

MOULTON COLLEGE

SEARCH AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 21st April 2021 via Teams

Present: Mr D McVean (in the Chair), Mr C Matts, Mr A Clarkson, Mrs C Harris, Mr T Neville OBE and Mr A Thomson

In attendance: Mrs P Odulinski and Mrs G M Hulley

21/11 Apologies for absence (Agenda item 1)

There were no apologies for absence.

21/12 Declarations of interest (Agenda item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

21/13 Minutes of the last meeting (Agenda item 3, Paper A)

The minutes of the meeting held on the 25th February 2021 had been circulated previously. The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

21/14 Actions outstanding (Agenda item 4, Paper B)

Action 27: A set of metrics to underpin the delivery of the Strategic Plan would be completed by summer 2021. The Committee agreed this would be a more proactive approach than a remit statement which had been proposed previously. (Closed)

All other actions were progressing according to agreed timelines.

Mr A Clarkson joined the meeting during the next agenda item.

21/15 Governance review March 2021 (Agenda item 5, Paper C)

Pauline Odulinski was welcomed to the meeting and was invited to present the key points from her report.

The review of governance had provided an opportunity to fully appreciate the journey that Moulton College and its Corporation had completed during the last 12-18 months. The feedback would concentrate on points that would add further value to governance as well as suggestions which could complement a number of actions that were already planned. The report included a number of recommendations which would benefit from being prioritised into a series of short, medium, and long-term actions.

- The new Strategic Plan 2020-30 offered an opportunity for the Board to agree its unique selling point (USP) and how to capitalise on this in terms of focus and competition elsewhere in the market. Governors should be mindful that this may change as the plan progressed.
- A strong presence was needed with employers and businesses. This was in terms of having a clear understanding of who the stakeholders were and how the Board wished to engage with them. Benefits of this included being able to demonstrate the ability to triangulate information received from the Executive; and, using existing skills and expertise of members in order to be more proactive ambassadors in the various business sectors. This was particularly true in view of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc which was the Government's long-term vision to secure sustainable growth and prosperity for all (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, February 2021). There was

also an opportunity to revisit the Strategic Plan to gain clarity about the College's position in relation to the local, regional, national and global market.

- The report confirmed that the current Board was highly skilled, able and experienced. Consideration needed to be given in the medium- and long-term to the role for governors and any further skill requirements. This included:
 - Succession planning and the membership of the Board. This was presented in the context of agreeing Moulton's USP and direction with the strategy. What skills would be required in governors in order to capitalise on the growing markets identified previously?
 - The production of a stakeholder engagement strategy for governance that included details for building on further engagement with students through observations and learning walks. This would also provide evidence of impact.
 - A greater focus on strategic conversations which could be helped further with the reports that were presented to meetings. Further clarity was required around expectations for reporting with a greater focus on impact.

The Committee welcomed the recommendations from the report and were in agreement with the points made. These would be used to inform a wider discussion about actions to be taken and recommendations to the Corporation. The report would form the basis of the programme for the Governor Development Day on the 29th April 2021. Additional points to note by the Committee included:

- A commitment to ensuring that governors' attention was focused correctly. Further work was required on the cover sheets to ensure they focused on intent; implementation; and; impact.
- A key question for the Corporation was what does governance in the 21st century look like?
- As part of the strategic conversations, to revisit the curriculum offer to ensure it was fit for purpose. Student experience was paramount and in addition to ensuring the offer was of a high quality, the College was also preparing students for a global market. Consideration should be given to gathering feedback from heads of school; alumni; and, using evidence from learning walks.
- In a wider discussion around the College's USP, members highlighted the contribution that the College's offer and services could add to its local communities by adding value by anticipating the needs of the region. There was also great potential in exploring opportunities from the international market in terms of face to face and online learning. The Principal outlined some of the actions already being taken to address some of these points in the short-, medium- and long-term.
- Future changes should also be viewed through a political lens, for example, implications for the sector resulting from the Augar review. Engagement with employers needed to be taken in the context of what the political landscape would be over the next 3 or 4 years.

In terms of next steps, the Committee agreed:

- To recommend the report to the Corporation. The Governor Development Day would be used for the whole Corporation to start a conversation about what it needed to do differently.
- That an action plan would be prepared by Pauline Odulinski and shared with the Corporation once completed. The Search and Governance Committee would monitor progress at each of its meetings.

