

# EXTERNAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW RECOMMENDATION AND RESPONSES

## Recommendations

That the Governing Body

1. Asks authors of papers to provide simple explanations of complex, technical matters.

This is probably best done verbally at the meeting. Authors should consider whether information they are sharing is accessible to the “lay person” and provide suitable guidance.

2. Ensures that the purpose of an agenda item is clearly stated on the agenda.

This can be marked on the Agenda for the meeting.

3. Invites college managers other than SLT to provide briefings on their areas to assist the board in understanding the operation of the college.

Other college managers are (as and when appropriate) invited to meetings. This is perhaps an area we should look at how to improve. SLT will consider compiling a list of suitable areas to consider .

4. Introduces an annual, formal election of chair and vice-chair which is minuted.

The appointment of Chair and Vice Chair are agenda items for the Autumn Term Governing Body meeting and is minuted accordingly. The Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs are appointed at the Summer Term Governing Body meeting and is minuted accordingly.

5. Develops a schedule for link governors to report to the board together with a simple, agreed format for the reports.

There's a trade off between areas of interest/expertise and rotation; natural wastage allows this to happen. This will be discussed with link governors to agree a way forward. The Principal will design a simple template that can be used for link governors to record and comment upon their visit and experience

6. Formally considers the high level of reserves held by the college.

The financial position of the college is carefully reviewed when the budget is set each year. This could be broadened out to be a specific item of the annual governor training that considers the emerging opportunities and risk each year to gauge appetite for any large-scale investment. The options considered around financing the new building completed in 2024 is a good example of how this works in practice.

7. Establishes a Governance Committee to review the performance of the governing body, search for new members and work to ensure that the board reflects the wider community whilst maintaining an appropriate skill set.

The Chair, Principal and Clerk review the Governors Annual Self assessment and respond to the points raised. They also review the vacancies on the Governing Body. It is difficult to recruit new

governors, particularly Foundation Governors. The college will undertake a Skills Analysis in the Spring Term to identify areas where there is a skills shortage e.g. financial expertise.

8. Develops a succession plan for when the current chair decides to retire from office.

The Chair is actively developing a succession plan for when he retires.

9. Introduces a formal induction programme for new governors.

A meeting will be arranged with the newly appointed Governors to see what they feel should be included in an induction programme.

10. The meeting of the full governing body is supplied with a bullet point list of matters arising from the committees.

The Chairs of the various committees report at the Governing Body meeting on the key areas that have been agreed at the committee meetings. The minutes from the committee meetings are also submitted to the Governing Body meeting.

11. Receives an annual report based on the staff climate survey which is used to inform future actions.

A summary of the staff climate survey can be provided for Governors discussion.

12. Establishes a similar report based on student perceptions of their experience at Aquinas College.

A summary of the data collected in relation to students` can be provided for Governors.

# EXTERNAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW

## ACTION PLAN

The Governing Body at its meeting on 25 March 2025 received the report from Mr R Peacock following his review of Governance at the college. It also considered the points submitted by the college in its response and agreed that an Action Plan be drawn up.

The Chairperson, Principal and Clerk to the Governors at their half termly meetings considered how best to move forward. It was agreed that a draft action Plan be drawn up but before implementation it would be discussed with the new Principal once she was in post.

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Action on the points raised by Mr Peacock in his report as follows:

1. This is probably best done verbally at the meeting. Authors of the reports to attend either Governing Body or committee meetings to explain their report to Governors.
2. The purpose of an agenda item to be clearly stated on the agenda. Approval, noting or for information.
3. SLT members to attend meeting where appropriate. The Vice Principal, Assistant Principal (Finance), Assistant Principal (Curriculum) already attend. The Personnel Manager to attend the Employment Committee from the start of the 2025/2026 academic year. The Careers Manager to attend the General purposes Committee for the Annual Report on Student Destinations.
4. This already happens.
5. The Principal will design a simple template that can be used for link governors to record and comment upon their visit and experience.
6. The financial position of the college is carefully reviewed when the budget is set each year.
7. The college will undertake a Skills Analysis in the Autumn Term to identify areas where there is a skills shortage e.g. financial expertise.
8. The Chair is actively developing a succession plan for when he retires and it is hope that this can be implemented during the 2025/2026 academic year.
9. A meeting will be arranged with the newly appointed Governors to see what they feel should be included in an induction programme.
10. This is already covered by the minutes of the committees being submitted to the Governing Body and the Chair of each committee highlights the key issues.
11. A summary of the staff climate survey can be provided for Governors discussion.
12. Establishes a similar report based on student perceptions of their experience at Aquinas College. A summary of the data collected in relation to students' can be provided for Governors.