

Active Devon Board

19th October 2023, 4.50pm, via Teams

Agenda		Recommendations
1. Policy Ambitions (Diversity) (Matt Evans) see supporting information	15 mins (for discussion & approval)	To agree future intent in respect of articulating Active Devon's specific diversity ambitions
2. Board Recruitment (Matt Evans & Andy Martin) see supporting information	15 mins (for discussion & approval)	To receive an update on the ongoing recruitment process and consider key recruitment priorities in support of the selection panel

Implications relating to equality, diversity & inclusion (EDI), welfare & safety, environmental impact and Active Devon's values:

EDI: Key decision sought on policy position with regards to EDI (item 1) and diversity implications for Board recruitment (item 2)

Welfare & Safety and Environmental: No directly relevant matters.

Values: Both items align closely to our values of Trust and Inclusion.

Supporting Information

Agenda Item 1: **Policy Ambitions (Diversity)**

The following statement (or close derivatives) appear variously in our current Equality Policy, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) and associated Governance Statement Reporting:

Active Devon is committed to maintaining gender parity on the Board, by ensuring that at least 30% of Board Members are male and at least 30% female.

This ambition was adopted in 2017 and reflects the original requirements of the UK Code of Governance for Sport. Since then, we have never come close to failing to achieve the gender parity described (minimum 44% / 56% split).

At its July meeting the FGASC raised the question of whether this articulation of our gender diversity ambitions was appropriate, given the increased contemporary significance of gender reassignment within EDI agenda.

The CEO was tasked with seeking guidance which he has done, both from Sport England and the specialist EDI consultant assigned to review and support development of our DIAP.

The advice has been inconclusive in suggesting an alternative approach but it has been clarified that the 'gender parity' requirement is no longer present in the UK Code of Governance. Instead it has been replaced by a more wide ranging diversity requirement (as well as stronger practical requirements around DIAPs):

Each organisation shall publish clear ambitions to ensure its leadership represents and reflects the diversity of the local and/or national community (as appropriate). These ambitions shall be centred on each organisation committing to achieving greater diversity in all its forms on its Board and senior leadership team.

The Board is requested to review and give consideration to our future approach. The following options appear to be available:

1. Continue with the statement and intent as is
2. Seek further advice to reflect the specific relevance of gender reassignment in the context of our ambition
3. Replace the statement with one reflecting a more wide ranging ambition (as per the new Governance Code Requirements)
eg To represent, reflect and understand Devon's diversity in our Board Membership, organisational leadership and decision making
4. Pursue another alternative identified by the Board

Following the Board's steer in this matter, the Exec will complete the review of the Policy Statement and make updates as appropriate to the DIAP and Governance Statement, with the aim of bringing them to the November Board meeting for approval.

Agenda Item 2: **Board Recruitment**

The recent proactive recruitment drive has resulted in four firm applications, including one expression of interest in the Chair role. Generic skills wise, they include some strong candidates but there appears less direct alignment to the specific skills / diversity gaps we identified.

Simon Kitchen, Andy Martin and Charlotte Burrows have agreed to support the selection panel and in order to support their approach and considerations, we wish to obtain a steer from the Board on some key questions.

In terms of context Board Members should remember that we operate an 'always on' approach to recruitment, we don't have to wait for an annual recruitment drive to progress appointments. We operate a 'pipeline' of potential applicants and scope to consider more targeted / flexible recruitment options.

Number of Board Members

Constitutionally the board can have a maximum of 12 and currently comprises 7 (plus Angie Scott in abeyance). Is there an optimal number of Board Members to ensure the Board and new sub-committees, operate effectively?

Generic v Specific Fit

How important is it that new appointments align closely with identified skills, knowledge or diversity gaps, versus candidates who have strong generic capabilities but align less closely?

Chair Succession

What is the Board's view about making a new appointment of someone direct to the Chair position, at this time?

As a reminder, the selection panel will assess and interview candidates but any appointments it recommends will be subject to full Board approval.