

TRAFFORD & STOCKPORT COLLEGE GROUP

**Minutes of the Search Committee
held on Monday 28 October 2024 at 10.00am via Microsoft Teams**

Present:	Graham Luccock Louise Richardson James Scott Graham Briscoe Sarah Drake Marcia Reynolds	(Chair) (Vice Chair) (Principal and CEO) (Co-opted Member)
In attendance:	Rebecca Clare Yvonne Riley	(Corporation Secretary) (Assistant Corporation Secretary)

Minute No**SEA/21/24 Election of Chair and Vice Chair of the Search Committee 2024/2026****Chair of the Search Committee for the Academic Years 2024/2026**

The Corporation Secretary (CS) sought nominations for the position of Chair of the Search Committee for the Academic Years 2024/2026.

Graham Luccock was the sole nomination, and it was unanimously resolved that he be re-elected to the position of the Chair of the Search Committee for the Academic Years 2024/2026.

Vice Chair of the Search Committee for the Academic Years 2024/2026

The Chair sought nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Search Committee for the Academic Years 2024/2026.

Louise Richardson was the sole nomination, and it was unanimously resolved that she be re-elected to the position of the Vice Chair of the Search Committee for the Academic Years 2024/2026.

SEA/22/24 Apologies for Absence

The Corporation Secretary (CS) reported that there were no apologies for absence.

SEA/23/24 Declarations of Interest**Action: Corporation Secretary**

A member (GB) advised that he had been appointed as an Independent Member of the Audit and Risk Committee at Monoux Sixth Form College North London and it was confirmed that the Register of Interest would be updated accordingly.

There were no other declarations of either direct or indirect interest in any of the items on the agenda.

SEA/24/24 Minutes of the Search Committee Meeting held on 19 June 2024

There were no issues raised by members and it was resolved that the minutes of the meeting be approved and accepted as a correct account of the meetings proceedings.

Minute No**SEA/25/24 Matters Arising from the Minutes**

The Chairperson referred members to the previously circulated summary and progress update concerning the actions arising from the minutes and earlier meetings of the Search Committee.

It was confirmed that all the actions had been closed.

The Chair of the Committee confirmed that mentor meetings with two current Members of the Board of the Corporation (OB and EM) had taken place to support succession planning.

There were no further issues raised by members arising from the minutes.

SEA/26/24 Board Membership Profile

The CS referred members to the previously circulated report and information in relation to the membership profile of the Board of the Corporation.

There was confirmation that the outcomes from the Individual Non-Executive Governor process were reviewed by the Committee on an annual basis, with a view to the Committee being informed on its decision making when considering and making recommendations in relation to appointments to the Board of the Corporation.

Members were referred to the accompanying information in relation to:

- Outcomes of the Skills Audit 2023-2024
- Ethnicity, Gender and Disability Profile
- Skills, Knowledge and Experience Register
- Terms of Office
- Committee Membership arrangements
- Annual Attendance Report

The following aspects and emerging themes from the information provided were highlighted:

- that 16 members had completed the skills audit arising from which no significant skills gap had been identified and further that it was considered there were appropriate skills to enable the Board to conduct its business effectively
- the areas identified within the audit as to where there was little, or no knowledge included Further Education Policy; Higher Education Curriculum and Policy; and Adult Education
- with respect to the areas identified it was considered that three Co-opted Members had been appointed to the HE Curriculum and Quality Committee (in addition to a HE Student Representative) to provide Higher Education expertise and that they also have experience of Adult Education
- knowledge brought to the Corporation for Further Education Curriculum was high and therefore Further Education Policy could be an area for future training development
- that the skills gaps for improving teaching, learning and assessment, Ofsted Inspection, Student Affairs, Employment Law, Estates matters, and Commercial Law are key skills that have been searched for through the governor recruitment campaign and are skills obtained by the applications received to date

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- that since the skills audit had been undertaken the Chair of the Audit Committee had resigned and this should be taken into consideration for future recruitment of governors and any future training needs
- the first training session of the academic year to focus on 'AI for TSCG and Alignment to JISC principles for the use of AI in FE Colleges' and the new 'Financial Handbook' and the second session of the academic year will focus on FE Policy and MIS/Curriculum Data
- it was noted that two Members had specifically requested AI training in the open comment section of the skills audit
- the gender, ethnicity and disability profile of the membership recognised that in recent years there had been a significant change to the profile. The Board of the Corporation profile was broadly in line with FE Governor Workforce data for disability and slightly higher for ethnic heritage. The Board of the Corporation currently has a higher percentage of females than males
- detailed information relating to all the Board members' profile including industrial and commercial experience, educational background and qualifications, key skills, and work within the local community was provided through the Skills, Knowledge and Experience Register
- a summary of the terms of office of the membership of the Board of the Corporation and an overview of committee membership was also included and will be considered under the next item on the agenda
- a copy of the Committee Membership was included for information
- annual governor attendance report was also included to support the next item on the agenda. It was noted that the overall attendance across all meetings was 81% and the mean average for the sector was 82%. Attendance across all committees was higher than the previous year, except for the HE Curriculum & Quality Committee but changes to membership were made in-year to support positive attendance
- a new calendar of meetings has been implemented for 2024/2025 to support governor engagement with members of staff and students (a recommendation from the Governance External Review) and a review will be undertaken of the success of this ahead of the meeting schedule for 2025/2026 being produced.

