

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SEARCH & GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
HELD: on Thursday 30 April 2026 at 17:00 in 4F07 DHB Boardroom

Present	In Attendance
John Williams (Chair)	Alina Khan (VPED&I) (Items 1-5) (via MS Teams)
Paul Birtles	Allison Booth (GD)
Chris Webb (CEO)	Rachel Henry (DGD)
Billy Khokhar	
Sharon West	
Bulbul Barrett (via MS Teams)	

The quorum was three committee members

L/J Denotes the time any individual left/ re-joined the meeting.

Item		Action / Report Item
1.	<u>Introductions, Apologies for Absence and Disclosures of Interest</u>	
1.1	The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
1.2	There were no apologies for absence.	
1.3	The CEO disclosed an interest in relation to agenda item 9.	
2.	<u>Chair's action</u>	
2.1	There had been no use of Chair's actions since the last meeting.	
3.	<u>Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2026</u>	
3.1	RESOLVED: The Minutes of the meetings held on 15 January including the confidential annex were approved as an accurate record and would be signed by the Chair.	
3.2	Q. Is it working well having a Safer Schools Police Officer on site two days a week? A. Yes, this is working well. The Police Officer spends time at the various campus sites and has delivered some safety sessions to students.	
4.	<u>Matters Arising</u>	
4.1	The Matters Arising Report was reviewed and it was noted that all matters were complete.	

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion		
5.	<u>Update on strategic objective – To become a truly inclusive College</u>	
5.1	The VPED&I provided an overview on the updated strategic objective – To become a truly inclusive College. The Chair highlighted that Governors had previously seen the Q2 update at the last Corporation meeting.	
5.2	The VPED&I advised that work was being undertaken to address how <i>cultural responsivity</i> in the curriculum is evidenced as part of the QER process. The key action following the second-term QERs was to deliver staff training to ensure all departments understand cultural responsivity and the QER expectations in this area. Work was ongoing in supporting staff on how to evidence this in planning through inclusive and universal design for learning approaches that show how the curriculum meets the needs of all learners. L/AK	
Effective Governance		
6.	<u>Strategic Planning Event</u>	
6.1	The GD asked members to consider the 2027 Strategic Planning Event in terms of venue, topics and potential speakers and requested that any suggestions be brought to the Extra S&G meeting in June, to allow time for the Governance Office to contact any external speakers in good time.	
7.	<u>Code of Good Governance Compliance Review 2025-26</u>	
7.1	The AoC Code Template had been periodically updated to show compliance against the requirements of the Code; this was routinely monitored by the Search and Governance Committee. Members reviewed the progress within the AoC Code Template and agreed that it was a comprehensive and thorough document and also acknowledged that the College was demonstrating good compliance with the Code.	
8.	<u>Governor Attendance</u>	
8.1	The Committee reviewed the attendance report provided, which gave a summary of attendance by Committee/ Corporation/ Individual. It was noted that the agreed target for governor attendance for 2025-26 was 75% and that the average overall attendance was reported to be currently at 80%.	

8.2	Members noted that attendance at Quality & Standards meetings was high and that attendance at Search & Governance meetings had room for improvement. Members had an in-depth discussion on the volume of meetings and the pressure this potentially placed on Governors with competing commitments. Members agreed consideration should be given to the voluntary nature of governance roles and the increasing scale, complexity, and accountability placed on Governors by Ofsted and the DfE. Options such as moving policy approvals to an online-only meeting were considered. Members emphasised the need to avoid lengthy meetings with overly complex agendas, while maintaining effective oversight and challenge. It was noted that the Schedule of Business drives both the number and timing of meetings, particularly around key approval points in the year. Members agreed that the GD, in consultation with the SLT, would review the Schedule, benchmark the number of meetings against other Colleges via the Clerk's network and explore possible options to streamline the meeting cycle. The resulting proposal would be brought to the next meeting. ACTION: The GD to review the Schedule of Business and bring back a proposal of possible options to streamline it.	GD
9. 9.1	<u>Succession Planning</u> <u>F&GP Committee vacancy</u> Following an advertising campaign in Autumn 2025, there had been two expressions of interest in the F&GP Member/ Independent Governor role. The S&G Committee had reviewed the submissions in January and had agreed that as neither candidate demonstrated having the desired experience in Human Resources / People Services / Employment Law, that the post be readvertised. This readvertisement was delayed while the GD, Chair and VPR&C gave consideration to an advertising campaign which would target specific demographics. In the interim, there had been another expression of interest submitted. The GD had an informal conversation with the potential candidate and in view of his HR experience, had encouraged him to apply for the role. Members considered the candidate's CV and cover letter submitted for the vacancy on the F&GP Committee and agreed to take the candidate to interview.	

