

## Minutes of: Search and Governance Committee

**Date:** 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024 **Location:** A5, College Road Campus

Present	In attendance
Peta Darnley ( <i>Chair</i> ) Russell Roberts ( <i>online</i> ) Mervyn Jones John Auckland Abigail Appleton ( <i>Principal &amp; CE</i> )	Abigail Boyce ( <i>Clerk to Governors</i> )
<b>Quoracy:</b> meeting was quorate as stated in paragraph 1 below.	<b>Absent:</b> None.

1. **Quorum** – The meeting was duly convened as a quorum of three members was present, satisfying the quorum requirement set out in Section B, part 4, Clause 2.2 of the Standing Orders (*Search and Governance Committee Terms of Reference*).
2. **Apologies for Absence** – no apologies were received.
3. **Declarations of interest** – Mervyn Jones (*MJ*) noted a potential conflict of interest, as the discussions will involve the appointment of a new Chair, while MJ currently serves as the Chair of the Corporation.
4. **Minutes of the last meeting**
  - a. **Approval of minutes of last meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024** - Minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.
  - b. **Matters Arising** - The Chair noted that they had received input from governors through the Chair recruitment survey. It was also mentioned that the Department for Education had been informed of the appointment of the new Clerk.
5. **Board and Committee Membership 2024/25**
  - a. **Vacancies / Succession Planning**

The Committee discussed the potential appointment of a new governor to join the Audit Committee. It was suggested that it would be beneficial for the candidate to meet with the Chair of the Audit Committee. The Clerk was tasked with arranging this and following up on the application.

The Committee also addressed the need to recruit a new accountant and the challenges associated with this. A discussion took place regarding potential candidates, with the Chair highlighting a particularly strong candidate. The Chair agreed to circulate the candidate's CV and requested the Clerk to send an application pack and arrange an initial meeting with the Principal.

**ACTION:** The Clerk will follow up on the application form and arrange an initial meeting with the potential applicants and the Principal.

**ACTION:** The Chair will circulate the CV to the Committee.

**b. New members of AQ&S and F&GP**

It was noted that new members had joined the AQ&S and F&GP Committees. The Committee also acknowledged the need for a new Chair for the Remuneration Committee and decided to approach a governor from the F&GP Committee for this role. The Principal highlighted that applications were being sought for the FE Student Governor position.

**c. Skills Audit for 2024/25**

The Committee discussed the current skills audit process and explored potential improvements. It was noted that there were gaps in the existing audit, particularly in the area of digital skills.

**ACTION:** The Clerk will explore a new method for completing the skills audit.

**d. Equity and Diversity Profile**

The Committee reviewed the EDI information and asked whether it needed to be submitted anywhere. The Clerk will check. The discussion then focused on how diversity could be expanded and the benefits it brings to students. A Committee member inquired about the benchmark EDI figures for Hereford. The Principal confirmed that this information is available from the college Access and Participation Plan (APP), which she will share with the Committee at a later date.

**ACTION:** The Clerk to check if EDI information needs to be submitted anywhere.

**e. Governor attendance of 2023/24**

The Committee reviewed the attendance figures and noted that they were strong. The Chair expressed appreciation to the governors for their time and efforts in this regard.

**6. Recruitment of New Chair and Chair Appraisal**

**a. Recruitment Timetable**

The Committee reviewed the recruitment timetable and noted that the goal was to publish the advertisement before Christmas. The Committee expressed satisfaction with the timetable and approved it for circulation to the Board for noting.

**b. Chair Application Pack and form**

The Committee expressed satisfaction with the application pack, noting only a few minor suggestions for improving the wording. They agreed that the pack was engaging. A Committee member asked whether a CV and covering letter might be more appropriate than an application form. The Committee discussed the benefits of this approach and whether there was a specific reason for using the application form. The Principal stated she would check with HR to understand why the college uses application forms, but the Committee agreed that, if possible, a CV and covering letter would be preferred.

**ACTION:** The Principal to contact HR re. use of an application form.

**c. Chair Advertisement**

The Committee reviewed the advert and suggested that adding pictures would make it more engaging. The Clerk explained that the advert had been drafted with the intention of being placed on the website, which would include pictures. A Committee member proposed that the current Chair conduct an exit interview. The Clerk clarified that the college's website may impose some limitations. It was agreed that a quote from the current Chair would be more suitable instead.

**ACTION:** The Clerk to obtain a statement from the current Chair and include it in the advert and application pack then circulate to board for noting.

**d. FE commissioner letter on Chair appraisal**

The Committee acknowledged the letter and the recommendation regarding the annual appraisal of Chairs. After discussion, it was noted that the current Chair and Principal have a strong working relationship. Given that the current Chair will be leaving soon, it was agreed that it would be more appropriate to introduce this process once the new Chair is appointed. The importance of not being too mechanical in the review process was highlighted, with a focus on improvement and flexibility. The Committee agreed that this would be revisited once the new Chair is in place.

**7. Training, Development, and Engagement**

**a. Training and Development Report and Plan**

Due to time constraints, the Committee suggested postponing this discussion until the next meeting.

**b. Staff/Student and Governor Engagement Opportunities**

This will be discussed in further detail at the next Committee meeting.

**8. Close of Business and Date of Next Meeting**

With no further business to discuss, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 4:28 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025, at 3:00 PM.