

Minutes of the Meeting of the Governance, Search and Strategy Committee

held at 8.30 am on Wednesday 5 February 2025

In the Banks Room, Spring Grove House

Present: Mr S McGeoch (SM) Chair
Ms T Aust (TA) Principal
Ms R Turner (RT)
Mr S Taylor (ST)
Mr P Sullivan (PS)
Mr A Rides (AR)

In Attendance: Ms K Frost (KF) Head of Governance

1/25 **Welcome and Apologies**

PS took the Chair and welcomed everyone to the meeting. There were no apologies for absence. It was noted that SM was running late.

It was confirmed the meeting was quorate.

2/25 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest relating to the items on the agenda.

3/25 **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

Minutes from the meeting of the committee held on 22 May 2024 (Paper 3) had been received in advance.

IT WAS DECIDED the minutes were a true record of the meeting and they were approved.

4/25 **Matters Arising**

An update on progress towards the actions from the last meeting was received in advance of the meeting. It was noted that all of the actions had been completed.

5/25 **Risk Management**

A 'Risk Register Extract GSSC' (Paper 5) was received in advance of the meeting. No changes had been made since the Committee had last met.

Governors discussed whether to increase the impact score for Business Continuity but after discussion agreed to leave the scores as they were.

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Governors discussed risks relating to the right selection of a new CEO/Principal. IT WAS DECIDED to add an additional risk to the risk register relating to the recruitment and retention of members of the Executive Team.

Action: MC

SM joined the meeting.

Governors asked why the Committee had oversight of Risk 20 'Competition for students' and whether it would be better under the oversight of the CQSE Committee. IT WAS DECIDED the risk would be moved to the CQSE Committee.

Action: MC

6/25 **Governance**

a) **Corporation Membership and Succession Planning**

'Corporation Membership and Succession Planning' (Paper 6a) was received in advance of the meeting.

It was noted that SM's term of office was due to end on 31 July 2025. SM had expressed a willingness to stand again and as SM had only completed 1 term of 3 years, the Corporation would be able to appoint him for another term.

Charanjit Ajit Singh and John Bolt's terms of office were due to end on 31 July 2025. It was agreed KF would approach both to ask if they would be prepared to stand for a further year as Associate Members.

Action: KF

b) **Governance Report**

The 'Governance Report' (Paper 6b) was received in advance of the meeting. The following points were noted:

- Governor Attendance Data: There had been an overall increase in attendance to 79.8%. There were no issues or concerns.
- Register of Interests 2024: The updated Register of Interests had been included in the report. There were no concerns.
- Training Plan 2024-25: The proposed governors briefing sessions were listed in the report.

c) **Governance Self-Assessment Process 2024-25**

'The proposed Governance Self-Assessment Process 2024-2025' (Paper 6c) was received in advance of the meeting.

It was noted that there were two new elements to the governance self-assessment process this year: a questionnaire to be completed by members of the Executive Team and a review of the Chair's performance. It was also noted that the form of the Board Effectiveness Review (Appendix 1 to the paper) was changed from the prior year, which Governors indicated was an improvement.,

Governors suggested the following amendments:

- Skills Audit: Add in legal experience/knowledge.
- KPIs: Amend the wording in two areas to provide more clarity.

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After making these amendments IT WAS DECIDED to approve the Governance Self-Assessment Process 2024-25.

The Head of Governance reported that the Corporation would need to arrange an External Review of Governance next academic year. IT WAS DECIDED in the first instance to approach Fiona Chalk to see if she would be available to carry out the review.

Action: KF

d) Review of the Instrument and Articles

A draft 'Instrument and Articles of Government 2024-2025' (Paper 6d) was received in advance of the meeting.

It was agreed that PS/KF would meet to go through the Instrument and Articles in detail and bring a proposal back to the next meeting.

Action: KF/PS

The Committee discussed the process of appointing governors. It was suggested the appointment of a recruitment panel could be delegated to the Chair, CEO/Principal and Head of Governance on behalf of the Governance, Search and Strategy Committee. This would only apply for the recruitment of governors; a Corporation decision would be required to appoint a Panel for the recruitment of the CEO/Principal or a Senior Postholder.

