



BOARD OF GOVERNORS STRATEGY, GOVERNANCE AND SEARCH COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF AN MEETING OF THE STRATEGY, GOVERNANCE & SEARCH COMMITTEE HELD AS A TEAMS VIDEO LINK MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2020

		<u>Meeting Attendance</u>
PRESENT:	Tina Coates (Chair)	(1 out of 1)
	Kate Webb (Group Principal & Chief Executive)	(1 out of 1)
	Tony Dixon	(1 out of 1)
	Martin Pritchett	(1 out of 1)
	Rob Lewis	(1 out of 1)
	Stuart Taylor	(1 out of 1)
	Tom Wainwright	(1 out of 1)
Co-opted Member:	Josie Wragg (JW)	(1 out of 1)
In Attendance:	Angela Wellings (External Governor)	
	Fiona Carthy (FC) (Carthy Communications) (for item 7)	
CLERK:	Lynn Payne	(1 out of 1)

PART I

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ACTION

The meeting started at 6pm.

1. Apologies for Absence
There were no apologies for absence.
2. Declarations of Interest
No Member declared a conflict of interest with the agenda.
3. Committee Chair & Vice Chair for 2020/21
Members unanimously agreed to elect Tina Coates as Chair and Martin Pritchett as Vice Chair, of the committee, for this academic year. It was noted the Vice Chair's term of office would not be for a full year, as his office as Governor would come to an end in March 2021, at which time it was agreed there would be an election for a new Vice Chair.
All Members were agreed.

Tina Coates confirmed she was happy to take in the role of Chair for the next academic year.

Introductions were made for new members of the committee.
4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 24 June 2020
The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 June 2020, having been previously circulated to members, were agreed as an accurate record and the Chairs electronic signature would be applied.
All Members were agreed.
5. Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting held on 24 June 2020
It was noted all matters arising had been actioned.
6. Update on Annual Strategic Plan
This item was presented by the Group Principal. Members were informed of the College's 2020/21 annual strategic action plan and asked to comment, and to provide

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challenge and scrutiny was welcomed. The Group Principal reminded Members that the strategic aims had been approved in the summer term and that this was, unusually, only a one-year strategic plan. She went through the plan in detail, highlighting the crisis facing the College at the moment, in relation to Covid-19, and the economic shockwaves of that. She advised that an adult course task group had been set up. She detailed the impacts and implications of Covid-19 on the student body. Members also discussed the adult unemployment that would increase. Members acknowledged much was unknown. They asked for more information on local economic impacts and the Group Principal agreed to provide this at the next strategy session. JW suggested that SBC could contribute to this. JW gave Members a brief summary on the impact in Slough.

**Group
Principal**

Members thanked the Group Principal for the update on the strategic plan, which was noted.

7. Marketing Summer Campaign Update (16-18)

This item was presented by the Group Principal and FC from Carthy Communications. Members were advised of student recruitment and marketing activity that had taken place over the summer period. Members were advised that the recruitment of students, which had been a key risk for the College, had been exacerbated by the uncertainties brought about by Covid-19 and presented many challenges. It was noted the uncertainties included in particular the reluctance of students to use public transport and to move to an unfamiliar environment. Also included was the lack of normal engagement activity with feeder schools in the summer term, the lockdown affecting young people's motivation, particularly with a cohort likely to be NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) and GCSE results. The change in the GCSE results may have enabled some students to stay on at their school sixth forms. Members discussed the issues.

The biggest impact was felt to be the U turn on GCSE grades and the shift in enrolment trends. It was noted there was a decrease in enrolments at Level 1 and an increase at Level 3. FC felt the campaign was mainly about communication rather than marketing. She advised members that being bold and brave in the approach had helped students and the College had tried to be first on the scene with information and assistance and to be as proactive as possible. She confirmed that changes to web pages had been made quickly and online tools used to enhance the 'read' and she detailed for Members all the marketing work that had taken place and the courses that had been affected. One of the main courses down in numbers was noted as ESOL and the Group Principal felt there would need to be a special re-engagement programme set up for this group to re start. The Chair challenged the executive and FC on plans for this term and was advised about work on virtual open days and student engagement.

The report was noted.

Fiona Carthy left the meeting.

The Chair of the Committee asked whether the marketing content would be out to tender this term and the Group Principal confirmed the tender exercise was due to take place this term.

8. Slough Inclusive Growth Strategy

Members had received a copy of the 'Slough Inclusive Growth Strategy 2020-2025', a comprehensive document that JW introduced to Members. She highlighted the growth predictions for Slough as fantastic, and referred to the life chances and health issues for some people as exacerbated by Covid-19. The Chair of the Board felt this would be an excellent document to consider at the Governor's Development Day in November, looking at the impact on the Slough Trading Estate and the blossoming of the diversity of portfolio arrangements. Members agreed and looked forward to the session.

