**Shenfield High School**

**Governing Body Strategy Meeting**

**Monday 24 January 2022**

**5pm – 5.58pm**

**The Boardroom**

**Present**

Jane Swettenham (JS) Chair

Carole Herman (CJH) Headteacher

David Churchill (DC) Parent Governor

Andy Williams (AW) Parent Governor

Clare Hoddy (CH) Governor

Karuna Shaunak Hobbs (KSH) Staff Governor

Lynn Smith (LS) Governor

Neil Purbrick (NP) Governor

Stuart Roberts (SR) Staff Governor

Julian Beard (JB) Governor

Katharine Boulton (KB) Governor / Scribe

**Apologies**

None

Vicki Noonan not present

**Welcome and introduction - JS**

JS welcomed 2 new appointees to the Governing Body – Lynn Smith and Clare Hoddy who were appointed by members in December.

Welcomed Governing Body to first Strategy Meeting in 2 years as last years cancelled due to the pandemic.

JS confirmed there was no fixed agenda for this meeting – the purpose was to discuss and agree the recruitment process the Governing Body would be adopting following CJH’s resignation.

The appointment of a new Headteacher is one of the most important and difficult tasks that any governing body will have to undertake. It is crucial that governors make the right decision for every child that is in the school, for every child that joins the school in the future and for staff. CJH is a long standing and exceptional Headteacher who would be extremely difficult to replace.

The Headteacher oversees the operational management of the school on a day to day basis and implements the values, ethos, culture and vision of the school set by governors The context of the school is crucial in this process and must be fully understood in the recruitment process. It is key that this is accurately conveyed when briefing the independent advisor who will be assisting us. The accuracy of the brief will be key so they understand who we want and what is best for the school.

The Governing Body need to think about the position of the school currently, the areas for development and the type of person they want to take that development forward.

**Timetable**

The timetable is tight if we want to have the widest pool of potential candidates as current Headteachers will need to give one term minimum notice. This means that the process needs to be concluded by 30 April at the absolute latest. This means advertising by the February Half Term at the latest.

The process we follow needs to be clear, transparent, inclusive and complies with the Equality Act 2010 under which our legal obligation is to ensure there is no discrimination against any protected characteristics. Governors all had information from JS in the past about the Equality Act.

**Process**

First step – appoint an independent advisor to support us in the process. This support and advice will be crucial and of tremendous value. JS ran through the options:

3 options

1. Independent education consultant with knowledge of the Essex context
2. Professional Body (ie ASCL / NAHT)
3. National Recruitment agency which we used last time

To assist with this, Leanne Hedden, previous Chair of Governors, has agreed to give us the benefit of her experience and advice, as she has experience from the previous recruitment exercise as one of the governors who led that process when CJH was appointed.

Independent Education Consultant (IEC)

CJH has been in preliminary contact with an education consultant. CJH will engage in the process at the beginning in terms of clarifying the school information and helping brief the IEC but will step away at the point of advertising.

CJH provided governors with a possible avenue of support they could pursue if they wished. CJH provided information about a consultant who works within Essex. She is a former Essex Headteacher who has been involved in many HT appointments (currently working with The Billericay School and previously Appleton School, Benfleet). CJH has known of her work. She understands the Essex context. Advantages are she is very professional, has a good working knowledge of the Essex context and has experience of recruiting for similar roles. She would have access to colleagues who could work with her. She would be able to meet Governors this week to advise on what elements of support she can give and discuss remit for IEC. We need the widest possible field. Need to attract HT and DHT. The Advertisement should go out the week before half term. Her fees are competitive. The Essex consultant could provide references from a number of schools she has worked with. Suggested timetable:

7-11 February – advertise nationally (TES)

4 March – closing date for applications

4 weeks for short listing / interviews

30 April process concluded

Professional Body

DC - ASCL is the Association of School and College leaders. DC has worked with ASCL and has provided JS with information on their offering. This is similar to the IEC support. Again, an initial meeting to discuss then if we wanted to go ahead then a member of the ASCL team would be appointed to work with us.

Offer end to end service. They could meet virtually to discuss their offer with governors.

JS said we need to make the decision about the advisors this week so the deadline can be met to place the advertisement.

Recruitment Agency

JS - The third option would be to consider a national recruitment agency that specialises in the recruitment of senior leadership in education settings. Navigate were used for CJH’s recruitment. CJH confirmed her experience was good with them as a candidate. It was an exacting process. Her previous school were less successful with her replacement using them. However this was not due to any failure on Navigate’s part but a failure by governors to properly brief as they did not provide good intelligence about their school.

Questions:

JB – queried if Jo Wincott (independent advisor to Head’s Pay Committee) had been considered?

CJH – advised he had been at ASHE but was now working independently. He is the former professional officer at ASHE. If he were approached he would likely just refer the school onto ASHE as ASHE has a headteacher recruitment package. However ASHE are the organisation that will be employing CJH in September.

