

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COLLEGE

Minutes of a Special meeting of the Search and Governance Committee of the Board of Governors held on Monday 16 June 2021 via Microsoft Teams.

PRESENT

Ms Emma Bull (Chair)
Mr Clarence Crosdale
Mr Mike Hastings

Mr Mal Cowgill
Mr Mark Taylor (from Item 3(5))

IN ATTENDANCE

Mrs Elizabeth Ball – Clerk

Emma Bull was appointed as the Chair of the meeting.

04/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (ITEM 1)

There were no apologies or declarations of interest.

05/21 MINUTES (ITEM 2)

The minutes of the meetings held on 12 November 2020, 10 December 2020 and 29 March 2021 were approved as a correct record.

06/21 MATTERS ARISING

05/20 EMT involvement in Governor self-evaluation

It was noted that this will be facilitated by the Principal.

13/20 Governor Reviews

It was noted that the documentation had now been prepared and meetings are being arranged.

15/20 Opportunities for mentoring EMT

It was noted that new Governors would need time to settle in before they were asked to mentor members of the Executive Management Leadership Team.

For more experienced Governors, however, it was suggested that mentoring opportunities could include inviting individuals to attend meetings or meet with staff at a Governor's own institution.

It was agreed that the Head of Governance and the Principal would review opportunities that are available.

07/21 **GOVERNANCE REPORT (ITEM 3)**

1. Terms of office

The Committee noted that the only term of office that expired in 2021 was that of the Student Governor.

The Head of Governance advised that a new Student Governor will be nominated and elected by the Student Union and that the individual may attend a meeting of the Board of Governors before the end of the current academic year as an observer.

In view of the appointment of a number of Governors from 1 April 2021, the Committee agreed that consideration should be given in the future about how the end of these terms of office could be staggered.

2. Skills and Expertise Audit

The Committee reviewed the updated skills and expertise audit and commented that this was now more balanced with high levels of skills and experience being evident in all areas.

3. Equality and Diversity

The Committee reviewed the Equality and Diversity data as at June 2021 which provided a comparison with the ethnicity data for the City of Wolverhampton.

As the diversity of the Board has been a priority for the College, the Committee considered that there was a much better balance although there were a slightly higher number of male governors.

The Committee considered that the Board was now much more representative of its community and that a further comparison with the City could take place once the outcome of the 2021 Census is known.

4. Membership of Committees

The Committee considered the report on the proposed membership of the Committees and the Task and Finish Groups for 2021/22.

It was noted that there is currently a vacancy on the Search and Governance Committee and the Remuneration Committee.

The Head of Governance was requested to contact one of the Governors to find out if they would be interested in taking on the role.

Mark Taylor joined the meeting

5. Attendance

The Head of Governance advised that an updated report had been circulated to members of the Committee which also included levels of attendance at the most recent meeting of the Campus Transformation Oversight Group.

It was noted that levels of attendance remain high particularly in view of the pressure on some Governors as a result of the pandemic.

The Committee considered that the Board of Governors should consider whether in the next academic year there was a return to all face-to-face meetings or whether some meetings should continue to be held via Microsoft Teams or similar.

It was noted that, if there was a view that some governors should continue to be allowed to attend meetings via Teams where others were present in person, there was a need for the technology to be improved.

It was agreed that members of the Board of Governors should be asked to give their views on how meetings should proceed from September 2021.

6. Training and Development

The Committee noted the report and considered whether Safeguarding Training for Governors should be refreshed every three years as required for staff in the College's Safeguarding Policy.

The Committee agreed that it was not appropriate for Governors to repeat the training that is available on the Education Training Foundation site and proposed that refresher training should be delivered by the College on an annual basis.

The Committee also considered how often the Governor's DBS checks should be carried out and noted that for staff these are renewed annually via the updating service.

The Head of Governance was requested to discuss with HR whether this service could also be made available to Governors.

7. Governor links

It was noted that Governor links have been updated following the appointment of new Governors on 1 April 2021.

Members of the Committee considered that it would be advantageous to have two Governors linked with each Curriculum area and that new Governor links should be identified for Health and Safety and HR.

Whilst this would involve some Governors being linked with more than one area, the Head of Governance was requested to contact Governors to find out if they were prepared to have two links.

It was agreed that Governor links be considered further at the meeting of the Board of Governors on 28 June 2021.

Governor Reviews and Appraisal of the Chair

It was noted that the documentation for the Governor Reviews had been circulated and meetings with the Chair were being arranged.

Whilst the Vice Chairs and the Chair of the Remuneration Committee had offered to carry out some of the reviews, the Chair advised that for this year, these were in hand, but that this offer may be taken up in future.

The Head of Governance confirmed that the information relating to term of office and attendance would be completed and forwarded to individual Governors in advance of their meetings.

In relation to the appraisal of the Chair the Head of Governance reported that the intention was to create a proportionate survey which could be completed by Governors from which a summary report would be prepared.

The Committee noted the report.

8. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chairs

The Committee noted that the role of Vice Chair was important in relation to succession planning and that the aspirations of Governors to take on the role in the future would be discussed as part of the Governor Reviews.

The Committee considered whether there should continue to be two Vice Chairs but agreed that this should not be changed currently, but could be addressed when a vacancy arises.

The Committee also considered the length of appointment of the Chair and Vice Chairs who are currently appointed on an annual basis.

It was noted that practice in the sector varies, but that a recommendation would be made to the Board of Governors that the Chair and Vice Chair be appointed for a period of 2 years and that the appropriate amendment be made to the Standing Orders.

Recommendation to the Board of Governors:

- **that the term of office for the Chair and Vice Chairs be a period of 2 years and that the appropriate amendments be made to the Standing Orders.**

08/21 SELF EVALUATION AND GOVERNANCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN (ITEM 4)

The Head of Governance presented the report.

It was noted that an action plan had been prepared following the Independent Board Review and the FE Commissioner's visit and that the outstanding actions had been included in the updated Governance Development Plan.

The Committee noted the actions that had been completed and removed from the plan and requested that the plan be BRAG rated.

The Head of Governance advised that as part of the Independent Board Review, Governors had completed a baseline survey, part of which included individual comments.

Whilst it was noted that the composition of the Board had changed considerably since the review took place, the Committee requested that relevant comments made by Governors be included in the Governance Development Plan.

It was also noted that the comments appeared to link to areas where Governors did not feel able to indicate that they strongly agreed.

It was resolved that relevant comments from the Baseline Survey be included in the Governance Development plan.

09/21 CONFIDENTIALITY

None

10/21 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

29 November 2021 at 5pm