

REASEHEATH COLLEGE BOARD
SEARCH AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2021 at 2.00pm
Via MS Teams

Present: David Pearson, independent (Chair) (DP)
 Marcus Clinton, principal (MC)
 Dr Elizabeth Harrison, independent (EH)
 Alastair Taylor, independent (AT)

In attendance Jackie Schillinger, company secretary (head of governance) (JS)

Part A unless stated.

| Item | Content |
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| 1. | WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE |
| 1.1 | The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Colin Baxter. The meeting was quorate. |
| 2. | DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST |
| 2.1 | DP declared an interest in part of item 4 in relation to the discussion of a renewed terms of board members and he left the meeting for that part of the discussion. The meeting remained quorate for this part to the meeting. |
| 3. | MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING |
| 3.1 | The minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2020 were approved as a correct record and the action log reviewed for assurance. |
| 4. | MEMBERSHIP REPORT |
| 4.1 | The Committee considered the membership report. |
| 4.2 | The re-appointment of one governor whose term is due to expire in March 2021 after one term was considered. It was agreed to recommend re-appointment after consideration of the one to one meeting feedback with the chair on contribution, attendance, skills and experience and the member's continued motivation to remain involved. |
| 4.3 | The approach was considered to re-appointment of a further three members whose terms are due to expire on 31 July 2021 and therefore any reappointment recommendation would be made to the July Board meeting. It was considered that the current exceptionally challenging environment could warrant an extension to the current term this time for these members despite the length of the existing terms, with a commitment to develop succession planning over the next three years so that newer appointees are well placed to continue to build on the stability and strength of the committee chair and board chair |

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| | roles for the future. |
| 4.4 | The meeting considered the timing of the next staff governor appointment. It noted that the term of one of the current staff governors is ending after six years and it was agreed that this role be offered out for election for an appointment from 1 August 2021. The current staff member may wish to reapply and will be able to do so. |
| 4.5 | The meeting then considered an item discussed at its previous meeting on skills and succession planning and agreed to recommend that a governor role be offered to a current co-opted member to take advantage of her skills, experience and ability to contribute time and energy to the role over the next few years, with an appointment from 1 August 2021, subject to approval at the July Board meeting. |
| 4.6 | The meeting considered the two current associate governors' one year terms that will come to an end on 31 July 2021. The meeting agreed that a further year would be appropriate as part of succession planning and the chair would discuss this in one to one meetings with the members in advance of the next committee meeting in May so that a recommendation can be made to the Board in July. |
| 4.7 | RESOLVED: The Committee recommends the re-appointment of Andrew Fletcher as a member of the Reaseheath College Board for a period of three years from 25 March 2021. |
| 5. | GOVERNANCE SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT |
| 5.1 | <p>The Committee considered the governance self-assessment report, based on the following approved process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual self-assessment questionnaire sent out in July/August 2020 to include feedback on committee membership, CPD requirements and remote governance • Skills audit sent out in July/August 2020 • Review performance against the Code of Good Governance/Development plan • Committee self-assessments in summer term meetings • Governor meeting attendance data • Individual performance reviews with the Chair that have been carried out during 2019-20 • Chair 360 review sent out in August 2020 • RSM internal audit governance audit and follow up as reported to the July 2020 Audit committee meeting. |
| 5.2 | <p>The meeting noted that the response rate from the self-assessment questionnaires was about 70% and it expressed the aim to increase this next year with all members being reminded of the importance of responding to this process. Members welcomed the feedback that indicated that whilst there were challenges in remote governance, members consider governance has remained effective during the pandemic. The Chair's performance questionnaire feedback provided very strong assurance that members consider the Board to be well led. The responses to the Board self-assessment indicated strong confidence overall, with a couple of areas to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two 'disagree' responses. These were in relation to knowing how the college's performance compares to other colleges and in receiving regular information on the views of employers about college performance. • One 'disagree' response. This was in relation to involvement in setting targets and KPIs. <p>The meeting noted that the Quality and Standards Committee have focused more on target and KPI setting in the first term of 2020-21, with an additional teams meeting to consider this in depth and which was reported to the Board at its strategy day in January and so progress has been made in response to</p> |

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| | <p>this feedback. The feedback on data that compares college performance and on employer views will be carried forward in 2020-21. The feedback on senior post holder performance management indicated that more visibility on this to the Board could still be helpful and this can be taken into account to ensure all know where to find this information as it is regularly reported through to the Board.</p> |
| 5.3 | <p>The recent White Paper was highlighted as a key focus of governance development over the next couple of years. The key commitments on governance set out in the White Paper were noted as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set out clear expectations for college corporation boards on recruitment, retention and development of principals and board members, to ensure they have the skills they need. • Refresh existing guidance on appointments, communicating a clear Government position on what constitutes good leadership, and make it clear that an independent person should be included on college leader interview panels to ensure objectivity and due diligence. • Work with the sector to develop a framework of skills and competencies to improve development for college corporation board members and governance professionals once in post. • Set new requirements for annual board self-assessment and regular external governance reviews. • Work with the Charity Commission to review how the existing system operates for paying board chairs, to consider the possibilities for enabling board chairs to be paid in specific circumstances within the confines of charity law. |
| 5.4 | <p>The committee considered that the Corporation was generally well placed against these standards and can look to take the opportunities presented by the White Paper on governance support and development, to continue to improve its effectiveness.</p> |
| 5.5 | <p>RESOLVED: The Committee approved the self-assessment report and governance development plan for recommendation to the Board.</p> |
| 6. | <p>MATTERS TO REPORT TO THE BOARD/OTHER COMMITTEES</p> |
| 6.1 | <p>The committee agreed to recommend further re-appointments at the July Board meeting for next year, but it discussed the need for flexibility with regard to overall length of term in the circumstances of the pandemic and the need for stability during the restoration and recovery phase over the next couple of years. It also agreed to further consider succession planning at its next meeting and the need for a 3 year plan on succession to committee chair and chair roles so that in 3 years' time those appointed more recently will be in a position to move into these responsibilities. The Principal noted that he is carrying out a review of internal reporting structures and will link this to governance reporting to be considered by the committee in due course.</p> |
| 7. | <p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> |
| 7.1 | <p>AT raised a query on the internal FE Academic Board. MC confirmed that this is not a requirement and quite unusual in further education colleges, but he confirmed that it is useful and not an old fashioned process and that his plans are to enhance this to provide a wider engagement of delivery staff and students.</p> |

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| 8. | DATE OF NEXT MEETING |
| 8.1 | The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 27 May 2021 at 2pm. |

The meeting closed at 3.15pm
Approved as a correct record: 27 May 2021