

## SANDWELL COLLEGE

### Minutes of a Meeting of the Search & Governance Committee held virtually on Monday 8 November 2021, 1.00pm

Present: J Tew (Independent) (Chair)  
G Pennington (Principal)  
J Uddin (Independent)

Apologies: K Ellis (Independent)

In Attendance: E Scotford (Clerk to the Corporation)

		Action
S21.20	<b><u>Welcome and Apologies</u></b>	
	The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting. Apologies were received from Ken Ellis and <b>accepted by Governors.</b>	
S21.21	<b><u>Declarations of Interest</u></b>	
	There were no declarations of interest.	
S21.22	<b><u>Minutes of the Meeting of the Search &amp; Governance Committee held on 21 June 2021</u></b>	
	RESOLVED THAT: <b>Governors approved</b> the minutes of the meeting of the Search & Governance Committee held on 21 June 2021 for signing by the Chair.	
S21.23	<b><u>Matters Arising</u></b>	
23.1	Minute No. 21.12.1 – Vice Chair vacancy – the Chair had followed up interest with a Governor with a view to appointment but the Governor had since submitted their resignation from the Board due to work commitments.	
23.2	Minute No. 21.12.3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employer and business links would be pursued to fill Independent Governor vacancy – work in progress.</li> <li>- Audit Committee attendance would be discussed with a Governor – actioned. The Governor had requested to stand down from the Committee due to work commitments.</li> </ul>	
23.3	Minute No. 21.13.3 – Governor whose term of office would expire in late 2021 - the Chair would establish the Governor's willingness to serve a second term – actioned, the Governor had confirmed they were happy to continue. The Search & Governance Committee would recommend their reappointment to the Board at its December meeting.	Comm Chair
23.4	Minute No. 21.13.7 – increase in Governor terms of office from 3 years to 4 to be further considered – it was decided that the term of office would remain at 3 years.	
23.5	Minute No. 21.14.7 – further discussion of the White Paper and its implications for governance – deferred until the next meeting when it was anticipated further guidance would be available. Clerk to note for agenda.	Clerk

S21.24	<b><u>Board of Governors – Vacancies/Forthcoming Vacancies/Committee Vacancies</u></b>	
21.24.1	<p>Discussion took place based on the Clerk to the Corporation's report detailing vacancies, forthcoming vacancies and committee vacancies which currently were:</p> <p>One vacancy currently exists for an Independent member.</p> <p>Two further vacancies had arisen with the resignations of: Simon Hackett (with immediate effect) Peta Murphy (with effect from 31 December 2021)</p> <p>One vacancy exists for a Staff Governor, Sandwell</p> <p>Vacancies for specific roles were: Vice Chair</p> <p>Independent members reaching the end of their current terms of office during the academic year were:</p> <p>John Tew - 10 March 2022 - Chair of the Search and Governance Committee and Member of the Audit Committee</p> <p><b>Governors considered</b> that Mr Tew continued to have valuable skills and experience and was an integral part of the Board. Mr Tew had confirmed his willingness to serve another term of office.</p> <p>Jayne Francis - 10 March 2022</p> <p>The Chair would speak to the Independent member to establish their willingness to serve a second term.</p> <p>Noel Grace - 16 May 2022 - Chair of the Audit Committee Amie Banford - 16 May 2022</p> <p>The reappointments of the 2 Governors with terms ending in May 2022 would be discussed at the next meeting of the Committee.</p> <p>All of the above Governors would have served one term of office.</p>	Chair
21.24.2	<p>The non-attendance and difficulties contacting a Governor were discussed. The Chair was pursuing all avenues to make contact with the Governor. If contact was not able to be made in the near future, the Committee recommended that a formal letter be sent to the Governor to establish his ability to continue and his willingness to meet his commitments and responsibilities on the Board. Chair to action.</p>	Chair
21.24.3	<p><b>Governors discussed</b> recruitment developments. A couple of potential candidates were in liaison with the College, including one potential business/engineering contact, and one with a finance/HR background. Governor information pack to be sent.</p> <p><b>Governors noted</b> the challenges facing local authority officers and councillors who often found it difficult to fulfil their time commitments to the Board.</p> <p>It was suggested an approach be made to ask the new leader of Sandwell Council to recommend any of his colleagues to join the Board as the link with the local authority remained useful. It would be useful to maintain the link with Sandwell LA alongside the link with Birmingham CC.</p> <p>It was noted that a new senior police officer was due to take up their post as well as a new Head of Regeneration for the LA who would also be useful potential Governors.</p>	