The Committee discussed whether there would be any value in appointing a Parent Governor to the Board. As such a large number of learners in the College were adults it was agreed not to appoint a Parent Governor at this stage.

e) Governance Documents

A draft 'Governance Handbook' (Paper 6e) was received in advance of the meeting.

It was agreed that PS/KF would meet to go through the Governance Handbook in detail and bring a proposal back to the next meeting.

Action: KF/PS

SM took the Chair

f) Governance Action Plan

An update on progress towards the Governance Action Plan was received in advance of the meeting. The Chair summarised progress towards some of the actions:

- Action 3 Generative Governance: A discussion took place regarding the potential transition to full generative governance. It was agreed that the current governance structure was functioning effectively, and there was no immediate need for changes. The implementation of full generative governance would require significant modifications, and after careful consideration, it was decided to maintain the existing governance structure.
- Action 6 Social Engagement: It was agreed to move this action to green due to the actions that had been taken.
- Action 8 Internal Informal Stakeholder Engagement: The action had been moved to green due to the activities in place in this area.
- Action 17 Governor Training: Governor training sessions were in the process of being arranged. There was a good coverage of sessions and so far had been interesting. It was suggested these should continue and that future topics could include ESOL and the Creative Subjects.

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Governors asked whether more student input from students was needed for the development of the new strategy. The CEO confirmed that students were being involved in the development of the new strategy. They would be asked to complete a questionnaire and there had been some discussions about the strategy at a recent ET+ Student Voice group meeting. RT reported that she had attended the ET+ Student Voice meeting and had written a report from the meeting which would be going to the next CQSE meeting.

Committee members discussed Action 16 Code of Governance and whether to pursue accreditations in EDI, Investors in People and Environmental Sustainability. It was noted that the College had achieved the Good Work Standard. It was agreed that the Executive Team would develop a proposal about which accreditations to pursue for the Committee to discuss at the next meeting. An additional accreditation, to consider is the AoC SEND Charter.

Action: TA/MC

g) **Use of College Emails**

It was agreed to ask governors to use their College email addresses for governing body business from the beginning of the summer term.

7/25 **Strategy**

a) **Skills and Logistics Centre Lease**

MC provided a summary of the background regarding the Skills and Logistics Centre Lease. The lease was due to come to an end in August 2026 and so action was needed to address this.

Reasons to keep the site included: The Skills and Logistics Centre fulfilled an education and training need and provided a unique curriculum provision that catered to local needs. The location was important as travel-to-learn patterns showed there was less mobility in that area, there was also a disproportionate number of people in the area who didn't progress to Higher Education. Additionally, the site is close to Heathrow and the North Feltham Trading Estate. There might be opportunities to further develop the provision there, for example in green skills, Higher Education or further development of the logistics specialism.

The site would require further capital investment and absence of a long-term lease restricted the use of ESFA funding.

It was noted that moving the Skills and Logistics Centre to Isleworth would be problematic and was not viewed as a satisfactory solution.

The Executive Team's recommendation was for the College to retain the Skills and Logistics Centre but to ask for it to be exclusively for the College's use. The Committee fully supported this recommendation and agreed that the Executive Team would initiate negotiations with the London Borough of Hounslow to move the process forward.

Action: MC/TA

Governors said they would be concerned if there were any restrictions on developing the site in a future new agreement as this would be important to allow the College to pursue any new opportunities.

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Governors asked if the College would need to revert the building to its original state if they left the site. MC said there would be no need as the College had met all of the requirements of the original tenancy.

Governors said it would be important to recognise that the site needed an upgrade and so expenditure would be required to stay there, however it was noted that moving elsewhere would also involve costs.

Governors asked if a risk assessment had been completed for the presence of asbestos on the site. MC confirmed that a risk assessment was completed when the College first moved onto the site and the asbestos removal had been taken care of. Additionally, it was noted that Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete did not appear to be present.

It was agreed a verbal update on progress would be provided to the next meeting of the Finance, Resources and Capital Projects Committee and then at the next Corporation meeting.

It was noted that in the context of the strategic plan, clarity would be required on the lease at Feltham to allow further investment there and that negotiations should seek to secure that clarity, either way. If Feltham couldn't be secured in an investable form, the strategic plan would need to be modified to embody development of an alternative for current provision on that site, and growth thereof.

b) Strategic Plan: Relevant Headline Areas

Two documents: 'Strategy Day Priorities' and 'Themes from the Strategy Day' were received in advance of the meeting.

