



# Minutes of the Search Committee

(Via Video Conference)

**Date: 21 April 2021**

<b>Present:</b>	Jo Beaumont (Chair) John Egan David Butcher Paul Webley (External Co-option) Colin Forrest (temporary co-option)
<b>In attendance:</b>	J Stott (Clerk)
<b>Apologies:</b>	Nav Chohan (Principal)
<b>Meeting commenced:</b>	17.15
<b>Meeting closed:</b>	18:30

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**09/21 Disclosure of financial and/or personal interest**

Colin Forrest disclosed an interest that he has a working relationship with Ron Hill, Stone King and Peridot who will be discussed as possible external contractors for the governance review.

**10/21 To agree the agenda and order of business as circulated**

The agenda and order of business were agreed.

**11/21 To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 4 March 2021**

The minutes were approved as a true record.

**12/21 Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

**13/21 To progress the external Governance Review**

**a) Proposal to the Corporation 30 March 2021**

The Skills for Jobs White Paper talks about strengthening governance and members had agreed that there is a need for a look at a historical review of practice, fitness and purpose going forward and what governance needs to look like in the future.

The Corporation agreed at their meeting for the Search Committee to carry this forward on behalf of the Corporation, initially by discussing and proposing the type of review and the most appropriate scope/themes for the review.

## **b) Discussion document**

D Butcher and C Forrest presented their document on the scope and possible themes around the review and a discussion took place on each. The four themes can stand alone or combined.

### **1) Strategic Planning**

This is about the Board's contribution to the educational nature of the College with emphasis on curriculum and quality and assessing risk.

### **2) Leadership of Governance/Governing**

This includes areas on leadership, professional development, and how governors conduct themselves. A member added that it is also about looking outside the board, such as at governors' relationship with the new combined authority, funding bodies and how we stand and link in with local industry employers. A change of Principal could mean that the advocacy role falls more on the Chair and governing body to see that the College is well positioned, though the College's track record is very strong. It was emphasised how we need to separate governance from governing which is the practise of governing and professionalism.

### **3) Relationships and Effective Governing**

A review would look at the real skills sets of the governing body, how they currently come into play and would suggest tactics as to how those skills could be deployed even more effectively. This could be via self evaluation, meetings with the Chair, and skills development. It was emphasised that a review would not include any comments on individual contributions or the way people work, but would be more about identifying and utilising particular skills sets. A governance review should also help us to highlight those areas we are most effective at as well as identify any skills gaps.

### **4) Impacts**

Members discussed the diversity of membership in terms of impact and what benefit that brings and it was agreed it is about bringing in different perspectives, skills sets and ways of looking at problems. A member stated that the DfE is expecting colleges will follow the scottish model so impacts may need to be refreshed

The Chair asked for thoughts on timescales and it was agreed this should be set in motion as soon as practicable. The different stages we need to consider in planning are: the time taken to go to tender; to receive proposals; the work to be carried out; to receive the report; committee evaluation; and proposal to the Corporation. Ideally the review needs to be carried out in June/July so that a report can be produced by the end of this academic year. Other considerations are on which parts of the review can be carried out remotely and which will require a more hands on approach. If we want to include observation of committees, that would take us through to July.

There are different models that can be considered eg, a phase 1 review leaving us with an action plan to address the recommendations which allows for continuity and an extension for a period of reflection beyond the review, or part of the proposal could include that they return to monitor how we are progressing any actions.

Another consideration is the budget for the review - with a recent quote around £4k + VAT. As soon as the scope can be presented to the Corporation for approval, the next stage asking for an approach and fee can be progressed.

**c) Details of external providers to undertake a review**

Details were provided of three different board evaluators taken from the Governance4FE website for consideration and discussions took place on the merits of each.

A) AoC /ETF - there are certain criteria a college must meet to qualify for this free review which must be concluded by the end of July. The meeting ruled this option out as we did not meet the criteria and could not meet the timescale. It was also felt a free review comes with an element of risk.

B) Peridot Partners Ltd

C) Stone King

Other options were also discussed and it was agreed to look into:

D) Peer based reviews; and

E) AoC Create (who provide their own standalone review)

**ACTION:** The Clerk to email all members a broad scope for the review asking for a response by 26 April.

It was agreed to then start to approach the contractor models (B-E) with an aim for a response by mid May. The Search Committee will then meet again in the first week of June to identify who to recommend and appoint before 15 June which is when the next committee meeting takes place. It was agreed it would also be useful to let consultants know our meetings structure when approaching them.

**d) Original proposal from Stone King**

Stone King has already submitted a proposal to the College which members noted.

**e) Peridot Brochure**

Peridot Partners is the further education sector's governance recruitment who work across England, in all regions, with colleges facing a range of

challenges; from financial risk to recurring poor quality and the need for transformation. They have delivered board reviews in a range of business environments from large international membership bodies with very complex governance structures (IOSH), to social enterprise organisations in education (The Education Business Partnership) and national charities.

**14/21**      **Date of next meeting**

To be arranged w/c 31 May 2021.