

## MINUTES OF SEARCH & GOVERNANCE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

**Venue:** Board Room, Wisemore Campus

**Date:** Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> October 2023

**Present:**

Charlotte Bosworth (Chair)  
David Wheeler  
Jat Sharma  
Stuart Pedley-Smith  
Graham Ward

**In Attendance:**

Lesley Venables, Head of Governance

<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
	There were no apologies for absence.	
<b>2</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	The following declarations of interest were received:  Jat Sharma - chairship of the national AoC Sport Committee and non-executive directorship of the local NHS Trust Charlotte Bosworth – previous colleague of Barbara Van Der Eecken (new associate proposed for appointment) Stuart Pedley-Smith and Graham Ward in respect of minute 8	
<b>3</b>	<b>Appointment of Chair</b>	
	<b>Resolved</b> – That Charlotte Bosworth be appointed as Committee Chair for 2023/2024	
<b>4</b>	<b>Minutes</b>	
	<b>Resolved</b> - That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 <sup>th</sup> May January 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair	
<b>5</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>	
<b>5.1</b>	Governors received for information a progress report on the actions resulting from the previous meeting and noted that the majority of these had been completed or were featured on the agenda.	
<b>5.2</b>	Under minute 30.23 the Head of Governance reported that, as the SAR process for 2022/2023 had now commenced, it would be more appropriate for a governance SAR to be drafted for that academic year and circulated to the Committee for comment.	LV
<b>5.3</b>	Training for governors on safeguarding was scheduled for later in the day, with a further session to be undertaken at the governor session on 8 <sup>th</sup> November. Mandatory training needed to be recorded systematically and this would be followed up by the Chair and Head of Governance as part of the current round meetings with individual governors. It was agreed that governors could use any safeguarding training undertaken as part of their employment or other voluntary activities as evidence of compliance. A link to the Education Training Foundation course on safeguarding for FE governors would be circulated.	LV LV/DW  LV
<b>5.4</b>	The Chair felt that the current student voice activities should continue, but that the relevant committee should be revamped as discussions tended to be dominated by a small number of students. The College was seeking wider representation through an ambassadorial programme. It was agreed that the	JS

	Principal would provide an update on student voice issues and activities as part of his strategic report to the Corporation.	
5.5	As reported above the Chair of the Corporation and the Head of Governance had started to meet with individual governors and would try to complete as many of these as possible during the term.	DW/LV
5.6	At the previous Committee meeting it had been agreed that a revised skills audit would be undertaken in 2023/2024. The Head of Governance presented 2 examples used in other FE colleges. Option A was preferred and it was agreed that this should be carried out by 17 <sup>th</sup> November 2023, to inform any future recruitment, training and development activities.  <b>Resolved</b> – That a new skills audit profile be compiled and the results reported to the Committee's next meeting	LV
6	<b>CHAIR'S ACTIONS</b>	
	None	
7	<b>SEARCH &amp; GOVERNANCE ANNUAL REPORT 2022/2023</b>	
7.1	The Head of Governance presented a draft of the Committee's Annual Report for 2022/2023. This focused on key issues during the year, including attendance, membership, skills profile and training undertaken, together with a number of recommendations for further improvement in 2023/2024.	LV  LV/ MSmith
7.2	Overall the attendance level was 78% against a sector average of 82.7%. It was noted that the Learning & Quality Committee had had an attendance level of 57%, which was partly due to a number of additional meetings being arranged and changes to the scheduled dates to ensure quoracy.	
7.3	It was agreed that a minimum target of 75% should be set for all governors and associates in 2023/2024. The quorum calculation would also be changed from a percentage to an actual number and figures for the Student Voice and EDI Committee would be added to the final version of the attendance table.	
7.4	Reminders regarding the need to confirm attendance at meetings would be sent out in advance.	
7.5	<b>Resolved</b> – That the areas for further development in 2023/2024 be approved	
8	<b>MEMBERSHIP ISSUES</b>	
8.1	Governors received a report on current and future membership issues.	LV
8.2	There were currently 2 vacancies for external governors. The Committee noted that the most recent skills audit was dated April 2022 and did not accurately reflect the Board's membership profile. This would be revised by the end of the Autumn Term with an updated version of the skills audit submitted to the Committee's next meeting. In the meantime, suggested areas for recruitment were: finance/audit/risk management, IT/digital, legal and marketing.	
8.3	An application had been received from an education quality consultant who was experienced within the further and higher education sectors and was currently working with the Education Training Foundation. Governors felt that the skills brought by this individual would be a valuable addition to the Learning & Quality Committee and agreed that the individual should be	

