

**The College of West Anglia
MINUTES OF SEARCH COMMITTEE
25 January 2011 – 2.00 pm Board Room**

Present: Peter Dixon Chair
Sharon Cambridge Vice Chair
Paul Cotton
David Pomfret Principal
Roger Ward

Attending: Rochelle Woodcock Clerk

1 Apologies

None.

2 Minutes of the last Meeting – 8 December 2010

The Minutes of the meeting of 8 December 2010 were agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

3 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4 Review Corporation Committee and Working Group Membership

The Clerk presented a paper, for consideration, outlining the proposed allocation of four new governors to committees/working groups, and the resultant revision to the committee structure.

The Chair advised the committee that Jaqui Fairfax, Nerissa Vaughan and Gary Webb had attended an induction on 24 January 2011. They had all confirmed that they were happy to serve on the committees allocated to them. The remaining governor, Mike Thorne, had not yet been approached regarding allocation to a committee, as his induction was postponed.

PC also tabled a paper, at the meeting, indicating that were the committee/working group membership to be restored to their original levels (as per the Governance and Financial Management Regulations 12 May 2010), it would place a high demand on Governors to cover the cycle of meetings.

RW mooted the possibility that more meetings could be held on the same day, based on commonality of serving Governors. It was noted that this might cause problems in terms of individual time commitment/availability.

The Principal commented that some of the committee levels eg Audit, may have originally been set at a higher level than was needed. With higher membership of the Board, it would be necessary to consider whether the temporary arrangements put in

place were still viable, and what membership levels committees should be returned to, in order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

The Chair commented that the new governors had filled existing committee vacancies. A wholesale restructuring exercise had not taken place, but this might need to be considered during the annual review process.

RW noted the importance of the experience gained, through serving on a committee, particularly Quality and Audit, where a key requirement was to examine processes in depth. He welcomed the different perspectives brought to committees by new governors.

The Principal advised that the new governors had been allocated to committees based on their skills, interests and consideration of where they might make the best contribution.

In concluding discussions, it was requested that the following amendments be made to the proposed Committee Membership structure:

- Audit Committee - Mike Thorne to join the Committee (Membership 5: Quorum 2)
- Employment Policy – membership to remain as originally designated (Membership 5: Quorum 2)

It was agreed, subject to the above amendments, that the revised Corporation Committee and Working Group Membership be recommended to the Corporation for approval.

PC advised that he has been Acting Chair of both the Audit and Performance Review and Quality Committees for some months, due to the vacancy situation, and asked whether this could now be resolved.

It was agreed that the Chair arrangements for both the Audit and Performance Review and Quality committees should be formalised, for the remainder of this academic year. The election of a Chair would be added to the agenda for the next meeting of each committee.

Action Clerk

5 Review Governor Skills Audit

The Clerk presented a paper, for consideration, containing two draft formats of the Governor Skills Audit, to be undertaken this year. Two additional categories had been added to the Audit – Health and Safety and Safeguarding, for approval.

It was agreed that the two additional categories should be included.

A detailed discussion followed regarding the two proposed formats.

PC commented on the importance of investigating the results.

SC was concerned at the timing of the Audit, particularly for new governors, who would not yet have gained specialist knowledge.

It was noted that this might have some impact on the overall results, but they would have the opportunity to indicate their current skills and knowledge in the more generic areas. In presenting the results, this aspect might need to be highlighted.

The Principal noted how important it was to get a balance of skills across the Corporation. The audit would identify training and development needs and provide a basis for skills match to committees.

The following amendments were proposed to Draft 2 of the document:

- **Generic Skills**
replace b) Change management with b) Managing change
amend c) Equality and diversity/Safeguarding to c) Equality and Diversity
- **Determination of educational character and strategic direction of College**
remove point e) Local Authority management
- **Appointment, grading, suspension, dismissal etc**
replace c) Workforce planning & development with c) Staff planning & development

It was agreed, subject to amendment, that Draft 2 of the Governor Skills Audit be recommended to the Board for approval.

6 Vacancy Position

The Chair advised that the remaining governor vacancy was currently being held for a potential nominee from Norfolk County Council, which was currently undergoing restructure. It was proposed that this vacancy continue to be held and reviewed at each meeting.

Agreed

RW noted the importance of bringing greater diversity, in terms of ethnic background, to the Board, and advised that he has been making some contacts to see if there are any suitable candidates who might be interested.

7 Any Other Business

(i) Surveys - Governor Annual Self Assessment

The Chair noted, from last year's experience of the Governor Annual Self Assessment, how it is possible to get results that are not totally accurate. He commented that individuals might mark themselves down, if they felt they did not have a full working knowledge of a subject. It would be impossible to have a full knowledge of all areas and subjects. It was important that the Self Assessment be viewed not as a test, but more as a measure of awareness/understanding that a system or process was in place.

He asked that a Clerk's item be included, at the relevant Corporation meetings, to introduce both the Skills Audit and the Annual Self Assessment to governors.

Action Clerk

The Principal noted that the Self Assessment, whilst reviewing individual governor's confidence, did not collectively review the performance of the Board. Governance, this year, had been included in the Self Assessment Report (SAR) under Leadership and Management. Next year it will be important to consider how a separate Governance SAR could be completed.

8 Chair's Items for briefing to Corporation

- Corporation Committee and Working Group Membership
- Governor Skills Audit

9 Date of next scheduled meeting – 15 June 2011 time tba

The meeting closed at 3 pm