

**HARROW COLLEGE FURTHER EDUCATION CORPORATION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
SEARCH & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 3 JUNE 2009**

1. PRELIMINARY PROCEDURAL MATTERS

1.1 Attendance & Apologies for Absence

Membership: Mr P Harding (Chair)
Mr T Medhurst
Mr P O'Dwyer

In Attendance: Ms J Chaplin (Clerk)

1.2 Declarations of Interest

It was noted that Mr P O'Dwyer knew one of the Board member applicants, Councillor John Cowan.

1.3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12 November 2008 were confirmed as a correct record, and were signed by the Chair.

1.4 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

2 CORPORATION MEMBERSHIP

2.1 Membership Report

A report was received updating members on current and forthcoming Corporation vacancies; and presenting applications from candidates for consideration in order to make a recommendation to the Corporation regarding appointment.

Members were advised that to date there were currently four Corporation vacancies, three in the category of external member and one staff member vacancy following the resignation of the support staff governor in May. It was noted that a fifth vacancy would occur in July when the second staff member, the academic staff governor, retired and that the term of office of the two student members would expire at the end of the academic year.

It was reported that in respect of the:

2.1.1 Staff governor members, arrangements were underway for staff elections to take place to nominate successors.

- 2.1.2 Student members, elections were taking place in May so that two new student members would be in place by July 2009.
- 2.1.3 External member vacancies, website advertisements had been placed with two organisations, which had resulted in ten applications and a further application had resulted from a Harrow Council nomination. It was noted that after undertaking a reviewing and sifting process of all the applications received, four had been brought to the Committee for further consideration:
- Councillor John Cowan
 - Mr Steve Marsden
 - Mr Ketan Sheth
 - Mr Antonio Weiss

In considering the applications members were reminded of:

- 2.1.4 The need to take into account the skills and experience of the individuals and the degree to which these would complement those of the existing membership; and the diversity profile of the current board in the context of the College community.
- 2.1.5 The skills highlighted as desirable, following the last skills audit, to complement the current Corporation membership; audit/ finance/financial services, estates/property, law/ legal services; and marketing.
- 2.1.6 The Committee's decision at the June 2008 meeting, for the purposes of better succession planning, to make more use of the option contained in the committees' terms of reference for the co-option of external members on to committees .

The applications of the four candidates were considered and it was noted that:

- 2.1.7 Mr Sheth was a solicitor specialised in property law. His professional expertise and the strong community focus of his background as a school governor, trustee of a charity and a magistrate was recognised.
- 2.1.8 Councillor Cowan, the Harrow Council nominee, possessed a very strong financial background with a speciality in audit. It was further noted that he had his own well-established practice and was also a well known and well respected local councillor.
- 2.1.10 Mr Weiss was professionally involved in management consultancy, specialising in public sector change management; but his strong interest in education, particularly the curriculum and student issues, was acknowledged.
- 2.1.11 Mr Marsden had had an extensive management career, the last ten years of which as the manager of a global business, with significant experience in strategic consultancy specialising in the fields of remuneration and organisational effectiveness.

There was a discussion of:

2.1.12 The staff and student election processes.

2.1.13 The applications received and the four candidates in particular, about which it was noted that:

- Mr Sheth's legal skills and experience would complement the skills of the rest of the Board, replacing the legal dimension and bringing a community focus to the Board "lost" following the departures of Jayshree Radia and Marie Harrison.
- Councillor Cowan's overall financial and audit expertise would be of great value to the Corporation and would strengthen the audit committee membership.
- Whilst the skills of Mr Weiss were recognised, it was considered that the expertise he possessed was already adequately represented by other members currently on the Board. Acknowledging that Mr Weiss had the potential to be a strong candidate who, in time, could be a valuable addition to the Board, it was therefore suggested that in the meantime the appointment of Mr Weiss as a co-opted member to one of the Corporation's committees would be the most appropriate solution.
- The breadth of Mr Marsden's professional experience overall would be of great value to the Corporation, bringing to the Board experience from working in such a large and global business environment, from which strength could be brought to a number of the Corporation committees.

2.1.14 The skills and experience of the individuals, the skills and diversity profile of the current board in the context of the College community; and the degree to which the skills of the applicants put forward would complement those of the existing membership.

After consideration it was **RESOLVED** to:

2.1.14 **RECOMMEND** to the Corporation the **APPOINTMENT** of Mr Sheth, Councillor Cowan and Mr Marsden for a four-year term of office.

2.1.15 **RECOMMEND** to the Corporation the **APPOINTMENT** of Mr Antonio Weiss as a co-opted member to one of the Corporation's committees.

2.2 The Work of the Corporation: Developing the Strategic Focus

A report was received outlining proposals intended to develop further the future strategic focus of the Corporation to ensure that it remained fully prepared for the on-going changing post 16 education and training landscape.

Members were advised that the proposals concerned suggested changes to two areas of Corporation business:

- 2.2.12 Revisions to the Corporation committee structure to improve corporate decision making and develop further insights from learner experiences to inform future strategies through improved learner participation; and
- 2.2.13 The development of links between members and curriculum areas to extend members' knowledge of curriculum, business support and other areas of the College's operations and raise the profile of the Corporation by providing opportunities for staff and students to meet informally with governors.