Questions and comments were invited from Members.

The Principal and CEO (PCEO) questioned whether Further Education Policy was a training need or a matter for Members of the Board of the Corporation to be informed of, due to the rapidly changing environment. The Corporation Secretary agreed that Further Education Policy was delivered through a number of mechanisms of reporting (such as the PCEO briefing on national, regional and local policy, the AoC Chief Executive Letter shared by the Corporation Secretary, governance updates and ad hoc briefings) in addition to matters considered at the Board of the Corporation and committees. The Corporation Secretary reported that this is also part of the Strategic Planning Day and the AoC are invited to provide the Board of the Corporation with an update on the sector from a local, regional and national perspective. Governors also attend relevant regional and national networks and training events to support their knowledge.

Action: Chair of the Search Committee/ Corporation Secretary

The Chair of the Seach Committee commented on the number of terms of office expiry dates in 2026 and it was agreed that the Chair and the CS would review the terms of office for current board members and recommend a plan to address the potential issue of multiple members' terms ending in 2026.

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Members were invited to review the current vacancies, of both independent and co-opted members, and to make proposals accordingly under the later agenda item.

There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that the position in respect of the Board Membership Profile be received and noted.

SEA/27/24 Governor Recruitment and Summary of Applications

The CS referred members to the previously circulated report and information in relation to the status of vacant positions (two independent members plus three current members for whom their term of office is due to expire in 2024 and committee vacancies) as well as a summary of applications.

In relation to governor recruitment the Corporation Secretary reported that there has been a strong and successful recruitment campaign that was focussed on the action from the Governance External Review to find individuals to support the delivery of the local and regional skills need. A range of recruitment methods have been used such as registering with local boards, contacting a range of local companies, direct approaches, registering vacancies with agencies such as Governor for Schools and our own website. The Corporation Secretary confirmed that she was particularly pleased that a number of the applications were former students or had links with TSCG and an action from the previous Search Committee was to grow our alumni to support governance.

The Corporation Secretary provided an update on each of the applications and suggested possible vacancies that each individual could fill.

A member questioned whether the applications received filled the current skills gap. The Corporation Secretary provided individual backgrounds and skillsets of each applicant and explained how each applicant fulfils the current skills gaps.

Action: Corporation Secretary

A member questioned whether all applications complete a letter of interest when applying for a vacancy. The Corporation Secretary explained this can be an action to take forward.

Action: Appointment Panel

The PCEO confirmed the need to explore the potential conflict of interest with CT around her employment with the DfE and her role as Team Leader for the Land Transaction Team. It was agreed that this will be explored further during her interview with the Appointment Panel.

With reference to the current member whose term of office was due to expire it was confirmed that JW had recently returned from a period of sabbatical and that he had indicated his preparedness to serve on the Audit Committee as a co-opted member. There was recognition of Jeremy's excellent skillset in leadership and people management, project management, financial analysis and accountancy.

A member questioned the attendance for JW, however with the background information provided the Search Committee supported JW moving to a co-opted member of the Audit Committee.

Minute No**Action: Corporation Secretary/Board of the Corporation**

Members of the Committee agreed that it be recommended to the Board of the Corporation that JW be appointed as co-opted member of the Audit Committee for a four-year term of office.

With reference to the current member whose term of office was due to expire it was confirmed that AH had indicated her preparedness to serve a further term of office. There was recognition of the excellent contribution of AH as both a governor and Vice Chair of the Resources Committee, as well as her experience/skills in strategic leadership, transformation and improvement, public sector regimes, financial management, risk and audit, chairing skills and governance.

Action: Corporation Secretary/Board of the Corporation

Members of the Committee agreed that it be recommended to the Board of the Corporation that AH be appointed to a further four-year term of office.

With reference to the current member whose term of office was due to expire it was confirmed that HL had indicated her preparedness to serve a further term of office. There was recognition of the excellent contribution of HL as both a governor and Vice Chair of the Audit Committee, as well as her experience/skills and her intention to stand as Chair of the Audit Committee following the recent resignation of the current chair. HL skillset included governance, internal controls and risk management, internal and external audit, data protection and financial management and analysis.

Action: Corporation Secretary/Board of the Corporation

Members of the Committee agreed that it be recommended to the Board of the Corporation that HL be appointed to a further four-year term of office.

