

Minutes of the Meeting of the Search and Governance Committee held on Monday 5th October 2015, 6.00pm The Conference Room, Prior Pursglove College

Present: Mr C Groves (Chair), Mrs N Crombie

In Attendance: Mrs E Grove (Clerk)

Meeting quorate

67% attendance rate

1) **Apologies for Absence**

Mrs Burton

2) **Minutes of the Meeting of Wednesday 15th April 2015**

The minutes were agreed and signed as a true record.

3) **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

4) **Vacancies and Size of Corporation**

The paper sent with the agenda was discussed in the context of the latest skills audit, the merger consultation, skills gaps and expertise on Prior's and Stockton Sixth Form College's (SSFC) governing bodies, and risks of not having a quorum at Corporation meetings at such a crucial time. In terms of the skills mix, the areas considered to need strengthening were finance, audit and child protection/safeguarding. Governors were reminded that Mr Pearce, external co-optee to the audit committee had a financial background and that Mr Bird who had just been appointed to that committee had risk management expertise.

Mrs Crombie advised that she had a good understanding of child protection matters and would be willing to link with that area once the nature of the role had been agreed by the Corporation.

Discussion moved on to the possibilities of sharing governor expertise with SSFC.

After further discussion it was agreed to recommend to the Corporation that current vacancies should not be filled and that the number of independent members be reduced to five giving a Corporation of fifteen and quorum of six. This recommendation to be made on the understanding that should the balance of skills change consideration should be given to filling the gap and increasing the number of independent members.

It was also proposed that the Chair of the Corporation be asked to stress to governors the need to make every effort to attend meetings to ensure a quorum at such an important time.

5) **Governors' Self-assessment**

5.1) **2103-14 Action Plan Progress Report**: A paper setting out governor attendance at training and other activities was tabled. Progress with the plan was discussed with particular focus on governor attendance rates and the significant change in the role of governors over the last year. It was considered that there had been good progress against action points.

5.2) **2014-15 Review of Questionnaire Responses**: A paper was tabled setting out findings from governor reviews. These were considered alongside the papers sent with the agenda. Governors commented that they had found the one to one reviews helpful. The summary of responses to the questionnaire, were extensively discussed. It was noted that the majority of questions had been graded 'highly effective or effective/average'. The responses 'less than effective' were discussed in detail together with the general comments from a minority of governors that there was limited opportunity to discuss matters without the presence of the Senior Leadership Team.

The difficulty of addressing diversity within the governing body was discussed. It was felt that this could be a topic for external input but should be deferred until the outcome of merger consultation was known.

Strengths and weaknesses were discussed and it was agreed that a draft action plan should be drawn up to put to the Corporation and the plan should include training and development needs for the whole board. Individual training plans should also be drawn up.

It was noted that the last Resources Committee had been cancelled due to lack of quorum and in consequence the review of committee effectiveness had not been undertaken. One completed questionnaire had been received to date.

5.3) Search and Governance Committee Review: The questionnaire sent with the agenda was completed. It was considered that the committee needed wider membership and this was cross referenced to individual governors' interest in joining committees. Mrs Grove was asked to follow this up.

6) **Any Other Business**

There was no other business.

7) **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

This was confirmed as Wednesday 9th March 2016 starting at 6.00pm.

8) **Publication of Documents**

8.1) 2014-15 Confidential Documents: It was noted that no documents had been withheld on the grounds of confidentiality.

8.2) Publication of Meeting Documents: It was agreed to publish the signed minutes. It was further agreed that the papers relating to Agenda Item 6 should be published after the matter had been considered by the Corporation.

The meeting closed at 7.27pm.