	recommended for appointment as an associate governor. Further potential candidates had been suggested, two of whom had a finance background, which was being pursued by the Principal and the Head of Governance.	JS/LV								
8.4	The Committee was advised that the terms of office for Graham Ward and Heather Lodge were due to expire in October and November 2023 respectively. This had been discussed with both individuals, who had confirmed that they wished to be considered for a further term of office, subject to an assessment of performance by the Committee.									
8.5	<p>During 2023/2024 the terms of office of several other governors were due to expire:</p> <table><tr><td>Paul Averis</td><td>July 2024 (second term)</td></tr><tr><td>Charlotte Bosworth</td><td>July 2024 (second term)</td></tr><tr><td>Stuart Pedley-Smith</td><td>October 2024 (third term)</td></tr><tr><td>Rani Sahota</td><td>December 2024 (first term) – note that this is an elected post, so nominations would need to be sought from staff</td></tr></table>	Paul Averis	July 2024 (second term)	Charlotte Bosworth	July 2024 (second term)	Stuart Pedley-Smith	October 2024 (third term)	Rani Sahota	December 2024 (first term) – note that this is an elected post, so nominations would need to be sought from staff	
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8.6	The first two individuals would be approached at an early stage by the Chair and Head of Governance to determine their future aspirations. In the case of Stuart Pedley-Smith he will have served as a governor for a total of 9 years in October 2024, which would make him ineligible to be reappointed, however, the Corporation can extend this in extenuating circumstances or to provide continuity. This would be discussed with Stuart as part of the cycle of meetings with the Chair and Head of Governance.	DW/LV								
8.7	Following recent elections for the Student Union, Aysha Rahman Amani had been appointed as the SU President for 2023/2024 and was automatically nominated to the Corporation. Further discussions regarding the second student governor were ongoing and a suitable candidate would be put forward for appointment at the Corporation’s November meeting.	LV								
8.8	Governors received for information an updated schedule of committee memberships.									
8.9	<p><b>Resolved -</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 That the Corporation be recommended to appoint Barbara Van Der Eecken as an associate governor for a one year term of office</li><li>2 That the Corporation be recommended to reappoint Graham Ward and Heather Lodge for a further 3 year term of office</li><li>3 That the Corporation be recommended to appoint Aysha Rahman Amani as student governor for a 1 year term of office</li><li>4 That discussions take place with Stuart Pedley-Smith, Charlotte Bosworth and Paul Averis regarding their future intentions and for this to be reported to the Committee’s next meeting</li></ol>									
9	<b>LINK GOVERNORS</b>									
9.1	The Head of Governance presented a draft schedule of link governorships, with further suggested amendments made. It was important that governors contributed to the areas to which they had been assigned. For example, the									

9.2	designated governor for safeguarding would be invited to meetings of the College's safeguarding committee to provide assurance to the Corporation that the framework was working effectively. Additionally, governors and associates would be encouraged to undertake learning walks in curriculum areas.	
9.3	<b>Resolved</b> – That, subject to further amendments being made, the schedule be recommended for approval by the Corporation	
10	<b>EXTERNAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW</b>	
10.1	The Head of Governance reported that a tender process had been undertaken for the engagement of a provider for the External Governance Review, which was required every 3 years.	
10.2	A working group comprising governors, members of SLT and the Head of Governance had met with 3 firms and had recommended that Governance4FE should be appointed to carry out this review. It was agreed that chair's action should be used to expedite the process, as there was a risk that the preferred supplier may not be available.	
10.3	<b>Resolved</b> – That Governance4FE be recommended as the Corporation's supplier for the provision of the External Governance Review for 2023/2024	
11	<b>AOC CODE OF GOOD GOVERNANCE</b>	
11.1	The Committee received for information a summary of the provisions of the new AoC Code of Good Governance.	
11.2	This version of the Code was more streamlined, with 6 fundamental principles at its core, presented in the context of Further Education using sector-specific language. Its intention was to emphasise sources of assurance, both internal and external, without it being an audit tool or checklist. The new Code had been designed to avoid unnecessary complexity/duplication and to promote autonomy and flexibility.	
11.3	It brings together structures, policies, processes, behaviours, and relationships, recognising their interdependence. The aim is to raise governance standards and to provide a basis for External Governance Reviews.	
11.4	Governors were advised that all FE colleges were required to adopt a recognised Code of Governance and outline in their annual financial statements the level of compliance against the adopted Code. It was felt that this Code was the most appropriate for the Corporation and the Committee recommended its adoption.	
11.5	The Head of Governance would be undertaking a review of compliance against each of the elements of the Code, with any recommendations for further action submitted to the Committee's next meeting.	LV
11.6	<b>Resolved</b> – That the Corporation be recommended to adopt the AoC Code of Good Governance	
12	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b>	
	23 <sup>rd</sup> January 2024	

