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REGIONAL BOARD REPORT

BORDERS COLLEGE REGIONAL BOARD

Subject: Report from Nominations Committee re Mentoring	**Purpose:** **For Approval** ☐ **For Discussion** ☐ **For Information** ☒
Prepared by: Ingrid Earp	**Date:** 22/2/22

Purpose: To provide Members with a report from the mentoring discussion which led from the Nominations Committee meeting.

Linked to Strategic Ambition: Take a leading role in enabling an inclusive, resilient and sustainable Scotland

Performance Measures: Recogise nationally as a progressive organisation

Linked to Strategic Risk Register: New Risk (outwith themes)

New Risk Commentary:

Executive Summary:

The subject of mentoring of new Board Members came up at the recent Nominations Committee meeting and it was agreed that a small group would meet to discuss our approach, experiences so far and any guidance we could give to mentors and mentees. David Peace, Nuala Broderick, Liz Parkes and Ingrid Earp met and the summary of the discussion is attached.

It was agreed a flexible approach is required and that the preferred learning methods of the mentee should be taken into account and no formal process needs to be in place at present. A key recommendation is that new Members should attend at least one of each of the Committee meetings when they join the Board. This would be with the aim of allowing Members to see the 'bigger picture' and how the work of the Committees complements each other and covers all aspects of Board business.

Recommendation: To note the report and give any feedback they may have.

Previous Committee Approvals: No

For publication ☒	**For publication with redactions** ☐	**Not for publication** ☐

Notes from Board Member Mentoring Discussion, 20 December 2021

Present: Liz Parkes, David Peace, Nuala Broderick and Ingrid Earp

Following on from the recent Nominations Committee meeting it was agreed that a small group should meet to discuss the approach we currently take to mentoring of Board Members and to identify any improvements that could be made.

What information would new Members find useful prior to beginning to work with their mentor?

As part of their induction Members should be made aware of how Boards work and in particular how our Board works, and that being a Board Member is a role that is one of strategic oversight and not overly concerned with operational matters. It is also important to remember that a main focus is to do the best we can for the students who are at the heart of the College sector. Attendees at this meeting felt our Board works very well with a collegiate, non-judgemental and all-encompassing approach and that they were proud of how the Board carries out Board business. It was noted that CDN do offer training, much of which is now online and self-paced, for new Board Members and there is significant amounts of guidance available with the most succinct, and probably the best as an introduction, being the CDN Guide for Board Members in the College Sector. For our Board in particular a recommendation from the group is that all new Members should attend at least one meeting of each of the Committees to allow insight across all Board activity, for example, Members not on CQC may not be aware of the depth of information that is presented there.

Knowledge of how Borders College runs and works is also essential and although new Members do have meetings with the individual members of the Exec Team it may be that more background is required for this.

What is the best way to undertake mentoring of Board Members?

The consensus is that there isn't a best way or right or wrong way and it very much depends on the relationship between mentee and mentor, the existing knowledge and skills of the mentee and the ways in which they prefer to learn. There will be shadowing, observation and different forms of communication.

Nuala has recently been a mentor for a new Board Member and talked about the approach they had taken. The mentoring is undertaken on a very informal and ad hoc basis although a routine has been established whereby prior to Board meetings Nuala and her mentee would meet to go through the agenda, discuss any points that could be raised, questions to ask, how to broach a subject etc.

Nuala said that she viewed mentoring as 'ongoing developmental' rather than induction and that, over time, needs change as the role of the Member evolves and grows.

Other hints and tips for new Members?

One suggestion was that mentors could go through some example papers with the mentee having gone through them themselves beforehand asking themselves, 'what are the key strategic questions to pull out of this paper', 'how does it align with the Strategic Ambition' and 'how does it link to the KPIs'? This might help the mentee formulate an approach to questioning that is appropriate and relevant.

Recommendations

- Mentor and mentee are well matched and have the opportunity to step down/ask for a different mentor if needed.

- All new Members attend at least one of each of the Committee meetings and be encouraged to attend more as 'in attendance'.

- Chair, Board Secretary and Mentor to work together to ensure Member has the information needed, in the format that works best for the Member, and to be accessible and approachable (bear in mind that Mentor is a volunteer and will have many other demands on their time), and not give conflicting advice.

- Encourage all members to think about approach to meetings and papers in the light of the Strategic Ambition, achieving KPIs and supporting strategies such as sustainability and step away from the overly operational.

- Gather feedback regularly on the usefulness and effectiveness of mentoring, with suggestions for ways to improve. Incorporate more specifically into the Board Self Evaluation.

- Explore how to give a succinct but informative background to how the College works other than meetings with Exec Team members.