

**EASTLEIGH COLLEGE BOARD
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SEARCH & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 9TH FEBRUARY 2022 AT 1700 HRS HELD VIA TEAMS**

Present:

Mr J Sendell (Chair)
Mr Paul Cox
Phil Harris-Bridge
James Heaton-Smith
Rupert Goodman

In Attendance: Fiona Chalk, Governance Advisor

S.01.22 GOVERNORS MEETING TIME WITHOUT SMT

No issues were raised.

MEMBERSHIP & BOARD MATTERS

S.02.22 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

S.03.22 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declaration of interests, financial or otherwise, in any items on the agenda were made by those present.

S.04.22 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 17TH SEPTEMBER 2020

Subject to an amendment for S.13.20, the minutes were agreed and signed as a correct record of the meeting.

S.05.22 MATTERS ARISING

The Chair provided an update on membership:

- a. Ashley Barnes has resigned as a governor and the Clerk has requested an exit interview
- b. Kerry Matthews resigned as a governor but has agreed to remain as an advisory governor to the Standards Committee.

**The Committee agreed to this proposal and resolved to recommend to the Board, Kerry Matthew's appointment as an advisory governor to the Standards Committee.
Clerk to action.**

Vice-Chairs – the Chair asked the committee to consider the appointment of another Vice-Chair. This reflects both the increasing workload for governance coming through the White Paper and subsequent Skills Bill, as well as a potential Southampton solution. Having two vice-chairs would allow more time to be dedicated to these issues. The current Vice-Chair agrees. It was noted that there needs to be a formally identified split of the job role into two, detailing responsibilities and expectations.

The Committee resolved to recommend to the Board meeting in March, that the role of Vice-Chairs be split amongst two governors and that the formal appointment process for the second vice chair takes place at the July board meeting after the further recruitment of new governors is completed

Clerk to action.

Following the recent resignations, the committee recognised a need for further recruitment. Peridot Partners were used previously and as a governor has resigned within a short period of time, that re-appointment will come at no cost to the college. Based on the skills assessment carried out in the Autumn term ahead of that recruitment, the proposed skills

and experience to be recruited, will continue to focus on the areas of specialism for the college. This includes those with a construction background, preferably incorporating environmental and sustainability knowledge too. The Board needs to have a board level lead on Safeguarding, so knowledge of safeguarding and learner care will be a focus. A third area will be on knowledge of curriculum, quality, and accreditation. The curriculum areas of social care, business and IT are covered by existing members, along with financial/audit expertise.

It was proposed that Peridot be asked to submit a proposal for appointment of 3 governors. Candidates will be made aware of the potential opportunity of a vice-chair position, as the Board will be looking for potential candidates from the existing membership and potential new members. The timeline is proposed as follows:

- Peridot to submit a proposal by the beginning of March
- The Board to approve the recruitment in March
- Selection will take place in April
- Attendance and potential appointment at the Board training event in May
- Appointment at the Board meeting in July of new members and positions of office, to commence for the 2023/4 academic year.

The committee agreed that a governor role description setting out clear expectations, be drawn up ahead of recruitment. Documents will be circulated to the committee ahead of the Board meeting, for comment and recommendation.

The committee resolved to recommend to the Board, the appointment of 3 new governors in the areas of skills as detailed above, that subject to receipt of a suitable proposal, Peridot Partners be appointed to carry out the recruitment process.

All/PC/Clerk to action

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

S.06.22 COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The committee noted the amendments proposed following discussion at the January Board meeting:

- The wording on diversity and inclusion, taken from the FREDIE policy (Fairness, fairness, respect with quality, diversity, inclusion and engagement - the framework of the National Centre for Diversity).
- The membership be increased from four to five (Alison Caplin being the recommended additional member)
- A member of the committee who is not a member of the Board. It was agreed that such a member should come from a pool of potential members with varying skills such as governance, recruitment, legal, EDI, whose skills could be utilised dependent on the agenda topics. Such members could be drawn from local businesses that the college is keen to connect with.
- Members of the committee will, on a rotating basis, attend the college's FREDIE working group

The committee resolved to recommend to the Board for approval, the revised Terms of Reference, and the appointment of Alison Caplin to the committee.

Clerk to action.

