

# HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

## SEARCH & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 16 March 2016

Membership: \*M Prodger (Chair)  
M Coleman  
\*K Spencer

*\* denotes present*

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

#### **587 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Martin Coleman.

#### **588 Declaration of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **589 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the Search and Governance meeting held on 06 October 2015 were agreed and approved as an accurate record.

#### **590 Matters arising from the minutes**

There were no matters arising.

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

Governors considered the register of membership and the governor attendance figures for 2015 – 2016, presented by D Sheridan, Clerk to the Corporation.

R Locke's term of office expired on 12 March 2016 and he announced that he would not be seeking re-appointment due to relocating to Scotland. The Search and Governance Committee thanked R Locke for his commitment and dedication to the College and wished him well for the future.

The vacancies on the Board were discussed and after a detailed discussion, the Search and Governance Committee agreed to approach Pearson, Anglia Ruskin University to ensure continuity with in-coming and out-going governors. The Committee agreed that the Principal, Clerk and Committee Chair should meet with prospective candidates with a view to making a recommendation to the Search and Governance Committee and the Corporation. A potential governor has been identified by the School Governor One Stop Shop (SGOSS) and the Search and Governance Committee agreed that the Principal, Clerk and Committee Chair should interview her.

The attendance figures for 2014 – 2015 were discussed and noted by the Committee and governors noted that attendance at Corporation meetings had

improved however there had been a slight decline in attendance at Committee meetings.

The Search and Governance Committee noted the paper.

## **592 Governor Training and Development**

The Search and Governance Committee received and considered the report of Governor Training and Development, presented by D Sheridan, Clerk to the Corporation and R Lucas, Deputy Clerk to the Corporation.

Governors noted the number of Governors who have completed their safeguarding and Prevent training and Governors particularly thanked Eddie Johnson for completing his training whilst on holiday abroad.

Harlow College had hosted an ACER Governor Induction training session on 14 February 2016 and Julian Bedford and Luke Jones attended this session.

R Lucas gave an overview of the academy learning walks, those that had taken place to date and those that are planned. Governors noted that a number of Governors still need to provide the Deputy Clerk with their availability.

The Search and Governance Committee noted the report on Governor Training and Development.

## **593 Self-Assessment, Quality Improvement and Inspection**

The Search and Governance Committee received and considered the report on the Self-Assessment of the Corporation, the Quality Improvement Plan and inspection, presented by D Sheridan, Clerk to the Corporation.

The Search and Governance Committee considered Governors' responses to the self-assessment and discussed in detail the following:

- Page 1 – national policy context:  
Some Governors reported that they are not well informed of some of the Government's policies for further education. It was noted that Governors do receive the information, however it was agreed that a discussion could be built into the strategic planning process to further highlight these policies.
- Key areas that Governors felt the Corporation was not strong on, such as learner destinations and stakeholder voice, were judged to be strong by Ofsted in January 2016.
- Many of the areas detailed in the self-assessment are covered by the Standards and Curriculum Committee and a mechanism for further highlighting key issues to the full Corporation is being explored.
- The areas in which Governors disagreed are to be analysed and if appropriate, an action plan will be developed.

The Search and Governance Committee considered the Leadership and Management section of the Ofsted report published in February 2016.

Governors discussed and noted the following:

- Inspectors reported that there is good financial, audit and risk challenge from Governors however challenge on standards is weaker.

- Inspectors reported that ambitious performance targets, particularly for English and maths should be set, whereas the College, in consultation with the Standards and Curriculum Committee, has been setting realistic improvement targets rather than overly ambitious targets.
- The main areas to improve Governor challenge are in respect of teaching, learning and curriculum.

The Search and Governance Committee considered the QIP for Governance , resulting from the self-assessment of the Corporation. The following four areas for development were discussed:

1. *Corporation members should not be satisfied with quorate attendance at Corporation meetings but achieve more challenging attendance targets.*
2. *Governors wish to develop more ways to understand the views of its learners and maintain interaction with student body.*
3. *Governors recognise the need to be familiar and informed of employer views of the College.*
4. *Governors recognise the need to be informed of the strategic Government policies for further education*

The Committee agreed that setting ambitious targets and English and maths be added in as two additional areas for development in the QIP.

The Search and Governance Committee noted the self-assessment of the Corporation and the Ofsted report and approved the Quality Improvement Plan for Governance for 2015-16.

## **594 Annual Report of the Further Education Commissioner 2014-15**

The Search and Governance Committee received and considered the Annual Report of the Further Education Commissioner 2014-15, presented by D Sheridan, Clerk to the Corporation. The Clerk reported that this is the FE Commissioner's latest annual report and that more colleges are falling under FE Commissioner's remit. The process of identifying struggling colleges was highlighted to Governors.

The Search and Governance Committee asked the Clerk what lessons could be learnt from the annual report and Governors attention were brought to the following sections of the report:

- Page 11 and 12 – the role of the Clerk and ensuring no conflicts arise when the Clerk undertakes more than one role within a college.
- Page 13 – 15 – Governance – the key issue within governance is effective challenge of senior leadership and college performance.
- Page 22 – a list of potential issues which could lead to intervention from the FE Commissioner.
- Page 23 –collaboration rather than competition is being encouraged and this links to the Government's Strategic Area Reviews.

The Search and Governance Committee noted the FE Commissioner's annual report and agreed that they need to keep abreast of the information contained within the report.

## **595 Strategic Planning Event**

The Search and Governance Committee received a verbal update on a proposed strategic planning event from K Spencer, Principal. The event will focus on the College's strategic planning and elements which need revising and updating. It is proposed the event will be a later afternoon session, followed by a meal in the Skylight Brasserie. Proposed dates will be circulated by the Deputy Clerk to the Corporation.

The Search and Governance noted the verbal update on the strategic planning event.

## **596 Internal Audit of Governance**

### **596.1 To receive and consider the internal audit report**

The Search and Governance Committee received and considered the internal audit of governance report, presented by D Sheridan, Clerk to the Corporation.

Governors noted that an internal audit of governance is undertaken annually and forms part of the assurance opinion reported in the College's financial statements. Scrutton Bland, the College's internal auditors, undertook the audit and provided Governors with significant assurance that the governance, risk management and control arrangements for the material risks reviewed are managed effectively. Governors' attention was brought to the two low level recommendations made within the report, to undertake a Governor Skills Audit and to review the job description of the Clerk to the Corporation. Governors noted that the Skills Audit will be circulated at the Corporation meeting on 17 March 2016.

The Search and Governance Committee noted the internal audit of governance.

### **596.2 To receive and consider the job description of the Clerk to the Corporation**

The Search and Governance Committee noted the current job description of the Clerk to the Corporation which is now out of date and also noted the AoC's model job description.

The Search and Governance Committee agreed for the job description to be reviewed by the Principal and Clerk to the Corporation, adopting the appropriate sections from the AoC's job description. The Search and Governance Committee also agreed that the Deputy Clerk's job description should be reviewed at the same time.

## **597 Any Other Business**

There were no items of any other business.

## **598 Dates of future meetings**

Summer Term	Tuesday 14 June 2016	8.30am
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