Lucas, Head of Governance.

The report was taken as read.

Ruth Lucas highlighted that Governor attendance is currently below the 2025 – 2026 target however it is broadly in line with the 2024 – 2025 target. A discussion was held around attendance and how this forms part of the annual external audit.

The Search and Governance Committee agreed that the attendance target should be revised so that the target is the sector average.

Karen Spencer reported a small working group will look at the calendar of Governor meetings to ensure that there is a clear rationale and planned business for each meeting which will then be presented to the Search and Governance Committee for review. This will include looking at statutory requirements, deadlines and delegation to Committees where appropriate.

A Governor asked whether a more thematic approach to the meetings could be taken.

Karen Spencer reported that sessions on strategic planning and the Strategic Plan have taken place at Corporation meetings where the agenda allowed. A discussion was held around re-introducing a curriculum conference for Governors, College managers and stakeholders.

Ruth Lucas informed the Committee that the next External Review of Governance needs to be completed next academic year.

The Search and Governance Committee noted Governance KPIs and Improvement Plan 2025 – 2026,

## **8 Annual Report of the Further Education Commissioner 2024 – 2025**

The Search and Governance Committee received and considered the Annual Report of the Further Education Commissioner 2024 – 2025, presented by Ruth Lucas, Head of Governance.

The Committee was informed that the Annual Strategic Conversation with the College, the DfE and the FE Commissioner’s Office took place on 5<sup>th</sup> February. The notes from the meeting will be presented at the Corporation meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026. The FE Commissioner’s Office representative praised the College’s Self-Assessment Report and reported that it was the best she had seen.

The Search and Governance Committee noted the Annual Report of the Further Education Commissioner 2024 – 2025.

## **9 Any Other Business**

There were no items of any other business.

## **10 Dates of Next Meeting**

Summer Term 2026	Thursday 07 May 2026	9.30am
	Tuesday 23 June 2026	9.30am

## **Key Points From The Meeting For Corporation:**

### **1. Membership of Harlow College Further Education Corporation**

To receive and approve the recommendation of the Search and Governance Committee.

### **2. Annual Report of the Further Education Commissioner 2024 – 2025**

To receive and note the Annual Report of the Further Education Commissioner 2024 – 2025.