	The Principal would make contact with Sandwell Council Leader and the senior police officer.	Principal
21.24.4	Other possible routes for sourcing potential candidates were discussed. The Committee Chair had contacted a local source seeking business or education skills. Any interested parties would be notified to the Clerk for the Chair, Principal and Committee Chair to meet.	
21.24.5	Governor information pack to be sent to the Principal's contact at Newman University. This would present less conflict of interest than other local universities.	Principal
21.24.6	<p>Current committee vacancies were outlined and discussed:</p> <p>Two vacancies on the Audit Committee - to be filled on the appointment of 2 new Independent Governors.</p> <p>One vacancy on the Remuneration Committee – to replace Peta Murphy. John Tew to be appointed to the Remuneration Committee.</p> <p>LQCC vacancies included: one vacancy for an Independent Governor to replace Peta Murphy; two Student Governor vacancies to be filled when the new appointments for the year were confirmed. A new Governor with an education background would be allocated to the LQCC on appointment.</p> <p>Peta Murphy was also LQCC Committee Chair. KE would take over as Committee Chair temporarily pending new Governor recruitment.</p> <p>One vacancy on the Finance &amp; Strategy Committee to replace Simon Hackett. New recruit to be allocated to the Committee.</p>	
21.24.7	<p>RESOLVED THAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Governors monitored and discussed</b> Board membership and vacancies.</li> <li>• <b>Governors noted</b> the need to be mindful of succession planning and equalities, diversity and inclusion in new appointments.</li> <li>• The Chair would speak to the Independent member (JF) to establish their willingness to serve a second term.</li> <li>• If contact was not able to be made in the near future, the Committee recommended that a formal letter be sent to the Governor to establish his ability to continue and his willingness to meet his commitments and responsibilities on the Board. Chair to action.</li> <li>• The Principal would make contact with Sandwell Council Leader and the senior police officer regarding current Board vacancies.</li> <li>• Governor information pack to be sent to the Principal's contact at Newman University.</li> </ul>	<p>Chair</p> <p>Chair Principal</p> <p>Principal</p>
S21.25	<b><u>Evaluation of Performance of the Board of Governors 2020/21</u></b>	
21.25.1	<p>The Evaluation of Performance of the Board of Governors 2020/21 was considered in comparison to the previous year.</p> <p><b>Governors identified</b> that the key issues were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender balance – the balance of membership in terms of gender had remained static in comparison to the previous year. Future recruitment would continue to be mindful of diversity and inclusion.</li> <li>• Attendance rates – it was acknowledged that attendance issues had been addressed by the Chair with individual Governors where necessary. There had been an improvement in overall Governor attendance on the previous year up from 71% to 75%, compared to the sector average of 87.79%.</li> </ul>	

	<p>No meetings were inquorate during the year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Members' response times – Governors' targets included the need to respond by the requested deadline. Governors had been reminded of the importance of submitting their annual returns by the deadline by the Clerk, the Chair and the Chair of the Search &amp; Governance Committee.</li> <li>Governors to maximise their training, particularly with the expansion of online and virtual opportunities as a result of the Covid-19 situation, remembering to note any webinars or online sessions they attend. Knowledge updates circulated to Governors by the Clerk included: AoC, ESFA, and other agencies, to also be noted. Governor attendance at college events to be maximised, Covid restrictions permitting, in line with Governor targets. The College would subscribe to the new ETF Governor Development online training programme to further enhance training opportunities for Governors.</li> </ul>	
21.25.2	<p><b>Governors noted</b> the likelihood of an Ofsted inspection in Spring term 2022. Discussion took place regarding Governors' connection and involvement with the College since the Covid situation. <b>Governors acknowledged</b> that the situation but felt they had been kept fully informed and updated on a regular basis of the performance of the College through regular emails and inclusion in communication channels. It was noted that the Link Governor programme was to be reinstated which would assist in increasing Governors' presence on site and involvement with college activities.</p> <p><b>Governors discussed</b> the suggestion of a Strategy Day early in 2022 to include a tour of the new sites and facilities at Bennetts Hill, Cadbury and Sandwell, followed by an in-depth Governor training session on Ofsted. The Committee Chair and Chair of the Corporation would discuss further.</p>	Comm Chair/Chair
21.25.3	<p>The Principal advised that Ofsted training for managers took place every 3 weeks, from 11am-2pm, at Bennetts Hill which Governors were welcome to attend.</p> <p><b>Governors acknowledged</b> that, whilst all Governors need to be prepared for Ofsted, a smaller core group of Governors would meet with inspectors.</p>	
21.25.4	<p>It was noted that the Link Governor Scheme was due to be reinstated. Link Governor feedback reports to be a standing agenda item for the Board which would provide evidence for Ofsted.</p>	
	<p>RESOLVED THAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governors received and monitored the Board evaluation report 2020/21.</li> <li>The Committee Chair and Chair of the Corporation would discuss further the suggestion of an additional Strategy Day early in 2022.</li> </ul>	Comm Chair/Chair
S21.26	<b><u>Register of Members' Interests</u></b>	
21.26.1	<p><b>Governors noted</b> that some Governors had not yet provided their annual returns – the Clerk and Chair continued to pursue their return.</p>	
21.26.2	<p>RESOLVED THAT: <b>Governors received</b> the Register of Members' Interests.</p>	
S21.27	<b><u>Skills and Knowledge Analysis</u></b>	
	<p><b>Governors noted</b> that the Board was well served with a wide range of skills and experience. The skills base which would be targeted in new Governor recruitment were: education, finance/audit, and engineering. Involvement of stakeholders including local authorities and business and employers was increasingly important.</p> <p><b>Governors noted</b> that, nationally, the pandemic had negatively impacted on Governor recruitment.</p>	

	RESOLVED THAT: <b>Governors received</b> the Skills and Knowledge Analysis.	
S21.28	<b><u>Any Other Business</u></b>	
	There was no other business.	
S21.29	<b><u>Determination of Confidential Items</u></b>	
	There were no confidential items.	
S21.30	<b><u>Date and time of next meeting</u></b> <b>Monday 7 February 2022, 1.00pm</b>	

Meeting ended at 2.15pm