



HUDDERSFIELD NEW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

Search & Governance Committee Meeting held on Tuesday 2nd May 2017
from 5pm.

Confirmed Minutes

Present: Ms L Summers, Mr J Dawson Mr A Nelson, Ms A Williams, Ms M Boryslawskij (100%)

Clerk: Mrs C Coupland

1. **Apologies for Absence/ Declaration of Interest**

There were no apologies received.

There were no declarations of interest.

2. **Minutes from Meeting held on 24th November 2016**

Resolved:

- That the minutes be accepted as a true record.

3. **Matters arising**

- **Governance Self Assessment & Skills Audit.**

At the last Search & Governance Committee the Clerk was tasked with refreshing the Corporation's annual skills audit for governors and the annual Governance self-assessment questionnaire.

The Clerk reminded the Committee that the annual skills audit is to identify skills and knowledge gaps in governors' personal attributes, professional talents and relevant experience which underpin effective governance. The proposed skills audit builds upon the DfE's competency framework for governance (Jan 2017). This framework is made up of competencies grouped under the headings of 6 features of effective governance: strategic leadership; accountability; people; structures; compliance and evaluation. The Clerk is of the opinion that the proposed competency framework clearly draws upon the essential and desirable skills for governance which can be acquired through a range of life experiences.

It was understood by the Committee that no individual governor is going to have all the skills, attributes and experience listed in the audit. The Corporation is a team, and the purpose of the audit is therefore to ensure that each of the skills cited are covered by at least two governors to allow for robust succession planning for the Corporation and that of its committees. Members however agreed it useful for the proposed Governance Competency Framework to better identify the minimum expectation threshold of the self assessment to assist Governors when scoring

personal levels of experience/skills/knowledge. Furthermore, Members asked for the experience, skills and other attributes list in the revised version to be referred to in the first person given that this is an individual competency audit.

The Clerk reminded the Committee that the Corporation already recognises the need for a detailed and effective self-assessment process that can then inform plans, actions and improvement in College Governance and core business performance. At present a Governance Self Assessment Review (SAR) Questionnaire is issued on an annual basis to garner governor's individual views on the effectiveness and efficiency of the HNC's governance framework. Responses of which have been used to inform the Governance SAR report and grading as well as determine the quality improvement plans for the following academic year.

The Clerk recommended to the Committee that by building upon the 'Evaluation feature' of the proposed Governance Competency Framework - the formal opportunity for self-assessment of Governance would follow the skills audit in order to maximise on Governors' reflection of skills, knowledge and experience. The Members endorsed this approach.

The Committee recognised that the proposed HNC's Competency Framework for Governance: The knowledge, skills, behaviours and structures needed for effective governance is only one tool to review Governance effectiveness and monitor Key Performance Indicators. Other evaluative tools to support Governors in determining appropriate improvement and development plans in sustaining outstanding governance shall therefore continue to be used. The Committee therefore asked the Clerk to consider the logical sequence within the corporation's operational plan as to when Governors would be asked to complete the Competency Framework.

The Committee agreed that the comprehensive executive report presented for this item would also help create the basis for the Corporation's Self-Assessment Policy & Procedures document which could then be shared with all stakeholders.

Resolved:

- **For the clerk to submit a revised version of the Governor Competency Framework building upon feedback received.**
- **For the clerk to provide the Committee with a revised operational plan.**
- **For the Clerk to create a Self-Assessment Policy and Procedure to include the Governor Competency Framework once approved.**

4. Governance Quality Improvement Plan: Mid-Year Review

The Clerk reminded members that the Quality Improvement Plan has derived from the areas for improvement identified through the self-assessment process. The targets agreed are founded on what the Corporation believes it needs to address in its efforts to maintain outstanding. Key development priorities have also been identified for 2016/17 and incorporated into the Quality Improvement Plan.

A key task for the Search & Governance Committee is to review & monitor the specific areas for improvement during 2016/17:

- To continue to effectively respond to, monitor and review the impact of local, regional and national changes on the college's strategic direction and business performance.
- To explore and establish appropriate collaborative arrangements with a wide range of partnerships with schools and other education providers within the area.

- To identify and develop improved methods for the Corporation to engage with stakeholders and be informed of their views.
- The development priorities also identified for 2016/17 are:
- To ensure each individual Governor is able to effectively undertake and fulfil role in Governance
- To establish succession planning opportunities for all Governor roles (inc Link Governors and Corporation and Committee Chair/Vice Chair)

The Committee was satisfied that the majority of actions agreed as necessary were already achieved or near to completion. The Clerk explained that the two areas identified as Amber are 'on track' for completion by the end of the academic year and that a priority work schedule has been agreed with the Chair, to ensure that actions to be taken are achievable by the set target dates.