9.2	ACTION: The GD to invite the candidate to interview.	GD
9.3	<u>Upcoming Remuneration Committee vacancy</u> The Committee discussed an expression of interest that had been submitted for the Remuneration Committee and agreed that the Chair and GD would have a discussion with the interested party.	
9.4	ACTION: The GD to arrange a meeting with the Chair, GD and interested party.	GD
9.5	Members also discussed the recruitment of an Independent Governor who would be representative of 'local employer voice'. The CEO suggested that work could be done to advertise amongst the employers that the College already works with and who are already engaged with, and invested in, students' lives. It was agreed that this be added to the succession plan.	
9.6	ACTION: The GD to add recruitment of an Independent Governor who would be representative of local employer voice to the succession plan.	GD
9.7	<u>Staff Governor vacancy</u> At the S&G Committee meeting in January, members had discussed how to better involve Student and Staff Governors both in the business of the meetings and how they could be encouraged to contribute effectively. Many options had been discussed, including the Chairs being more involved, allocating Student Governors to different Committees and considering a more robust induction process. Members had agreed to look at the possibility of widening the criteria for Student Governor eligibility and agreed that this should also be reviewed in relation to Staff Governors. The Committee had asked the GD to review the relevant governance documents to confirm current mandatory requirements and the scope for broadening the appointment process for Student and Staff Governors. The GD advised that the key Governance documents refer only to the criteria of Staff and Students should be selected from and do not specify any mandatory requirements. Members had an in-depth discussion on both Staff and Student Governor recruitment. Due to the increasing level of accountability being placed on Governing bodies and the fact that Governance was becoming more of a key focus for the regulators, it was agreed that	

9.8	the recruitment process for Staff Governors should be more robust; to strengthen transparency and governance practice, and to improve consistency. From an equality perspective, it was agreed that this process would be democratic, fair and would enable the Corporation to select the right candidate for the role. The Committee agreed that the Staff Governor appointment process should be brought into line with the process for the appointment of Independent Governors, with the previous peer-voting approach being replaced by an application and interview process. Members also agreed that consideration should also be given to allocating Staff and Student Governors on different Committees to ensure their involvement was well distributed, supporting balanced representation and a diversity of perspectives. ACTION: The GD to bring the appointment of Staff Governors in line with the process for the appointment of Independent Governors.	GD
10. 10.1 10.2	<u>External Board Review - Action Tracker</u> Members reviewed the External Board Review action tracker: Item 5 - would be completed in September 2026. Item 12 - it had been agreed not to use a summary report for the Risk Register, Data Dashboard and policies. Item 13 - would be addressed in the Summer. The GD had provided a report on the action to address <i>Engage Student Governors in all aspects of governance</i> and asked members to consider if they would like to see any further actions allocated to this recommendation. As Members had previously agreed how to address this action at the meetings in September and January, it was agreed that the action could now be closed.	
11. 11.1	<u>Governance Quality Improvement Plan Update</u> The Committee reviewed progress against the Governance QIP 2025-26. It was noted that that the QIP data was in a positive position and that good progress had been made across all areas. The GD advised that the QIP would continue to be updated with any further progress over the next few months. The GD requested that members consider items for inclusion on the Governance 2026-27 QIP.	
12.	<u>Governor effectiveness review – plan</u>	

12.1	The Committee reviewed the proposed plan for the review of governance effectiveness for 2025-26.	
12.2	Members agreed the plan, noting its compliance with the AoC Code. The GD advised that the level of training engagement remained high this year, with members attending 182 training courses to date. The Governor 1:1s had closely informed the training offered and 8 training/ development sessions had been attended by the Corporation so far in 2025-26; it was again acknowledged that this was a record high. Corporation Training and Development attendance was recognised as an area for improvement. This would be addressed by the GD and Chair.	
12.3	RECOMMENDATION: That the Governance effectiveness review plan for 2025-26 be recommended to the Corporation for approval.	
13.	<u>Scheme of Delegation</u>	
13.1	The GD had engaged the SLT to assist with the review of the Scheme of Delegation and various updates had been made. The Scheme of Delegation had been updated to reflect: • Removal of the Director of People Services role. • Incorporation of the new SPH role of Deputy Chief Executive Officer (Quality & Curriculum). • Change of title for the VPF&CS to Deputy Chief Executive Officer (Finance & Corporate Services). • Incorporation of the 3 new SPH Procedures that were approved by the Corporation in December 2025.	
13.2	RECOMMENDATION: That the Scheme of Delegation be recommended to Corporation for approval.	
14.	<u>Committee Self-assessment against Terms of Reference</u>	
14.1	Members considered the Committee Self-assessment against the Terms of Reference which had been reviewed by the GD. Members agreed that the Committee continued to perform well. There were no suggested changes to the Terms of Reference for 2025-26.	
14.2	RESOLVED: The Committee agreed that it had fulfilled its Terms of Reference in 2025-26.	

