

BARNESLEY COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GOVERNANCE & SEARCH COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 SEPTEMBER 2017

PRESENT: S Perryman (Chair) Governor (Chair of Board)
C Partridge Governor
R Pourali Governor
C Webb Governor (Principal)

IN ATTENDANCE: A J Oaks (Clerk to the Board)

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

17.29 Apologies were received from S Turton.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS IN ANY AGENDA ITEM

17.30 The Chair reminded members of the requirement to declare any financial or personal interests in the agenda items. Members reserved the right to declare interests should any arise during the course of the meeting. C Partridge declared an interest in Agenda item 6, as one of the applicants for Board membership was known to her through her profession.

MINUTES

17.31 The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 April 2017 were agreed as a true and accurate record by those who had been present at the meeting, and were signed by the Chair.

MATTERS ARISING

17.32 The status of actions arising from previous meetings was noted.

GOVERNANCE REPORT

17.33 The Committee received a report from the Clerk covering governance matters in 2016/17. The report was aligned to the Instrument and Articles of Government, and highlighted all activities undertaken by the Board during the year. In terms of appointments and resignations, the Committee reflected on the process for the appointment of staff and student governors going forward, and the potential for such categories of membership to be made through recruitment and selection rather than election by the respective constituent body. The merits of appointing members based on their background and experience and ability to contribute was discussed in detail and it was agreed that the Board should take a view on this option. The Committee concurred that should the proposal be taken forward the interview format for staff and student members would be modelled accordingly as commitment would be a priority over experience. The Clerk advised that should the Board wish to explore this further, full consultation with staff and students would need to take place. The Committee agreed to discuss this further with the Board.

RESOLVED 17.33 to explore options for the recruitment of staff and student members

17.34 Attendance levels were reported to be below benchmark, at the same level as the previous year. Discussion took place with regard to the figures, and it was recognised that in some cases Governors found it necessary to decline attending a meeting due to the nature of their work. The Chair commented that whilst the level was below benchmark, Governors who were not attending regularly made a very powerful contribution when they were present. Moreover, Governors' wider engagement with learners and with SLT demonstrated

a high level of commitment and that the quality of their contribution should be taken into consideration.

- 17.35 C Partridge commented on attendance levels at high profile events, suggesting that in addition to including dates in the calendar that the College might be proactive in circulating a list of such events well in advance, or that reference might be made to up and coming events at the Board meetings. R Pourali commented that the college had many E&D events and that as the link governor she would be delighted to receive invitations to these. The Clerk agreed to take Governors' suggestions forward.
- 17.36 In relation to the Board's responsibility for ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of all staff and students, it was noted that there was no link governor for H&S following P Jagger's resignation in May 2017. Following discussion and consideration of governors' commitments and the number of Committees and link visits attended, it was proposed to invite D Shepherd to undertake the role of H&S link governor going forwards. The Clerk undertook to contact D Shepherd to confirm he was content with the proposal.

RESOLVED 17.37 That D Shepherd take up the role of link governor for Health and Safety.

- 17.38 Governor and learner engagement during the year had been excellent, with ten governors undertaking visits with learners. The majority of visits were those related to governors monitoring strategic priorities, which the Committee recognised would change going forwards in line with the new strategic pillars and balanced scorecard. Consideration was given to how governors might discharge their duty in this regard, given the number of strategic goals and increased number of KPIs which effectively moved governors away from being attached to specific objectives to adopting collective responsibility. Members discussed ways in which they could continue to monitor performance against strategic objectives through departmental visits to curriculum departments or back office functions. It was acknowledged that governors' backgrounds and skills would probably drive which areas they were drawn to.
- 17.39 The Principal tabled a draft of the three strategic pillars and emphasised the importance of the visits remaining strategic, given the risk of moving into operational aspects could be perceived to be greater within this model. Members agreed and discussed ways in which governors might work with the model and agreed that while it was very important for governors to be proactive in choosing areas to undertake visits, it was recognised that visits may also be triggered by reports by exception presented to meetings. It was suggested that the Clerk work with the Deputy Principal to produce a matrix mapping governors to the three pillars. It was agreed that the new model would allow governors to refocus on strategic priorities and with added assurance from SLT through the balanced scorecard, it was likely that fewer visits would be required.

RESOLVED 17.40 that the Clerk work with the Deputy Principal to develop a matrix for Governors monitoring of strategic objectives.

- 17.41 Paperless meetings had been trialled in 2016/17. The Clerk reported that the format adopted to navigate the agenda and reports and the accessibility of the repository on Office 365 had worked well. However there had been a series on ongoing technical issues experienced relating to Wifi and security passwords, which had largely been resolved. Several Governors were using their own device to access papers for meetings which had not presented any issues. The Clerk commented that several Governors continued to request paper copies out of preference. Following discussion members agreed that the Agenda and papers for meetings should be circulated in line with governors' wishes.

CONSTITUTION, SKILLS ANALYSIS AND VACANCIES

- 17.42 The Committee received a report from the Clerk highlighting the Board's current determination, current and forthcoming vacancies, and an analysis of Board members' skills

and diversity. Members discussed the current determination and were minded to retain a maximum of 18 as it allowed for any strong candidates to be considered in the future and it also helped to ensure the Committees were populated with the appropriate number of members.