Resolved:

- **To receive the report**

4. Clerks Report: Membership Determination and Succession Planning.

Corporation Membership:

The Clerk informed the Committee that at present the Corporation comprises of 15 Governors. There is only a current vacancy for a Parent Governor. External Governors are at full complement given the recent appointment of Ms Drury.

The Clerk advised the Committee that consequent to Governors one to one meetings with the Chair – expressions of interest had been received from individuals in respect of assuming two of the three designated Link Governor roles – SEND & Safeguarding. Ms Summers informed the Committee that she had asked the existing link governors to make contact with those interested to start to agree a period of shadowing. Ms Summers also confirmed that she had asked the Clerk to manage the transition period on behalf of the corporation. The Clerk advised the Committee that in the interest of continuity – a seamless transition would be best achieved with formal handover taking place at the start of the next academic year. All members were in support of this timeframe.

Committee Membership:

The Clerk remains of the opinion that the current makeup of the Audit Committee provides the necessary skill mix as required by the revised Joint Audit Code Of Practice. However members all agreed that it would be beneficial to bolster the Audit Committee's Membership by recruiting co-opted members from financial audit backgrounds – in turn also securing succession plans for when future external governor vacancies occur. The Clerk confirmed that the opportunity for co-optees continues to be advertised via national governor recruitment websites. The Clerk also confirmed that she had directly approached suitable individuals as recommended by Governors – however to date no expressions of interest have been received. The Committee took this opportunity to consider further recruitment options for the Clerk to pursue.

Parent Governor:

A Parent Governor vacancy has existed since the start of the Spring Term. The Clerk confirmed that she continues to actively promote this opportunity by writing to parents, emailing students and also advertising the vacancy on the college's website and at Parent Evenings. Again, Members considered alternative recruitment approaches to better attract parent interest in this role.

Student Governor:

The Clerk confirmed that Scott Buckley is the newly appointed Student Governor (until Easter 2018). Scott is not an SU Executive however he understands the need for securing open communication channels with the Executives in particular the President in order to support him in executing role responsibilities. The Clerk has also met with Scott to commence induction.

Resolved:

- **To receive the report**
- **For the Clerk to support the handover process of Link Governors for SEND & Safeguarding and to liaise with the relevant members of the Senior Leadership Team.**

5. Policy reviews

The Clerk confirmed that annual reviews had been undertaken for the following policies and procedures:

- Access to Corporation Information
- Guidance for Clerk on public access to meetings of the Corporation
- Selection of Governors
- Succession Planning
- Governor Induction Policy
- Mentoring Policy

The Clerk informed the Committee that no amendments were deemed necessary. Members endorsed the Clerk's opinions.

Resolved:

- **For the Corporation to note that annual reviews of the listed policies had been undertaken and that no amendments are deemed necessary.**
- **For the Corporation to note that the existing policies continue to be available via Moodle and the College's website.**

6. Any other Business.

Use of personal governor email accounts:

The Clerk advised the Committee that at the recent SFCA Clerks Conference an issue was raised about the use of personal email addresses for work purposes. Eversheds, at the conference, advised Clerks that whilst there is no specific legal provision requiring only College emails to be used it is recommended practice as it makes a great deal of sense from a risk management perspective. Furthermore on a separate but related note, the use of personal email to send and receive College information opens the personal email account up to being searched in response to a Freedom of Information request.

The Committee considered the information presented by the Clerk – it was agreed that the risks of data breaches are clearly reduced if information exchanges stays within the College email system however all were mindful that Governors, given open access to Moodle (the College Virtual Learning Environment), are not generally in receipt of sensitive personal data e.g. student or staff.

The Committee asked the Clerk to ascertain the College Management's view (from an IT and Risk Management perspective) by the date of the next committee meeting in order to better inform their final decision on the matter.

Resolved:

- **That the information be received**
- **For the Clerk to liaise with the relevant staff members and to report back to members at the next committee meeting.**

7. Learner Impact Reflection

The impact of discussions and scrutiny of the Committees work in improving the outcomes and experience for all learners was considered and the following agreed:

Resolved:

- **Maintaining high performance amongst Governors enables the Corporation to continue to provide strategic leadership and accountability.**
- **A high performing corporation is able to support the college to achieve its aims and objectives and secure positive outcomes for students.**
- **By reviewing Membership and agreeing succession planning strategies; the Committee ensures that the Corporation continues to have the required mix of skill sets to effectively undertake its business in improving the quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment.**
- **The annual review of all Governance Policies ensures the effective running of the Corporation and that of its Committees and Governors ability to confidently provide oversight and scrutiny of college and governing activities.**
- **The pursuit of excellence in all of the Corporations activities is demonstrated by an uncompromising and highly successful drive to contribute t the colleges success and ambitions**
- **Systems for rigorous evaluation and analysis are embedded within Governance with a clear focus on continuous and ongoing improvement**

8. Determination of confidentiality

No items were deemed confidential.

9. Date of next meeting: Tuesday 6th June 2017.