14.3	RECOMMENDATION: That the Corporation notes the Committee self-assessment.	
15.	<u>S&G Committee Schedule of Business for 2026-27</u>	
15.1	The Committee reviewed the Schedule of Business which covered each S&G meeting for the coming academic year. Proposed updates were: • The Corporation Training & Development sessions • The Corporation Strategic Conversation subjects and speakers	
15.2	Members agreed that the Search and Governance meetings in September and January would be scheduled at 16:00 going forward, to bring the timings in line with the other Committee and Corporation meetings.	
15.3	RESOLVED: That the schedule of business for 2026-27 is agreed.	
16.	<u>Corporation Draft Agendas (21 May & 9 July 2026)</u>	
16.1	Members considered the draft agendas for the May and July Corporation meetings. The Committee had previously agreed that the strategic discussion for the May Corporation meeting was to be 'The benefits and drawbacks of remunerating Governors'.	
17.	<u>Questionnaires Review</u>	
17.1	At the S&G meeting in September 2025, members had reviewed the Corporation and Individual Self-Assessment questionnaire results and had engaged in an in-depth discussion on the responses. It had been noted that the vast majority of scores and commentary provided were positive, although a number of the comments seemed to run counter to the high scores given. The GD had advised that in order to enable more actionable feedback and to gain longer term value from the outcomes of the assessments, the wording within the annual questionnaires would be refined. Actions taken: • To support effective follow-up and resolution of any issues raised, the Corporation self-assessment questionnaire would no longer be anonymous. Members who preferred to share comments anonymously would have the opportunity to do so through a separate, dedicated feedback form. • Repetition within the questionnaires had now been removed. • All questionnaires were now aligned with the ETF Chair and Governor Competency Framework.	

	• Consultation with the Clerk's Network had taken place to understand what other FE Colleges were reviewing in terms of questions and feedback. • Simplified response categories had been introduced to support more accurate interpretation and to enhance clarity. • All questionnaires and the 1:1 form had been updated to adopt a more values-focused approach. Members reviewed the revised questionnaires and agreed that they were much improved; now being more succinct and aligned with the ETF Frameworks. The GD advised that the questionnaires would be rolled out over the summer, with the feedback presented at the S&G Committee meeting in September.	
18.	<u>External Board Review- Procurement Exercise</u>	
18.1	The GD advised that a review of External Board Review providers would be conducted and the results would be presented at the Extra S&G Meeting for consideration.	
Policies		
19.	None	
Any Other Business		
20.	<u>Items for report to the Corporation</u>	
20.1	• Minutes of the meeting of 30 April 2026 • Governance effectiveness review • Scheme of Delegation • Committee Self-assessment against Terms of Reference	
21.	<u>Any other business</u>	
21.1	There was no other business.	
21.2	The Chair closed the meeting at 18:40.	
22.	<u>Meeting Evaluation</u>	
22.1	To be circulated by the Deputy Governance Director.	DGD

Approved by the Committee:

..... **J. Williams**
Signed by the Chair

..... **24.09.26**
Date

Agreed actions

No	Minute	Action	Who?
1	8.2	The GD to review the Schedule of Business and bring back a proposal of possible options to streamline it.	GD
2	9.2	The GD to invite the candidate to interview.	GD
3	9.4	The GD to arrange a meeting with the Chair, GD and interested party.	GD
4	9.6	The GD to add recruitment of an Independent Governor who would be representative of local employer voice to the succession plan.	GD
5	9.8	The GD to bring the appointment of Staff Governors in line with the process for the appointment of Independent Governors.	GD
6	22.1	Meeting Evaluation to be circulated by the Deputy Governance Director.	DGD