Consideration followed in relation to the current Committee vacancies and the following was recorded:

- **Audit Committee** (1 co-opted member)

The CS confirmed that there was currently one co-opted member vacancy on the Committee, and it was reported that this would be filled through the appointment of JW.

The following committee vacancies would be filled through the Appointment Panel process following successful interviews:

- **Audit Committee** (1 Independent member of the Board of the Corporation)
- **Resources Committee** (1 independent member of the Board of the Corporation)
- **FE Curriculum and Quality Committee** (1 co-opted member)

Student Governor Election

The CS reported on the outcomes of the recent Student Governor election which had been carried out consistent with the Student Governor Appointment Process. There was confirmation that Aisha Shabbir had been elected as Student Governor and that Miracle Mbokela and Jaisha Nehal as Deputy Student Governors.

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There was also confirmation that Blerta Shira would continue in her role as Student Governor.

It was further advised that the duration of the Student Member period of office would be until they conclude their studies at the Group.

There were no further questions or issues raised by members and following due consideration it was resolved that:

- a) the application to appoint JW as a co-opted member of the Audit Committee for a term of office, from 2024 until 2028, (JW) be recommended to the Board of the Corporation for approval;
- b) the application of an extension to a further four-year term of office, until 2028, from the current Board members (AH and HL) be recommended to the Board of the Corporation for approval;
- c) that the five external candidates, in relation to the three current vacancies of the Board of the Corporation and co-opted vacancy on the FE Curriculum and Quality Committee be invited to meet with the Governor Appointments Panel with a view to the Panel making an appropriate recommendation concerning the candidate's appointment to the Board of the Corporation;
- d) the vacancy on the Resources Committee would be filled by one of the new appointments.

SEA/28/24 Annual Governance and Governance Professionals Training and Development Report

The CS referred members to the previously circulated report and information in relation to the training and development undertaken by members of the Board of the Corporation during the previous academic year.

It was noted that there was a statutory requirement placed on Further Education Boards by the Department for Education (DFE) to record a statement in their Annual Report on the in-year training and development of members and governance professionals. There was confirmation that this was evidenced within the Annual Report and would be commended to the Board of the Corporation for approval at its meeting in December 2024.

It was further reported that the requirement states that there must be reference to the Board's learning and development policy and a brief explanation of the learning activities undertaken in the year indicating how they had benefited or were likely to benefit governance performance.

Members were referred to the overview of governor training undertaken and the appended detailed information which included an assessment of the impact of the training. Members noted the inclusion of information in relation to Governor inductions/insight training.

The CS confirmed that there had been a high level of commitment to governor training with 20 internal training events with a cumulative attendance of 91 members and 18 external events with a cumulative attendance of 31 members, presenting an in-year total of 38 events with a cumulative attendance of 114 members.

It was noted that, in addition, governors undertake mandatory Level 2 safeguarding training, accessed for the first time using the iHASCO platform and that they also confirmed that they had read the Keeping Children Safe in Education Guidance (Part 1) and the Child

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Protection and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy 2024/2025. The Corporation Secretary confirmed that the use of iHASCO had proved successful and the positive steps to utilise platforms that were already being used by the Group. It was also noted that a number of forms had been changed to Microsoft Forms and this had supported compliance and ease for governors but also utilised the use of AI in creating the forms and improving processes.

It was also noted that members of the Board of the Corporation regularly receive the following information:

- Association of Colleges (AoC) Chief Executive's Letter and relevant AoC Bulletins
- Client Briefings from Internal Auditors as appropriate
- Other publications as appropriate e.g. legal briefings by Eversheds, Department for Education updates etc
- All staff Briefing for local updating

The CS added that the report also included information in relation to the current position appertaining to the Governance Professionals in terms of experience and specialist governance qualifications as well as the training engaged in over the course of the 2023/2024 academic year. It was noted that the Board of the Corporation is served by two Governance Professionals: the Corporation Secretary and the Assistant Corporation Secretary.

Questions and comments were invited from members.

A member questioned in relation to the Governance Insight Activities and whether the information was shared any wider. The Corporation Secretary confirmed that the information supported the capturing of evidence of training within the Financial Statements. The insight activities provided a detailed and wide-ranging record of the training completed and the visibility of governors across the Group both internally and externally including support at events. The Corporation Secretary confirmed that the Governance Team reminded governors on a regular basis to let them know of any training or events that they have attended to ensure that the record is as accurate as possible.

SEA/29/24 Any Other Business

There were no matters raised under any other business.

SEA/30/24 Date of the Next Meeting

The CS reported that the meeting of the Search Committee had been convened due to the number of current vacancies and that all of the items due to be presented to the Committee in January had been covered as part of the agenda to support the appointment process.

Following consideration, it was agreed that the next meeting scheduled to take place on 22 January 2025 would be cancelled.

It was noted that should a meeting be required before then to support any potential further recruitment, an additional meeting would be convened accordingly.

Action: Corporation Secretary

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The meeting closed at 10:46 am.