S.07.22 ANNUAL WORK PLAN & MEETING DATES 22-23

The Committee agreed the work plan covered the necessary work required, according to the Code of Governance and other such compliance documents. It was noted that there are 3 key themes covering membership, Board and governor effectiveness, and committee business.

It was agreed that exit interview reports for governors should come to committee as soon as they are available, rather than on an annual basis. Governors asked whether there was any reporting on exit interviews from staff, and if so, were there any common themes. The Chair advised he discussed this with the Principal and Director of HR, so should any common themes be identified, this would be reported to governors. The same applies to all retention issues, including any grievances.

The Committee approved the work plan for 2022-23.

GOVERNANCE IMPROVEMENT

S.08.22 SELF-ASSESSMENT & EXTERNAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW PLANNING

The Committee noted the requirement in compliance documents such as the Code and Funding Agreement, for there to be both internal and external reviews of governance, and the importance of a cycle of review in driving up Board effectiveness.

Point 10.53 in the current Code of Governance for English Colleges recommends the scope of a self-assessment, and governors agreed this is a good basis for this year's self-assessment. It was agreed that a questionnaire should be drawn up, and that it should be short and very focused on areas the Board wants to improve, with no more than 20 questions.

Governors asked if there was a template for such reviews and whether there needs to be a self-assessment the same year as an external review. There are several templates available, and the Clerk will work with members of the committee who have experience in reviews, to draw up a draft template questionnaire. There is no requirement to carry out an internal self-assessment in the year when an external review is held.

It was suggested that the external review take place at the start of academic year, as the college will be in the Ofsted window, as all colleges will be inspected over a 3-year period from the start of the 2022/23 academic year. Therefore, it would be good to have an action plan for the improvement of governance in place and supported by an external review. It was noted that the final guidance from the DfE on external board reviews will be published at the end of March. This will allow sufficient time ahead of a planned review for the college at the start of the 22/23 academic year, to ensure best practice for reviews is in place.

Providers of such reviews were discussed, and approaches will be made.

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

S.09.22 GOVERNOR TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Governors noted that this policy had previously been discussed and this committee have been asked to be more prescriptive and consider giving greater clarity of detail around expectations, including the time investment, by governors. The Clerk explained that this is part of a larger piece of work, such as drawing up governor role descriptions, having letters of engagement issued when governors join the board, to ensure clarity of expectations when appointing governors. There is a balance between overburdening volunteers, whilst being realistic in order to prevent early resignations.

Governors agreed that supporting opportunities to maximise governor effectiveness is really important, and that the ETF platform is a useful tool for this and something that every governor should be involved in. The level of involvement will depend entirely on the knowledge and skills each individual governor brings to the table.

It was agreed that the following wording be added to the Governor Training & Development policy under 3.2:

In addition to mandatory training such as Safeguarding and Prevent, there are 3 areas of skills and knowledge that all governors should gain:

- a. an understanding of how the college operates*
- b. an understanding of the FE landscape*
- c. the art of governing*

All governors have access to the ETF Governance Development Programme, and the proposal is that as a minimum, each governor should complete modules on Understanding Your Role and Understanding the Sector from the Core modules, within their first year of appointment. Any governor who has previously either been a governor within the education sector or who has extensive FE knowledge, may opt to choose a different Core module, as appropriate. Within each subsequent year, each governor should undertake at least 1 additional module as it relates to their position on a committee or link governor area. This can be a module from either the Core, Proficient, or Highly Effective strand. This equates to a minimum of approximately 1-2 hours of individual training each year.

All other adhoc activities for governors such as attendance at college events, attending college SAR grading meetings, sector conferences, etc., are at each individual governor's discretion.

Governors asked whether completion of induction meetings with SMT within 3 months is a realistic timescale. It was acknowledged that this was a tight timescale, but that 6 months was too long a timeframe for governors not to have had a basic induction to the college. The wording of the policy is amended to read that a planned induction is put in place within the first three months of a governor appointment and ideally completed as close to that timeframe as possible.

The Committee resolved to recommend the Governor Training & Development policy to the Board for approval.

Clerk to action

It was agreed that the Clerk would circulate to members an example spreadsheet of duties of governors, with a corresponding time requirement, for governors to comment on. This will then feed into the proposed role description that can be used for the next round of governor recruitment.

S.10.22 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

29 JUNE 2022 AT 1700 hours at Eastleigh College.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 1800 hours.