

I am pleased to have been invited to submit for membership of the Governance Committee. We have arrived at an important juncture in its affairs. How do I see my role?

- to assist the Chair in bringing clarity and energy to the Committee's purpose;
- to place my professional expertise and experience in the Committee's service;
- to provide timely and well-informed advice to CEO, Board and Council.

What qualifications and experience do I bring to the role?

I hold the IoD's Certificate and Diploma in Company Direction, sponsored for the purpose by the national Leadership Foundation. These prestigious qualifications, leading to Chartered Director status, require a secure understanding of company legislation, finance, Board purpose, Board conduct, and business strategy. In addition, I hold an MBA (with distinction) from a high-ranked Business School with a final dissertation on 'Corporate Governance for Non-Profit Organisations'. Among my other Masters degrees, I hold an MSc (with distinction) in Strategic Information Management. I am a longstanding Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute.

My experience of corporate governance and Board membership is extensive, particularly in the public, non-profit and voluntary sectors. I was appointed directly by the Secretary of State to the 'business rescue' Board of a failing college, serving three terms (twelve years) as we brought the institution from bankruptcy to 'outstanding' status. Elsewhere, I have over thirty years' experience of Board membership, either as a senior executive, consultant/advisor, or as a Board member, in several public and voluntary sector bodies, including universities. Nationally, I have been Board advisor to the former Learning & Skills Council; chair of two regional Training & Enterprise Councils; consultant/policy advisor to national funding councils, national committees of inquiry; Select Committees; and two Government departmental boards. I have delivered more than forty public lectures on the role of the Board and related matters; and advised numerous Boards on aspects of their conduct, commissioned to facilitate development exercises in several cases.

What priorities do I believe need to be addressed?

- Board development, renewal, and critical self-appraisal;
- Board conduct and unity in pursuit of strategic objectives and member services;
- Policy development, especially with respect to equal opportunity and member engagement;
- Modernisation and reform of relationships between ECF structures, finance, and membership; and a thoroughgoing reappraisal of decision-making processes.

Prospects for fresh-thinking have been opened up by the ICGRC process. Our collective intelligence needs to be applied to the questions it will raise. Hitherto, ECF has preferred to react to events. So long-term planning becomes a scramble for short-term plans; while the collective Mission remains 'business as usual with wishful thinking'. We can do better than this. Indeed, we have to do better because, if nothing changes, competitive chess as we know it will, within the next two decades, have returned to a state of affairs last observed up to the 1950s. Then chess was largely a pastime of the privately educated from London & SE. Time presses; remedies may be beyond us. But we do need to seek them. Good governance, with a focussed Board and informed membership, is where we start.