- 17.43 The Clerk advised that with R Pourali indicating she wished to stand down and G Beever's second term of office coming to end in March 2018 the Committee might wish to consider succession planning. A recommendation for Board membership had been made by R Pourali which the Clerk had followed up. This had not been pursued by the individual. In recent weeks three applications for membership had been received, in addition to one expression of interest that had been received via SGOSS. Members reviewed each of the applications in turn, in respect of skills, experience, background, with a view to matching them to skills needs going forward and complementing the existing skills mix.
- 17.44 An application from an individual with a finance background currently employed at SHU was considered. Members agreed the individual's CV was impressive and that his background in both public and private sector business and finance was attractive. Members acknowledged that the Board already had a member employed at SHU and were minded to keep this under consideration. A second application from another individual employed at SHU was considered. The application was from an academic whose main area of expertise was in HR. Members agreed that whilst the CV was very interesting they were unable to match the skills and experience to the Board's needs at the present time. The third application was from a Chartered Accountant and tax adviser, who was clearly passionate about education in Barnsley.
- 17.45 Members felt that the application from the first individual with financial expertise was much stronger than the other two applications and it was agreed that this individual should be invited to an informal interview with a view to strengthening financial oversight at Board level. The Committee also agreed to keep the third application on hold for the future.
- 17.46 An expression of interest for Board membership received via SGOSS was also considered by the Committee, and members agreed that the individual did not match the needs of the Board at the current time. The Clerk undertook to contact all the individuals concerned and to inform them of the Committee's decision.
- 17.47 The Principal commented that with only one member of the Board from a teaching and learning background he believed this was an area that required strengthening. No applications had come forward following the recent recruitment campaign from anyone with these skills, experience and background. Discussion took place with regard to how this could be addressed in a creative way to reduce potential exposure in this area.

R Pourali left the meeting.

- 17.48 In terms of seeking a wider field of applicants, C Partridge suggested the Principal might make contact with a CEO of a large Academy Trust who was local to Barnsley.
- 17.49 To conclude the report, members noted the gender and ethnicity of the Board and its Committees and reiterated their commitment to addressing this when seeking applicants for membership.

SELF EVALUTION – BOARD EFFECTIVENESS

- 17.50 The Clerk presented a report summarising the outcomes of the recent self evaluation exercise. Following completion of 1-1s with the Chair, a summary of strengths and areas for improvement had been produced. In terms of the latter, this included attendance, succession planning and monitoring of strategic objectives under the new model. Training, support and development needs centred around finance training, improving knowledge of funding and apprenticeships and support for those who were members of the Audit Committee. Action had already been taken by the Clerk to address some of the points raised.

- 17.51 The analysis of the Committee evaluation (Q&S, F&R and Audit) was noted. The Clerk commented that the evaluation had not yet been discussed at Committee level and that this would take place at the first meetings of the term, with Chairs of Committees leading.
- 17.52 Members noted that the review of the effectiveness of the Chair's performance had not been completed as not all returns had been made. The Clerk commented that she would share the analysis with the Vice Chair in due course. The Clerk commented on the challenge of eliciting governor response to surveys and sought the views of the Committee. The Chair suggested that it might be helpful for the 1-1 template to be reviewed and updated to make it quicker to complete with some clear headline areas for discussion. The Clerk agreed to review the paperwork for 2018.

RESOLVED 17.52 to review the 1-1 template for 2018

- 17.53 The Governance Improvement Action Plan (GIAP), updated following the Board effectiveness event in January 2017 was presented for consideration in relation to progress against targets. It was noted that the majority of the actions were rag rated amber as the majority had future deadlines. The Clerk advised that she would incorporate the outcomes of the 1-1s into the GIAP to maintain an up to date record. Discussion took place with regard to careful monitoring of the targets to allow for reporting to Board, and it was agreed that the Chair and Clerk should take this forward.

RESOLVED 17.53 that the Chair and Clerk will monitor progress against targets in the Governance Improvement Action Plan.

FEEDBACK FROM VISIT TO GRIMSBY INSTITUTE GROUP

- 17.54 The Chair reported that the Principal, Clerk and himself had visited their respective counterparts at The Grimsby Institute Group on 22 August to discuss their governance model. As a Group their governance model was significantly different to the College, however there were several aspects that had been very interesting to reflect on, particularly the use of labour market intelligence for producing Board reports. The Chair and Principal had been particularly impressed with the quality of the Board and Committee reports and of the strategic plan monitoring scorecard.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR EVENT WITH DR RON HILL ON GOVERNANCE

- 17.55 The Committee noted that the event planned for 19 September 2017 had been postponed due to the Chair's unavailability. The Clerk undertook to obtain further dates from Dr Hill.

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

- 17.56 The next meeting would be held on 8 February 2018, subject to an interview with a potential appointee, which would require the Committee to meet again to make a recommendation to the Board.

Signed _____ Chair

Date _____