The report was noted.

9. Vacancies on the Corporation and Committee

This item was presented by the Clerk. Members were asked to note the update on the Committee Membership and the in-year vacancies on the Corporation. Members were also asked to agree and recommend to the Board an increase in the Membership of both the Resources Committee and the Strategy, Governance and Search Committee to

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seven Members.

Members unanimously agreed to recommend to the Board an increase in the membership of the Resources Committee and the Strategy, Governance and Search Committee to seven Members.

In relation to the Membership of the Board, Governors' terms of office that would end in 2021 and any potential new members who could join the Board were discussed. Members were mindful of the Code of Good Governance, Nolan Principles and Office for Students requirements, to holding office and the number of terms served, and applied real scrutiny to their considerations. It was discussed and agreed that no Member would automatically be offered an additional term. Real scrutiny had to be applied to that decision.

Members discussed a further term of office for Rob Lewis who was coming to the end of his first term of office.

Members unanimously agreed to recommend to the Board that he be offered a further term of office.

Members discussed a further term of office for Angela Wellings who would have completed two terms of office in July 2021. In Angela's eight-year tenure members were advised that she had had an agreed leave of absence, in that time, for a period of around two years, whilst she was working out of the area, reducing her actual serving time as a governor to around 6 years. Members noted the excellent skills and expertise Angela brought to the Board particularly in the area of education. The Chair of the Board advised members that with a new CEO in place from April/May 2021 and with him as longstanding Chair leaving next year, that to consider retaining Angela for a short period of office would offer the College significant stability and continuity, not least as Angela had been Vice Chair of the Board for a number of years.

Members discussed the governance good principles and in particular the current guidance about governors only serving two terms of office. Members unanimously felt that there was an exceptional case to be made for retaining Angela, for an additional period of office, especially taking into account her period of leave of absence, and that it would strengthen the Board membership at this time.

The Chair of the Board proposed Angela be offered a further three-year term as a Governor and that this be recommended to the Board.

All Members were agreed.

There was a discussion about the office of the future Chair of the Board.

It was acknowledged that the present longstanding CEO would be leaving in April 2021 and the present longstanding Chair of the Board leaving in October 2021. With both longstanding offices changing in the same year members felt some certainty over the new Chair of the Board from next July would be useful.

It was agreed to recommend to the Board, subject to advice, that the election of the Chair of the Board designate, effective from July 2021 take place before the December 2020 Board meeting.

The Clerk advised Members that the Board would need to formally agree to an early election process for a Chair of the Board from July 2021, as the Instrument and Articles provide for this election to be carried out at the last meeting of the Board in the academic year. The Instrument and Articles were very clear on the point but it might be that, for the good reasons mentioned above and at this challenging time for the College, that on this occasion there would be scope for an early election and for consideration to be given to an extended period in the office of the Chair to provide continuity. This term could be 2 or 3 years. The Clerk confirmed she would be speaking to Eversheds to ensure that this proposal would stand scrutiny and would provide the advice at the Board meeting next week.

(It was noted that -it may be that the new Chair of the Board takes office from October 2021, if the Board extend the current Chair of the Board's term of office to October 2021, when his longstanding term of office as a Governor ends).

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There were no other recommendations from the committee to the Board, in relation to recommendations for other members whose terms of office were ending in year, but grateful thanks to them for their time on the Board.

The report was noted.

10. 2019/20 Attendance Report

Members had received the attendance report in relation to their attendance at Board and Committee meetings over the last year. Overall, the headline information was that the College target for attendance at Board meetings, had been exceeded. The current target attendance was noted as 75%, and Part I Board meetings stood at 85% and Part II Board meetings at 86%. Meetings via the virtual platforms, since March 2020, had been very well attended.

The report was noted.

11. Governor Appraisals 2020

The Chair of the Board confirmed he would start these appraisals when it was possible and safe to have face to face meetings. He did not want to conduct these on a virtual platform. It was likely that they would therefore take place in January or February 2021.

12. AoC Governance Briefings

The AoC briefings report was noted.

13. Evaluation

Members were pleased to complete an evaluation and confirm where they felt they had added value and made appropriate challenge.

Reports were considered complete and sufficient to inform decisions and enable recommendations to be made. Enough time was allowed for review and debate on agenda items.

Members felt they made appropriate challenge where relevant and they considered they had added value in relation to the agenda items particularly the summer marketing campaign and proposals in relation to some member's continued membership of the Board. On the last item there was a good and rigorous discussion.

14. Dates and times of Future Meetings

These were noted as:

Scheduled for 5.00pm on: Monday, 23 November
Wednesday, 10 February 2021
Wednesday, 2 June 2021

15. Any Urgent Business

There was no urgent business to raise.

The meeting ended at 7.05pm

Chair.....

Date.....