

UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHER EDUCATION CORPORATION

Effectiveness review of the Board of Governors 2014

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As part of its continuing commitment to good governance and in compliance with guidance to the UK Higher Education sector¹, the Board of Governors of the University of Hertfordshire Higher Education Corporation makes a review of its effectiveness at intervals of five years.
- 1.2 This report concerns the most recent review, conducted in 2014- 2015.

2 CONTEXT

- 2.1 Mr Richard Beazley became Chairman of the Board of Governors on 1 September 2013 following which he led a preliminary discussion by the then Governance and Nominations Committee concerning the possible timing, format and scope of the 2014 Review.
- 2.2 It became clear that the 2014-2015 Review would coincide with a series of important changes within the sector. Internally, an institutional project had commenced to determine the University's Vision of itself in 2020, and the development of a Strategic Plan which, during the period 2015-2020, would enable the institution to achieve that Vision.
- 2.3 These, together, were considered to provide the context for the Board in terms of how it should evolve and operate over the 'life' of the new Strategic Plan in order to govern the institution effectively.
- 2.4 From a sector-wide perspective, the Committee of University Chairmen (**CUC**) was engaged in a review of its 'Guide for Members of Higher Education Governing Bodies in the UK' and it was considered important that before conducting its 2014 Effectiveness Review, the Board should have a clear understanding of any changes that the CUC wished to make in its guidance to institutions and their governing bodies.
- 2.5 A further consideration was the nature and scope of the 2009 Review which had been particularly wide-ranging. In addition to obtaining Privy Council approval to a series of amendments to the Articles of Government, the Board had made significant changes to its committee structure and to the overall size of the Board itself. It was suggested that a 'lighter touch' might be adopted for the 2014 Review to allow further time for changes arising from the 2009 Review to be embedded.
- 2.6 This debate was particularly valuable and enabled the Board to determine as its immediate focus, the development of the new Vision and Strategic Plan which, as the work of the CUC progressed and its revised guidance to institutions evolved, would together provide the framework within which the 2014 Effectiveness Review would be undertaken.

3 OBJECTIVES, SCOPE AND FORMAT

- 3.1 As work of the Vision and Strategic Plan progressed and the likely nature of new CUC guidance became clearer, the Board began to determine the format and scope of its 2014 Review.
- 3.2 Previous Reviews had been led by small groups of Governors and although members of the Board had been consulted as part of those processes, the Chairman wished to provide greater opportunity for Governors to participate in, and to contribute to, the 2014 Review, and to make the process even more transparent.

¹ Guide for Members of Higher Education Governing Bodies in the UK, CUC, 2009/24, March 2009