- To recommend to the Corporation that Pauline Odulinski should be retained by the Corporation as an advisor. Her specific expertise and connections with the wider network would be invaluable to help the Corporation be more radical in its approach.
- To arrange a governor development session on risk for July 2021. The session should include an opportunity to review: current suitability of risks; components of a stakeholder engagement strategy for governors; the curriculum offer; and, succession planning. Thereafter, there would be an annual meeting which provide an end of year assessment for the Corporation to reflect on how risks were managed and agree actions for the following year.

Resolved: To receive the governance review report.

Pauline Odulinski left the meeting. Alastair Thomson left the meeting during the following agenda item.

21/16 **Governance 2020-21 (Agenda item 6, Paper D)**

The report provided an opportunity for the Committee to complete a mid-year review of governance performance indicators and the governor training plan.

- a. **Governance performance indicators:** The Clerk reported that good progress was being made with 18 of the 28 indicators already achieved. There were a small number of indicators where there had been some slippage. The Committee questioned whether the right things were being measured. Members agreed it would be helpful if the indicators provided those areas where governance had made a difference and where there had been improvements following contributions from governors. Further improvements for 2021-22 should include:
 - There was currently no review of staff or student opinion on how the Board performed. It would be important to demonstrate added value to students, staff and employers.
 - Impact from the governor link scheme and the use of governor champions for priority areas. A set of questions to ask students should be devised to support learning walks.
 - Exploring opportunities to report impact from individual governors to demonstrate contribution and whether any improvements are required. Chairs of Committees were asked to identify 1 or 2 objectives that they would focus on each year.
 - A scheme of delegation was needed to provide absolute clarity between committees and the Board.

- b. **Governor training and development plan:** The Clerk reported that good progress was being made but there had been a small amount of slippage with supporting individual requests for training. An analysis of the findings from the recent skills audit as well as the governance review reported on earlier had also identified additional needs to be factored into the plan. Feedback from the Committee included:
 - The skills audit had highlighted that there were some areas of the curriculum where governors self-assessed with a low rating. It was agreed that Heads of School should be invited to deliver training for governors so that collectively, they had a good understanding of the curriculum offer. The link governor scheme should also include the allocation of governors to curriculum areas. Each link governor and

Head of School would be required to deliver a joint presentation to the Corporation at one of its meetings during the year. This would also add to the Corporation's collective understanding of the curriculum.

- It was agreed that the new method for collecting ratings had provided a richness to the evidence base. The findings would contribute to the succession plan that would soon be produced and provide a timeline for areas where there were known gaps or the skills base needed extending, for example, educational specialists.
- The plan should be very clear about training that was mandatory (Safeguarding and Prevent; Equality, diversity and inclusion; Health and Safety) or specific to the needs of being a member of a committee (finance, audit).

Resolved: To receive the report on Governance 2020-21.

21/17 Governor Development Day (Agenda item 7, Paper E)

- a. Governor Development Day (February 2021) – Findings:** Feedback from the day had been very positive with an 81% response rate. The Committee received the report.
- b. Governor Development Day (April 2021) – Programme:** The Committee considered a draft programme which had been circulated previously. The programme followed a similar format to February's event. The focus of the day would be closely linked to recommendations from the Governance review including a workshop on the stakeholder engagement plan. A second workshop would explore equality, diversity and inclusion and ways in which it could be fully embedded in all aspects of the College. There would also be a workshop to explore the College's approach to higher education in terms of offer and potential partnership opportunities.

The Principal explained that she had been invited to join a roundtable discussion alongside 2 other FE Principals with the Secretary of State. The session was planned for the 4th May and the discussion would largely be focussed around two themes: 'How would education recover over the next 5 years?' and, 'What are the workforce implications?' It was agreed that both questions should be incorporated into the workshop discussions in order to provide a governor perspective for the Principal to take to the meeting. In a wider discussion around the inclusion of careers as a workshop theme, it was agreed that this should feature in the next event in October 2021. The Committee agreed with the proposed programme and that governors should be invited to identify in advance which workshop they would like to attend.

Resolved: To agree the programme for the Governor Development Day.

21/18 Any other business (Agenda item 8)

- a. Teams training:** The Clerk to arrange with relevant colleagues internally for Teams training for governors. The purpose of the training would be to make Teams more accessible for everyone (**Action 30** – Clerk).