

THE COLLEGE OF RICHARD COLLYER
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
GOVERNANCE & SEARCH COMMITTEE
HELD ON Friday 3 November 2023 at 14:00

Present: Steve Allen, Ann Donoghue, Graham Lawrence (Chair of the Governing Body), Dan Lodge (Principal), Dr Grant Powell (via Zoom), Dom Valente

In attendance: Russha Sellings (Clerk), Pauline Hagen (FE Advisor) for Item 4 only

In the Chair: Ann Donoghue

1. Chair's Introductions and Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received and accepted from the Committee Chair Barbara Hobday, and the Committee Deputy Chair acted as the Chair for the meeting. Dr Powell attended the meeting by Zoom. Graham Lawrence was not present at the start of the meeting, joining by Item 4.

The Acting Chair explained that Pauline Hagen, who was due to present at the Remuneration Committee, had agreed to join Governance & Search to share her update with all Committee Chairs, 2 of whom were members of the Academisation working party.

2. Declarations of Interest

None declared with respect of the items on the agenda.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved without amendment.

4. Governance & Strategy

The agenda was reordered from this point as agreed. The rest of the Governance & Strategy item was covered later on the agenda.

Impact of academisation on governance/future structure/succession

[14.15 Graham Lawrence arrived at the meeting and Pauline Hagen joined the meeting via Teams]

Pauline was welcomed to the meeting having previously talked to Governors at the Collyer's Strategy Morning in June. Pauline was able to provide further insights on forming a MAT and the impact on leadership and governance. Pauline opened the session as a Q&A and invited questions from Governors. Pauline responded to questions about staff with respect of remuneration, opportunities, change management and in particular succession and the CEO appointment (specific in part to the Remuneration Committee). In Pauline's experience, being part of a MAT created opportunities for staff in terms of growing and developing staff and future leaders and potential of further scope for reward. For some (e.g. central staff) this would likely lead to a change in their role requiring a level of preparation and the ability to be agile. Establishing a MAT brings with it a degree of uncertainty, therefore in Pauline's experience, it was important that the CEO role was an internal appointment. This would also help in linking the past to the future. Schools joining the MAT should be on board for the right reasons; the vision should be clear and leadership roles were pivotal in embedding the vision. Pauline emphasised the need to ensure talent management was fostered with succession and key people development achieved through coaching and mentoring over the next 2-4 years. This would also be a continual and transitional process. It was common to find subject specialists in MATs, therefore the CEO was not required to be a specialist in all education phases. In some roles, however, dual phase experience and skills could be useful. There was a question on the timing of the phasing of a current leader into the CEO role, Pauline thought a year may be enough, however the CEO role was outward facing and therefore this would require regular monitoring by the new Board.

There were further questions around the formation of a new Board and bringing schools together, especially where they may not yet have made a formal decision. Preparation was key and Pauline advised that providing regular forums to meet before the Board was officially appointed would give Governors the chance to familiarise themselves with each other and help settle role allocation. This would also set the pathway to discuss expectations on all sides, roles and responsibilities, vision and values and formulating the key Scheme of Delegation collaboratively. Pauline added there were always roles for everyone in a MAT governance model and quite a lot of movement so bringing everyone in initially was therefore advisable. Where decisions were yet to be made, Pauline's view was to maintain momentum and carry on with whoever was ready.

There was a question on appointment of Members and how they might be recruited. Pauline felt this was quite a specific role for community people which should have a connection in some way to the College. Quite often people became Members because they couldn't fully commit to a Trustee role therefore, bringing their skills and experience in other ways.

Pauline also provided guidance on moving from a single entity to an extended family of education providers with a common purpose and educational model that could lead to the application of the principles of learning.

Pauline was thanked for the insights and ideas provided as well as the assurances around the process to convert and bring partners together.

[15.00 Pauline Hagen departed the meeting]

5. Matters Arising:

(not already covered on the agenda)

The Acting Chair handed over to the Clerk for an update as follows:

Item 4: EGR – As members were aware, an exemption was granted by the ESFA and notified to the Governing Body in July, however it was important for the Committee to keep abreast of the latest progress of academy conversion and continue the dialogue with the Territorial team if deemed necessary.

Item 5a-c/7b: ToR and Cttee structure – The agreed updates were made including the addition of working parties and the attendance of all was being tracked this academic year.

Item 5e – academy conversion risks – Covered in separate RR (see Item 5) – the Academisation working party would be responsible for monitoring the overall project risks.

Item 6a – Governor availability – The Deputy Chair gave an update on the discussion and resolution, although it would be sensible to keep oversight of the committee attendance.

Item 8 – suitability of training platform – feedback had been received on the new NGA platform and there was a further update under Item 7.

6. Governor Appointments

Papers: Top sheet, Co-optee application, updated skills analysis, FE workforce data

a) Update on vacancies

A positive interview had recently taken place with the Chair of Estates and Chair of Audit & Risk Committees and the Principal and Clerk of a prospective Co-optee for the Estates Committee. The candidate was an experienced ESG Manager which was relevant to the Committee's renewed remit. Members also heard from the Chair of the Estates Committee that a former Co-optee may be interested in returning in the future. The Principal added there was the possibility of the Estates Committee benefitting from the guidance of the Property Director of The Mercers' Company where needed.

Members supported the application of the new Co-optee and would continue to monitor the membership of the Committee.

Recommendation: The Governing Body to approve the appointment of George Dummer as a Co-optee to the Estates Committee via written resolution.

