

**WALSALL COLLEGE MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SEARCH & GOVERNANCE STANDARDS
COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY 24 JANUARY 2023 AT 1000 HRS
VENUE: A339 (BOARDROOM, WISEMORE CAMPUS)**

Attendance Present: **Attendees**
David Wheeler - Chair
Jat Sharma - Principal
Stuart Pedley-Smith
Jaswinder Dhillon – from 1035 hrs and on Teams

Together with: **Alison Buick – Head of Governance**

Apologies: **Graham Ward, Charlotte Bosworth**

Item	Subject	Who
14.23	<p>CHAIR’S OPENING REMARKS The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and welcomed all to the meeting.</p>	
15.23	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Graham Ward and Charlotte Bosworth.</p>	
16.23	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST The Principal noted that he was now the Chair of AOC Sport.</p>	
17.23	<p>MINUTES The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2022, having been circulated, were taken as read and approved.</p>	
18.23	<p>MATTERS ARISING The Action Points Record was reviewed and the following updates were noted:</p> <p><u>Item 31.22</u> Website information on being a Governor had been reviewed and was substantially complete.</p> <p><u>Item 07.23</u> Options for moving the summer term Governor Training date had been considered. No suitable date had been found and it was agreed to keep the agreed date, 12 June.</p> <p><u>Item 11.23</u> The Chairs meeting had been held on 16 January 2023. The External Governance Review would be discussed later in the agenda.</p>	
19.23	<p>CORPORATION MEMBERSHIP The Head of Governance referred Governors to her written report and the following was discussed:</p> <p><u>Terms of Office</u> Governors noted the Governor terms of office set out in the written report.</p> <p>There was currently a vacancy for an External Governor following the resignation of Alan Woods last summer. Some contacts had been made to try</p>	

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	<p>to fill this, but there were no definite candidates for the committee to consider at this time.</p> <p>Three Governors had terms of office ending this academic year – Aisling McGowan, Mary Mahoney and Jaswinder Dhillon. The Support Staff Governor position held by Aisling would be subject to a nominations and elections process for eligible staff. Jaswinder would have completed three terms of office in July 2023. Mary was eligible to be re-appointed so it was agreed that the Head of Governance would contact her to see if she was willing to continue.</p> <p>There was a discussion about current and future vacancies. The end of Jaswinder’s term meant that there would be a second vacancy by July 2023. It was again confirmed finance and business skills would be beneficial, as there was a vacancy for Finance and Resources Committee. Committee members would consider any suitable contacts they may have.</p> <p>The Principal noted other contacts to be approached.</p> <p><u>Committee Memberships</u> The current Committee Memberships for 2022/23 were noted.</p> <p>Governors resolved to receive the Corporation Membership report.</p>	<p>Head of Governance</p>
20.23	<p>GOVERNANCE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE</p> <p>The Head of Governance introduced the paper, which noted the progress on the Governance QIP to the end of December 2022 and was therefore for information.</p> <p>It was noted that the update was based on the information shared with Governors at Learning and Quality Committee and also at Corporation in the Autumn term, but it was recognised that this showed an early view. Actions agreed needed to be evidenced as the year progressed and at the year end. The Learning and Quality Committee Chair was known to have been in college for a variety of meetings and progress reviews, and it was suggested that his views be sought. The Chair commented that he had recently completed some learning walk throughs. It was also agreed that Governors should continue to be asked to feedback on their link activities at Corporation.</p> <p>Governors resolved to receive the Governance Quality Improvement Plan Update.</p>	<p>Head of Governance</p>
21.23	<p>EXTERNAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW</p> <p>The Head of Governance referred to her written report and reminded Governors of the requirement for all colleges to complete an external governance review by 31 July 2024. Funds had been allocated in the Governance budget for this.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the requirement remained unchanged despite the recent ONS re-classification of colleges.</p> <p>Governors were invited to comment.</p>	<p>Head of Governance</p>

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	<p>It was agreed that a decision was needed on a scope and that the Head of Governance should prepare an initial draft for consideration at the next meeting of the committee in May 2023. The Chair proposed that the meeting be extended by an hour to look at this in more detail.</p> <p>A Governor commented on the need to ensure value for money as well as beneficial outcomes from the review. There was some concern about the additional burden of this for Governors at an already extremely busy time.</p> <p>The outcomes of the review needed to be published on the college website.</p> <p>Governors asked who could be approached to do the review, and it was noted that there were several options, with information on the AOC and Governance4FE websites. It was likely to be necessary to obtain at least three quotations for the work and for Governors to meet with prospective reviewers to discuss the scope. The agreed scope may influence who would be invited to bid for the work.</p> <p>Governors resolved to receive the External Governance Review Report.</p>	
22.23	<p>ONS RECLASSIFICATION OF COLLEGES – GOVERNANCE ASPECTS</p> <p>The Head of Governance referred to her written report, which provided the latest available information about the ONS reclassification. This was based on briefings from AOC and Stone King.</p> <p>Governors noted some of the key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleges would remain independent exempt charities and Governors were still trustees; • Most things that colleges could do were still permitted but some would need DfE consent; • Early changes were mostly finance related and there was very little impact of these at Walsall, although many other colleges were affected much more; • More guidance, including a College Financial Handbook, was expected by summer 2024. <p>The Principal commented on discussions at recent meetings he had attended. It seemed that around 60 colleges were immediately impacted to some degree with the changes that were effective from 29 November 2022. There was much discussion between DfE and Treasury, which risked extending timescales for colleges waiting for decisions.</p> <p>At the recent Chairs’ meeting, the Chair had suggested inviting Stone King to present on this topic to a Governor Training session. Other chairs felt that there was a limited amount of additional information currently so it would be better to wait until more guidance emerged.</p> <p>It was resolved that Governors received the ONS Reclassification update.</p>	
23.23	<p>GOVERNOR TRAINING</p> <p>The Head of Governance had provided a written report that gave an update on training, including the new requirement to publish a statement on the development of Governors and Clerks in their accounts from 31 July 2022.</p>	

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	<p>Governors discussed the agenda for the Training scheduled in February 2023.</p> <p>It was noted that the proposed rollout of online training for Governors had not been as successful as anticipated. Feedback had identified that the required training was more onerous than had been expected. The Chairs' meeting had agreed that Governors did not wish to do this.</p> <p>The Head of Governance noted the reasons for online training. There was an expectation that college Governors should ensure that they were aware of statutory responsibilities such as safeguarding and EDI but feedback had also previously stated that Governors did not feel that collective training on these areas was a good use of time at Corporation. An online option would give flexibility in when Governors did their training.</p> <p>Following discussion, it was agreed to revert back to safeguarding and EDI training in Corporation meetings in May and July respectively, and that the ihasco training requirement would be removed.</p> <p>It was resolved that Governors received the Governor Training report.</p>	
24.23	<p>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</p> <p>It was resolved that the next meeting would be held on Tuesday 16 May 2023 at 1000 hrs. The meeting time would be extended by an hour for further discussion on the External Governance Review.</p> <p>The meeting ended at 1130 hrs.</p>	

Item	How governors challenged management

Item	Impact of meeting on college
23.23	Changes to delivery of Governor training were agreed.