KB – felt his involvement could be a conflict of interest given his work with SHS to date in context of performance management

AW – felt at least two options needed to be reviewed by Governors before making an appointment.

SR – agreed and felt that given the high profile of the school there could be scrutiny of the process. Another option would be to look at managing ourselves which would be recorded as having been considered but not proceeded with as it was agreed that governors needed the support of a professional advisor.

AW – asked if CJH would be able to support the new HT when appointed which CJH confirmed she would

CJH – would be in place until 31 August but available for phone support after that.

DC – concerned with tight timescales. Has led HT recruitment previously and knows how crucial the independent adviser is.

SR – agreed and felt that good local, Essex knowledge maybe important here meaning perhaps either the IEC or professional body route were possibly the best. There will be scrutiny so a minimum of two introductory meetings this week should be arranged.

JS – confirmed a quick decision was needed as to independent advisor and decision making process could come under scrutiny but needs to be properly managed and we must consider the value for money as we are spending tax payers money, the transparency of the process and who was the best person for the role. Must be as a minimum virtual meetings with two potential advisors.

KSH – confirmed happy to help with the process on behalf of staff.

JS – welcomed this as input from staff was key.

Next Steps

JS to talk to Leanne Hedden and bring her into the process as LH had been involved in CJH’s recruitment.

JS to identify a small group of Governors to participate in the advisor selection meetings and set those meetings up.

Question: Did the Governing Body want to look at a national recruiter?

LS / AW – both felt this would be sensible

Decision: JS – to talk to Navigate having first spoken to LH to seek her view of them. JS to set up meetings with ASCL and the Educational consultant this week. Not sure if time will allow to bring in a third party (Navigate) for a meeting this week but would at least get details of their offer and fees.

**Job Description / Person specification**

CJH to initially develop these for the Governing Body

Person Spec to be developed not to exclude anyone – so not cover specific years of experience or number of schools but rather talk of “significant” SLT experience or “demonstrate involvement”

There is a point at which CJH will have to step back and cannot be involved further, as it would be inappropriate but she can help with the person spec and job advert and providing information to the appointed consultant.

SR has found some good exemplars of application packs.

**Governor Knowledge**

JS suggested all Governors to read:

* Department of Education 2017 Recruiting a Head Teacher
* NGA website 2020 Executive leader recruitment toolkit

**Budget**

£6,000 in budget for professional fees – SR confirmed but this is such an important decision.

Additional approval via Chair of Resources for fees in excess of that via Virement brought to Resources

**Interview Process**

CJH explained that this would be a 2 day process with various activities and panel interviews on a variety of different aspects of school leadership on day 1. Then you either take them all through or make the cut. Say shortlist of 6-8 then down to say 3 or 4 for the second day. Key Governors on the panel on the second day with assessor alongside. Second day normally a presentation followed by formal interview. FGB would then have to meet to ratify. Staff voice and student voice would be day 1.

External advisor will be key in honing relevant interview questions / assessment tasks

**Staff Engagement**

AW – felt current staff needed to feel the process was open and they could apply, that the school not just looking for an external candidate.

JS – clarified no assumptions had been made about internal or external hire. It will be an open transparent process.

**Contingency**

KSH – asked what would happen if no suitable candidate appointed? CH – noted it was hard to recruit heads currently. There is a diminishing pool of candidates who want headship.

JS/CJH acknowledged this was a concern but hoped there was plenty of time to make an appointment before CJH left. Governing Body would step up and current DHT could be asked to fulfill role in the event no appointment was made and readvertising was necessary.

LS made the point that it would be important to manage staff who may be unsettled by the process. Acknowledged they would be supported.

**Shortlist**

Consultant would help advise on shortlist process – for example, possible scoring system of essential / desirable requirements.

DC - said the consultant will also advise on feedback to unsuccessful candidates, as better coming from fellow educational professional useful especially for any internal candidates.

Question:

LS asked whether either DHT had expressed an interest?

CJH – felt they were awaiting job description and person spec

**Regional Schools Commissioner notification**

Academies Handbook page 19 1.36 Departure of the Senior executive leader

Action: JS to notify RSC of CJH resignation and plan for recruitment of replacement.

**Next Steps:**

* CJH to draft initial job description / person specification
* JS to engage with Leanne Hedden for advice
* JS to notify Regional Schools Commissioner of resignation and recruitment
* JS to identify key Governors to manage appointment of external advisor
* JS to set up meetings this week with Sarah Dignasse (IEC) and ASCL as potential external advisers
* JS to request information from Navigate re fees and their offer (and possible meeting if time allowed)

JS thanked everyone for their time, their questions and would keep governors updated. JB thanked JS for work to date

Meeting closed – 5.58pm