

HARLOW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

SEARCH AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held virtually on MS Teams at 9.30am on Wednesday 26 June 2024

Membership *Liz Laycock
 *Ray Levy
 *Lily Lin (Chair)
 *Karen Spencer

*denotes present

In attendance Pauline Odulinski, External Reviewer (agenda item 3 only)
 Deanne Morgan, Executive Director – Finance
 Ruth Lucas, Head of Governance

1 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 External Governance Review

The Search and Governance Committee received and considered the draft External Governance Review report, presented by Pauline Odulinski, External Reviewer.

Pauline Odulinski thanked everyone who supported the process of the External Governance Review and in the preparation of the report. Pauline Odulinski reported that the process was positive and rewarding from both sides with a focus on adding value to what the Corporation is already doing and verifying where the Corporation is in its journey.

Pauline Odulinski confirmed that a very sound governance model is in place and that overall College governance is proficient and effective with the Corporation demonstrating a very positive impact on College outcomes, which is the best outcome possible from the review.

Pauline Odulinski reported that the report details recommendations and considerations for the Corporation to decide which they would like to take forward.

The three recommendations were highlighted as follows:

Recommendation 1 – whilst it is recognised that the College and Corporation has outstanding practice with engaging with businesses and outside agencies, it is important to have a mechanism in place for Governors to triangulate this and to demonstrate Governors' independence. Governors should have their own independent sources for knowing and checking what the College's reputation is and bring this intelligence back to the Corporation. There is a very good relationship between the Corporation and the

Executive Team and this recommendation is looking to enhance what is already being undertaken.

Recommendation 2 – Governors to focus on how they know what the student experience is. This is not about making judgements or being operational, it is focusing on how do Governors know what the impact of the Corporation is on students and having students' insights when making strategic decisions.

Karen Spencer reported that this is undertaken in the Autumn Term so may not have been as clearly seen in the External Governance Review due to the timing of the review. Visits are undertaken independently without any member of the Executive being present. The investment in resources comes from the intelligence from the students. It was suggested that governance feedback could sit alongside the student feedback at Corporation meetings. A Governor commented it could be an issue around how it is being recorded.

Pauline Odulinski commented it is something more subtle and it is to facilitate Governors thinking about asking the right questions. It is a bit more nuanced and not from a process point of view.

Recommendation 3 – a focus on moving forward with the College's longer-term vision and curriculum developments should form part of Governor succession planning.

Governors were given the opportunity to ask questions. The Committee agreed that the report is very informative and clear, encouraging the pro-activeness of Governors and how Governors can take initiative and ownership.

The Committee thanked Pauline Odulinski for her time and approach to the External Governance Review.

The Search and Governance Committee noted the External Governance Review report and agreed that it should be a discussion item at the Corporation meeting on 16 July 2024.

4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Search and Governance Committee meeting held on 13 February 2024 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

5 Matters Arising from the Minutes (not mentioned elsewhere on the agenda)

5.1 Annual Accountability Statement and Local Needs Duty (minute 10 refers)

Ruth Lucas reported that the Annual Accountability Statement was approved by the Corporation at its meeting on 13 June 2024 and was submitted to the ESFA and uploaded to the College's website on 20 June 2024.

6 Register of Membership

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7 Membership of Harlow College Further Education Corporation

The Search and Governance Committee received and considered the Register of Membership and update on the membership of Harlow College Further Education

Corporation, presented by Ruth Lucas, Head of Governance.

The Committee was informed that Kate Greer had resigned from the Corporation due to work commitments and the search for a suitable replacement has commenced.

The Committee were informed that Ray Levy's term of office expires on 10 October 2024 and the Committee unanimously agreed to recommend his reappointment to the Corporation at the Corporation meeting taking place on 16 July 2024.

Ruth Lucas provided the Committee with an update on Student Governors recruitment for next academic year. One Student Governor has already been elected and a recruitment campaign will begin in September for another Student Governor.

The Search and Governance Committee noted the Register of Membership and update on the membership of Harlow College Further Education Corporation, and recommended the following to the Corporation for approval at its meeting on 16 July 2024:

- The reappointment of Ray Levy as a Governor of Harlow College Further Education Corporation for a period of four years from 11 October 2024 – 10 October 2028.

8 Governance KPIs and Improvement Plan 2023 – 2024

The Search and Governance Committee received the Governance KPIs and Improvement Plan 2023 – 2024, presented by Ruth Lucas, Head of Governance.

Governors noted the progress that has been made to add against the actions and KPIs.

The Committee agreed that the Plan should be updated with the feedback and recommendations from the External Governance Review, with updated KPI action, for next academic year. This will form part of the discussion item on the External Governance Review at the Corporation meeting being held on 16 July 2024.

It was agreed that the External Governance Review be circulated to all Governors after this meeting.

The Search and Governance Committee noted the Governance KPIs and Improvement Plan 2023 – 2024 and progress made to date.

9 Governor Recruitment Policy and Procedures

The Search and Governance Committee received and considered the Governor Recruitment Policy and Procedures, presented by Ruth Lucas, Head of Governance.

Governors noted and approved the proposed amendment to the Policy, with the word *annual* being removed. It was agreed that reference should be added in to the Policy on Governor recruitment being in line with governance vetting processes as part of safer recruitment and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

The Search and Governance Committee approved the Governor Recruitment Policy and Procedures, subject to the amendments agreed above.

10 Any Other Business

A discussion was held around mentoring of new Governors and meeting with them in advance of meetings to talk through the papers. Ruth Lucas offered to meet with newly appointed Governors before the Corporation meeting.

11 Dates of Future Meetings, Terms of Reference and Calendar of Business

The Search and Governance Committee received and considered the report on dates of future meetings, terms of reference and calendar of business, presented by Ruth Lucas, Head of Governance.

Governors asked for the dates of the Student Award events to be added into the calendar of meetings.

The Search and Governance Committee noted the dates of future meetings and Committee approved the Committee's terms of reference and business plan.

Key Points From The Meeting For Corporation:

1. Item 1 – External Governance Review

To receive and consider the External Governance Review report.

2. Item 2 – Membership of Harlow College Further Education Corporation

To receive and approve the recommendations of the Search and Governance Committee.