With regard to the proposal to revise the Corporation committee structure it was reported that:

- 2.2.14 It was suggested, subject to the latest developments with the LSC halting capital projects pending further review, that the Property & Accommodation Committee had now substantially fulfilled its role and that it was appropriate for future business to be resumed by the Resources Committee.
- 2.2.15 It was proposed to introduce a new Committee, the Learner/Student Voice Committee, the formation of which was intended to improve corporate decision making through greater engagement of learners at a strategic level.

In respect of the development of more formal curriculum links with members it was noted:

- 2.2.5 That although opportunities existed for members to visit curriculum areas on an informal, ad hoc basis as part of on-going development, establishing formal links with curriculum areas, would have a number of benefits for individual members and the Board as a whole.

There was a discussion of the proposals and in particular:

- 2.2.16 The degree to which it was considered that the formation of a new committee would actually achieve the objectives stated in such a formal environment. It was noted that although the College actively engaged learners in college decision making through a variety of mechanisms, it was considered that such a committee would encourage rather than detract from learner participation. Members were further advised that there was a growing shift in the sector towards the inclusion of learner participation at all levels of the organisation.
- 2.2.17 The current committee structure and the balance of mandatory and optional committees; and the extent to which the optional committees remained strategically appropriate in assisting the Corporation in the fulfilment its responsibilities.
- 2.2.18 The potential for undertaking a complete review of the Corporation committee structure in advance of the next academic year.

After further consideration it was **RESOLVED** to:

2.2.8 **APPROVE** the proposals as outlined, subject to further discussion at the forthcoming Corporation meeting regarding the formation of formal, new Learner/Student Voice committee.

2.3 Corporation Residential: Evaluation

A report was received providing a brief evaluation of the Corporation's Annual Residential, which took place on 6-7 February 2009.

Members were advised that overall feedback suggested that:

2.3.12 Members had thought that the event lived up to their expectations and found it to be a valuable use of their time

2.3.13 There were a number of emerging themes

2.3.14 Feedback on the choice of venue had been mixed.

There was a discussion of the content of the event, which members considered to have been very informative and all those involved were thanked for their input.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED** to:

2.3.4 **NOTE** the report.

3 GOVERNANCE DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Governance Action Plan 2008/09: Update

A report was received updating members on progress in achieving the objectives for further developing good governance within the College, as set out in a governance development plan presented at the November 2008 meeting.

Members were reminded that the Plan set out objectives for governance development in three areas:

3.1.1 Governor recruitment

3.1.2 Support for members

3.1.3 Supporting strategic development

The progress to date made in most areas was noted and there was a discussion of the statistics for participation in the Corporation residential.

After consideration it was **RESOLVED** to:

3.1.1 **NOTE** the report.

3.2 LSIS 2009 Governance Conference

A report was received providing members with a summary of the Learning & Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) Governance Conference that took place in March 2009.

It was noted that the theme of the conference had been Stepping up to self-regulation and that although a number of themes had emerged from the conference the topic of most prominence had been the effect of the delayed capital build projects on colleges.

After discussion it was **RESOLVED** to:

3.2.1 **NOTE** the report.

3.3 Members' Handbook

A report was received outlining revisions made to the Governors' Handbook, which had been reviewed and updated.

Members were advised that in its original format it was a loose leaf A4 binder. It was reported that in its revised format, it was intended for the Handbook to be A5 diary size with an accompanying CD, containing the full versions of all the key documents that governors need to have, hopefully making it a much more manageable document and a departure from overwhelming volumes of paper.

It was noted that it was intended for the handbook to be published for the new academic year and for it to be reviewed annually; with any changes of any real importance after the date of publication to be covered with separate updates as and when necessary and for newly published (non confidential) documents to be added to the College website.

There was a discussion of the contents of the handbook and in particular:

3.3.1 The content, the final version of which it was noted would include key facts and figures about the College.

3.3.2 The Glossary of terms, which it was agreed would be expanded to provide a brief explanation of each term.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

3.3.3 **NOTE** the Handbook as updated.

4 COMMITTEE BUSINESS

4.1 Proposed Amendments to the Committee's Terms of Reference

A report was received on proposed amendments to the Committee Terms of Reference.

Members were reminded that the Terms of Reference set out the remit and procedures to be followed by the Committee and that to ensure that the Terms of Reference remained in line with good practice it was necessary to periodically review them.

It was reported that the Term of Reference were last reviewed in response to the publication of the amended Instrument & Articles of Government on 1 January 2008, following which amendments were proposed to ensure that the Corporation remained compliant with the Statutory Instrument.

It was noted that no further amendments are currently proposed with the exception of the inclusion of a reference to the appointment of a Chair *and Vice Chair* of the Committee.

After consideration it was **RESOLVED** to:

4.2.1 **NOTE** the report.

4.2.2 **RECOMMEND** to the Corporation the approval of the Committee's Terms of Reference as amended

5 ANY OTHER BUSINESS & MEETING EVALUATION

5.1 Any other business

No other business was raised.

5.2 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 11 November 2009 @ 5.30pm

5.3 Meeting Evaluation

Members completed the meeting evaluation forms and the meeting closed.