The Clerk further advised of a strong potential candidate who had come via a member of the Estates Committee. It was agreed that he should be invited to the College for a meeting with 3 members of the Committee and the Principal before a decision was made as to suitability and best committee fit. **(Action: Clerk)**

The Acting Chair raised the matter of a new Deputy Chair for F&GP since Stephen Avery's recent resignation. The Committee agreed Paul Mittendorfer would be a good candidate and subject to his agreement, he would be invited to the next pre-meet. **(Action: F&GP Chair/Clerk)**

Recommendation: The Governing Body to ratify Paul Mittendorfer's role as Deputy Chair of the F&GP Committee.

The Clerk relayed the Chair of the Collyer Endowment's request that a suitable candidate be secured for the College-appointed Trustee vacancy. At the present time it was acknowledged that progress should be made with recruitment and the current vacancy be filled with this in mind.

b) *GB Skills Analysis

There were no comments raised on the revised skills analysis with the addition of the skills of the new Co-optee (subject to agreement of his appointment).

c) *FE workforce Governor Data 22-23 collection (mandatory return)

The minutes record the annual return had been submitted to the ESFA in advance of the deadline for submission.

7. Governance & Strategy

Papers: Governance SAR 22-23 and QIP 23-24, SAR questionnaire responses, Governor attendance report summary, Governance RR, AoC FE Code summary, code and tracker template

a) SAR 22-23, KPIs and QIP 23-24

Overall progress was noted and it was discussed there were some minor observations and feedback for improvement. The Chair of the Governing Body had addressed the question on the size of the Governing Body which was considered usual for a SFC Governing Body as prescribed the model Instrument & Articles. Members supported the progress towards a rating of 'Outstanding'.

Under QIP target 3 22-23, the Clerk wished to highlight the use of Collyer's email accounts by 2 remaining Co-optees in progress towards Cyber Essentials which had been flagged by the College external auditor. Members agreed that with respect to the Principal's role as holding the responsibility for the security of the College network, this was imperative and instructions to transfer by the end of the month were requested. **(Action: Clerk)**

Recommendation: The Governing Body approve the Governance SAR-QIP including the assessment of governance as 'Outstanding'

i) *SAR Questionnaire response summary

Noted in consideration of the above item.

b) Governor Attendance Report 22-23

Actions had been taken to address attendance levels RAG rated below target. The Clerk advised the Governors in question may be more suited to a Member role in the new formation of the new MAT.

The Chair of the Governing Body expressed his wish to ensure that Governors had ample opportunity to gather outside of formal meetings to support team building.

c) Governance Risk Register 22-23

There were no further comments.

d) Adoption of revised AoC Code of Good Governance

Governors had been made aware of the consultation that completed earlier in the year and the possibility of streamlined code which had now been finalised. The Clerk had consulted with the FE Governance Professionals' forum and some colleges were opting to wait until the end of the year, whereas some were adopting the revised sector Code at their next meeting. As this version was much more user friendly, members agreed with the Clerk's recommendation that the Code should be adopted by the Governing Body at their next meeting and this would now be endorsed.

Recommendation: The Governing Body adopt the new AoC FE Code of Good Governance at their next meeting on 6 December 2023

8. Governor Training & Development

Papers: Pastoral governance role descriptions

i) Update on new programme

The Clerk highlighted that since the Committee had discussed the transition to a new training platform at the last meeting alongside additional resources, the Governing Body were presented with a new training programme at the first meeting of the academic year. Positive anecdotal feedback had been received although it was understood the NGA platform was more focussed towards schools and academies and therefore not all modules would be suitable.

Thanks were recorded to The Mercers' Company for providing access to the NGA Learning Link and also The Key for Governors for their Associated Schools.

ii) Pastoral Governor role descriptions

The Committee welcomed the new document which the Clerk explained covered all the key pastoral roles including the recently separated SEND role that had been combined with EDI. The intention, once finalised, was for the document to support development and this could also assist with succession. The Clerk took an action to finalise the document and share it with the Governing Body at their next meeting. **(Action: Clerk)**

iii) *Planning Day feedback (to follow)

The survey had been circulated following Planning Day earlier in the week, however more responses were needed. The Clerk would share the feedback once all the attendees had responded. **(Action: Clerk)**

9. Meeting protocol

Paper: New virtual/hybrid meeting protocol

The Chair of the Governing Body had requested that a protocol be drafted as good practice to both manage meetings and set expectations. Members settled the protocol being separate to and not appended to the Code of Conduct. Members commented on the draft. It was requested that the wording be revised with regards to providing a minimum of 24 hours notice which should be the aim, where enforcing it would limit flexibility. If there was to be a request to join 10 minutes before to test the technology, then this would need to be factored in on both sides. Members were comfortable with the proposed move to MS Teams. The protocol would be updated following the feedback and shared with the Governing Body at their next meeting. **(Action: Clerk)**

10. AOB

The Committee were made aware in confidence of a safeguarding incident which in usual practice was reported to the Safeguarding Governor and Chair of the Governing Body who were both present at the meeting. The Principal would provide further updates once available.

11. Meeting Assessment

Having all the Committee Chairs in one meeting was noted as a positive and impactful on governance practice enabling a richer discussion as well as oversight from all the committees.

Members were thanked for agreeing an extension of the meeting to hear from Pauline Hagen.

12. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee would next meet on Monday 26 February 2024, 16.00

The meeting closed at 16.27

Chair

Date

RRS 20-11-23