

# MINUTES



## SEARCH & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

**Date:** Wednesday 20 September 2023  
**Time:** 3.00pm  
**Venue:** Valo Building Boardroom / Video Conference

### **Present:**

Dr Andrew Roberts (Chair)  
Andrew Fawcett  
Dr Adrian Brooks  
Dr Bill Webster (Principal)

### **In Attendance:**

Deborah Bradburn (Clerk)

## **1. SECTION A - BUSINESS MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION UNLESS INDICATED OTHERWISE**

### **1.1 Election of Committee Chair**

Members were invited to put forward a nomination and elect a Chair for the Committee.  
Dr Andrew Roberts was nominated and a vote taken.

### **RESOLVED:**

Dr Andrew Roberts be elected Chair of the Committee for the current academic year.

### **1.2 Welcome to Members**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, which commenced at 3.02pm.

### **1.3 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence had been received from Professor George Holmes.

### **1.4 Declarations of Interest**

Members were invited to declare any interests in relation to any item on the agenda.  
No interests were declared.

### **1.5 Request for an item to be unstarred**

No requests were made.

### **1.6 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 June 2023**

The minutes of the meeting held 20 June 2023 had been previously circulated to Members for consideration.

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**Agreed:** that the minutes are approved as a correct record and authorised for publication.

## 1.7 Matters arising from the Minutes and Action Progress Log

The Clerk presented the action progress log and confirmed that all actions had been completed.

## 2. SECTION B - COLLEGE MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION UNLESS INDICATED OTHERWISE

### 2.1 Governor Attendance 2022/23

The Clerk presented the attendance report for the 2022/23 academic year and the following points were noted:

- The overall attendance target of 75% for the year had been met. The College had achieved 80% that was a 5% increase on the previous year.
- Eleven members recorded 100% attendance at Board meetings that was an increase on the previous year.
- Eight members recorded 100% attendance at Board and Committee meetings that was an increase on the previous year.
- Any individual attendance below the 75% target could in the majority of cases be explained due to unavoidable circumstances or prior commitments.
- The overall attendance rate had been affected by those members with an attendance rate below 50%. The rate would be further improved in 2023/24 as those with a below 50% attendance had ceased to be College governors.
- An attendance analysis across FE colleges reported an average attendance rate of 83% with the lowest being 69%.

#### **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the report.

#### **ACTION:**

Consideration to be given to an ex-officio member being included within the attendance statistics.

### 2.2 Governor Membership 2023/24

The Committee reviewed and discussed the following:

- There were two student governor vacancies following the current student governors having left the College to commence University and employment. The roles had been advertised with seventeen enquires and three applications received by the second day of promoting the positions.

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- The second term of office for two University nominated governors would end on 31 August 2024. Their respective skills and experience were in finance and Ofsted regulation/inspection. Any replacements would have to take into account these skills set in addition to the skills and diversity of existing Board members. Recruitment to the roles would consider equality, diversity and inclusivity requirements that would be cognisant of the College student profile and the community it served.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the discussion.

## **ACTION:**

Chair to discuss replacement University nominated governors with the University.

## **2.3 External Governance Review Schedule**

The Clerk presented the report with the following points highlighted:

- External governance reviews were recognised as an important part of good governance and were an ESFA/DfE funding agreement requirement.
- The College had appointed an external governance reviewer that had provided a comprehensive schedule of activity.
- The review would involve an initial circulation and completion of questionnaires by governors and the senior management team followed by conversations that would allow for a more meaningful review from differing perspectives of governance within the College.
- The review would involve attendance of a Standards and Performance Committee and a Board meeting followed by a session with the Board to present the findings that would include a group exercise.

## **Governor Questions:**

Is it expected that the review will be provided to anyone?

Not at the moment. However, there is a recommendation that a summary of the outcome of the review be made available on the College website and that a statement is included within the College financial statement stating when an external governance review had been taken place.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

## **2.4 DfE Governance Guide for Governors**

The Clerk informed the Committee that:

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- The updated guide had been circulated to all Board members and was to be read in conjunction with the College governing documents and the Code of Good Governance.
- The guide set out clear expectations and responsibilities of governors in supporting colleges to govern effectively and summarised the legal and regulatory requirements together with recommended practice.
- The updates included the replacement of references to 'funding agreements' with 'accountability agreements', an amended equality, diversity and inclusion section that clarified the public sector equality requirements, a link to the ETF's governance professional qualifications and a link to the DfE guidance on asset disposals.
- The Clerk reported that there would be a new AoC Code of Good Governance that would come into effect on 1 August 2024. The Code had been updated as a result of policy changes and a duplication of requirements in other guidance that colleges were subject to. There would be a 'soft launch' of the new code in September 2023 that would operate alongside the existing code during a transition period to allow time for work to take place with governors and governance professionals to gain insights from early adopters of the new code.

## **RESOLVED:**

The Committee noted the contents of the report.

### **3. SECTION C - UNIVERSITY GROUP MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION UNLESS INDICATED**

No matters were raised.

### **4. SECTION D - ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

#### **4.1 Meeting Evaluation**

The Committee members confirmed that the meeting had been excellent and had met requirements.

### **5. SECTION E - FUTURE MEETINGS**

Tuesday 18 June 2024 at 5.00pm

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting closed at 3.35pm

**Chair's Signature:**

**Date:** 18 June 2024