The Chair asked Committee members for their thoughts on the two main themes for the next Strategic Plan. Responses included:

- Maintaining a focus on the student experience which would include ensuring the curriculum remained relevant and positive destinations for students. It would be important not to lose sight of what the College was here to do.
- Preparing students for employment and focusing more on apprenticeships.
- Links with employers to enhance the student experience.
- Additional partnership arrangements.
- Digital strategy, digital skills and AI.
- Staff recruitment and retention.
- High needs. Supporting students with SEND to gain employment.
- Continued focus on ESOL.
- Maintaining an outstanding learning experience.
- A marketing and communications strategy would be important for a number of the pillars.

The Committee discussed the fact that sustainability hadn't appeared as a priority during the Strategy Day but noted that this may be because the starting point for the day was the College Vision which didn't include a statement about sustainability. It would be an area that the Corporation would want to include.

c) Strategic Plan: Next Steps

The Committee discussed the next steps in the development of the College's strategy. There was a conversation about the level of detail needed for the strategy

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document and whether to continue to include the level of information that was in the current strategy. A decision about this would need to be made.

The next step would be to ask each committee to consider the following pillars:

CQSE: Curriculum, Students, Employers and Partnerships.

FRCP: Staff, Facilities, Sustainability.

It was agreed that the Chair, in consultation with the CEO, would circulate a framework outlining the key timeline and considerations required for each committee.

Action: SM

The Committee emphasised the importance of being ambitious in this next stage of strategy development. While budget constraints should be considered later, the priority was to aim high and think expansively.

8/25 **Confidential Item**

A confidential item was discussed.

9/25 **Key Points from the Meeting**

It was agreed to bring the following points to the attention of the Corporation:

- Risk Management: A new risk would be added to the Risk Register concerning recruitment and retention of members of the Executive Team. Risk 20 'Competition for Students' would be moved to the CQSE Committee.
- Associate Members: John Bolt and Charanjit Ajit Singh would be asked if they would be prepared to stand for a further term as Associate Members.
- External Review: The next External Review of Governance was due to be held in summer 2026. The Head of Governance would approach Fiona Chalk in the first instance to ask if she would be willing to support the Corporation through the process.
- Annual Self-Assessment of Governance: The plans for the annual governance self-assessment were approved.
- Strategic Plan Development: The Committee received assurance that students were being involved in the development of the next Strategic Plan. The next step in the development of the plan was for Committees to look at each area in more detail.
- Governor Emails: Governors would be asked to use their College email addresses for College business from the beginning of the summer term.
- Skills and Logistics Centre Lease: The Committee had discussed the future of the Skills and Logistics centre, agreeing the intent was for the College to stay there, subject to negotiating a satisfactory arrangement. The Executive Team would open negotiations with the London Borough of Hounslow.
- CEO/Principal Recruitment: The Committee had agreed the recruitment process for the new CEO/Principal.

9/25 **Date of the Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting of the committee was 8.30am on Wednesday 21 May 2025.

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Summary of Actions

No.	Action	Lead	Target Date
5/25	Add a risk to the risk register relating to the recruitment and retention of members of the Executive Team.	MC	May 2025
5/25	Move oversight of Risk 20 'Competition for students' to the CQSE Committee.	MC	May 2025
6/25	Approach CAS and JB to ask if they would be prepared to stand for a further term as Associate Members.	KF	May 2025
6/25	Approach Fiona Chalk to ask if she would be willing to support the Corporation with the External Review of Governance in 2026.	KF	May 2025
6/25	Meet to go through the Instrument and Articles and Governance Documentation with a view to bringing a recommendation to the next meeting of the Committee.	KF/PS	May 2025
6/25	Put together a proposal about which accreditations to pursue.	TA/MC	May 2025
7/25	Initiate negotiations with the London Borough of Hounslow regarding the Skills and Logistics Centre lease.	MC/TA	March 2025
7/25	Circulate a framework outlining the key considerations for each committee to consider in their spring term meetings with regard to the development of the strategic plan.	SM	Feb 2025

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Date: