

Governors Present: Gill Slater (Chair)
Matthew Adams
James Adnett
Matthew Bennett
Emma Bridges
Sean Devlin
Phil Douce

Alex Gwinn
Sheena Payne-Lunn
Wendy Pickess
Cathy Scott-Burt
Ed Senior

In Attendance: Peter Cooper (Trust CEO)
Ruth Scotson (Deputy Principal)
Jo Payne (Clerk to the Local Governing Body)
Jane Jenkins (Vice Principal Designate)
Luke Moseley (Vice Principal Designate)

1. **Apologies and Appointments**

Apologies were received from Paul Cumming, Abi Stephenson and Cherry Yau.

As per the recommendation of the Curriculum and Quality Committee, the Local Governing Body **approved:**

- The re-appointment of Sean Devlin as external governor and member of the Curriculum and Quality Committee for a period of four years;
- The re-appointment of Matthew Adams as external governor and member of the Finance and Resources Committee for a period of four years;
- The re-appointment of Paul Cumming as external governor and member of the Finance and Resources Committee for a period of four years;
- The appointment of James Adnett as external governor and member of the Finance and Resources Committee for a period of four years;
- The appointment of Matthew Bennett as parent governor and member of the Curriculum and Quality Committee for a period of four years;

2. **Opening Standing Items**

- (i) Gill Slater declared that she attends Trust Board meetings as an observer. In relation to the item of urgent business shared in advance with governors, Sheena Payne-Lunn declared that she had a planning advisory role for the local authority and could not comment on anything relating to planning permissions or implications.
- (ii) Those parts of the agenda, which referred to individual students or members of staff were identified as confidential to the Local Governing Body.
- (iii) The Chair advised that there was an item of urgent business which would be raised at an appropriate time in the meeting.

3. **Heart of Mercia Update**

The CEO presented an update to the Local Governing Body which included the following points:

- The College's Senior Leadership Team had done a tremendous job and there was a real sense of momentum with an increase in recruitment and positive applications for next year, the appointment of two Vice Principals, high levels of retention, stronger finances and investment in IT personnel and infrastructure;
- King Edward VI College, Stourbridge, joined the Trust on 1st February 2021 creating a critical mass of three colleges. This provided opportunities for cross-fertilisation and to be more cost effective, an example being that Hereford Sixth Form College had adopted the College's tutorial system;
- There was a successful staff development day with subjects and cross-College areas sharing experiences, making contacts and establishing a sense of mutual support;
- SFOA training was planned for senior leaders across the three colleges;
- The concept of a 'Virtual College' was being developed with potential for non-subject specific extension through online lectures for students across the Trust;
- The colleges were working together in preparing bids for the 16-19 Capital Fund with the Trust supporting these bids with a financial commitment.

In response to questions the CEO noted that:

- The Trust had been working and liaising with some other Trusts made up of sixth forms and schools including one based in the East Midlands;
- Further to the announcement of the decision to build a new school in Worcester in response to limited existing capacity and demographic growth, the CEO and the College's Principal had met with the Local Authority to express early interest in the possibility of the Trust bidding to run the new school;
- Whilst the advantages of growing to be a Trust of five institutions included devolved capital funding, expansion would only happen if it was the right institution and the right thing for the Trust.

The Chair thanked the CEO for this time and for providing an update to local governors.

(Peter Cooper left the meeting at 5.47pm).

4. Minutes

(i) Minutes of the meeting on Wednesday, 24th February 2021

The minutes were **confirmed** as a correct record and will be signed by the Chair. An update was received on the action point and the Clerk advised that the current link scheme for governor visits meant that staff governors could visit another area in College. She would speak to the current staff governors about areas that were of interest to them and how this might be facilitated.

5. Finance and Resources

As the item of urgent business related to a capital bid it was agreed to consider the item at this point. The Principal explained that the SFOA had been campaigning for a number of years for there to be a process by which sixth form colleges could bid for capital funding ringfenced for the 16-19 sector. On 18th May 2021 the Government announced the 16-19 Capital Fund with a deadline of 14th June for submissions. The College was in the process of putting a bid together for the second phase of the Science Centre given that planning permission had already been granted. The estimated cost of the project was £2,250,000 with the Trust agreeing to invest 7.6% match funding to be paid back over a period of time. The same

investment had been offered to Hereford Sixth Form College who were also submitting a bid. Although the approval of governors was not officially required, the Principal appreciated the support and challenge offered by governors and wanted to seek their approval for the bid.

In response to questions the Principal noted the following:

- Although planning permission had been sought for phase 2 of the Science Centre project prior to phase 1 being started, if successful there would still need to be conversations with planning departments given that there may have been a shift in environmental concerns, for example;
- The SFCA suggested that the government was aware that the timescales for spending any funds and completing work were unrealistic and there would be flexibility. Given that 16-19 academies needed to seek Regional School Commissioner approval for significant change prior to being able to begin any works, this was already an obstacle that would make meeting the August 2022 deadline almost impossible;
- The College would ensure that there would be no financial clawback or penalty for not meeting deadlines prior to signing any funding agreement;
- Whilst the current growth in Science could be managed with the existing laboratories, half of these needed replacing. If the College could subsequently renovate the old labs into general purpose classrooms, this would enable growth in other subject areas to be managed.

The Local Governing Body **approved** the proposal to bid to the 16-19 Capital Fund noting that assurance would need to be sought that there would be no financial penalty incurred for not meeting timescales as currently outlined.

(i) Finance & Resources Committee minutes: 26.05.21

The Chair of the Committee presented the minutes and noted that the Committee had recommended the approval of its terms of reference and cycle of business.

The Principal provided an update in relation to some of the areas raised at the Committee meeting and reported that:

- There was a confirmed COVID case just before the half-term break resulting in thirty students being identified as proximity contacts and needing to isolate. Thankfully, none of these students developed symptoms and all had returned to College;
- The seating arrangements for the final assessments prevented more student from having to isolate as class groups were kept distanced;
- Home testing kits continued to be issued to students, however, data nationally and for the College suggesting that students were tiring of the process given that the number of result recording had reduced significantly;
- Changes to support staff pay scales last year, with the removal of a pay scale near the bottom, resulted in the lowest paid staff having a pay increase. This had, however, created some disparities and unfairness with some more skilled support staff being paid the same as less skilled colleagues. It was, therefore, proposed to move these staff up a pay point with a cost implication of approximately £7,500. The Principal said he would share a rationale and an outline of staff affected and total cost if this would be helpful.

A Parent Governor commented that he had links to free training in relation to cyber security which may be of interest. The Principal was grateful for this offer.

The Local Governing Body **received** the Committee minutes and **approved** the terms of reference and cycle of business for the Finance and Resources Committee. It was agreed that the Principal would share a proposal with governors, with feedback to be given to the Chair prior to a decision being made.

6. Quality Assurance

(i) Curriculum & Quality Committee minutes: 19.05.21

The Chair of the Committee presented the Committee minutes and reported as follows:

- The Committee agreed that Careers and SEN link governors should be appointed;
- The Committee asked that the College consider whether blind marking had a role in relation to other key assessments such as mock exams;
- The College was three time finalists in the SFCA Awards – once for the Senior Leader for Student Wellbeing in the Health and Wellbeing category and twice in the COVID and Beyond category;
- the Committee had recommended the approval of its terms of reference and cycle of business.

The Local Governing Body **received** the Committee minutes and **approved** the terms of reference and cycle of business for the Curriculum and Quality Committee.

7. Stakeholder Voice

The Local Governing Body **noted** the link visit feedback reports and the Chair thanked relevant governors for their time in meeting with College staff.

8. Governance

The Clerk presented her report and advised that:

- As an academy the Chair and Vice-Chair were to be appointed at the end of the academic year in preparation for the following year. Both Gill Slater and Sean Devlin had expressed a willingness to continue in their respective roles;
- Governor survey feedback indicated a preference for the annual conference to be held in October with peer appraisal to take place as part of this;
- There was also a preference for a return to in person meetings for next academic year with some interest in whether a hybrid model might be adopted. This would be investigated by the Clerk;
- A role description for the Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) was shared along with a reminder of the SEN role description and expressions of interest were invited.

Local Governing Body noted the information provided **approved**:

- The appointment of Gill Slater as Chair of the Local Governing Body for 2021-22;
- The appointment of Sean Devlin as Vice-Chair of the Local Governing Body for 2021-22.
- The schedule of meetings for 2021-22 including for the conference to be held in October 2022;
- The inclusion of peer appraisals as part of the October Conference programme
- A return to in person meetings for 2021-22
- The role description for the Link Governors for Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG).
- The Local Governing Body's cycle of business.

9. Policy Reviews

(i) Emergency Response Plan

The proposed changes to the policy were considered and **approved**. It was noted that the pandemic had prevented external review of the College's lockdown procedures by its Emergency Response provider.

- (ii) Risk Management Policy
The policy was **approved** with the proposed changes to reflect that the College had adopted the risk register and approach endorsed by the Trust.

10. Closing Standing Items

- (i) Chair's Action: None.
- (ii) Health and Safety: Scrutiny of the Emergency Response Plan ensured consideration of health and safety implications.
- (iii) Risk Management: Governors' consideration of possible implications of financial penalties for non-completion of capital work if successful should be noted and factoring into the risk register.
- (iv) Impact: Governors noted their consideration of matters in relation to the capital bid to meet the need to have facilities to support the growing student number.
- (v) Any Urgent Business: The urgent item of business was considered under item 5(i).
- (vi) Date of Next Meeting: The Local Governing Body **approved** the meeting schedule for 2021-22 noting the inclusion of the Governors' conference on Saturday, 2nd October 2021. It was, therefore, confirmed that the next meeting of the Local Governing Body would be held on Wednesday, 15th September 2021.

The Chair, on behalf of the Local Governing Body, thanked Cathy Scott-Burt for her dedication and contribution in her time as Parent Governor and wished her well.

It was noted that it was Ruth Scotson's final governors meeting as she retired from her role as Deputy Principal at the end of the academic year. Governors were pleased to note that she would continue with some teaching and thanked her for her tremendous efforts and contribution to both the Local Governing Body and its committees.

The meeting closed at 6.29p.m.

Signed:
Gill Slater (Chair)

Date:

LGB ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 9TH JUNE 2021

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
LGB/09.06.21/5(i)	Share a proposal with governors in relation to support staff pay proposal to include rationale and costs.	EYS	July 2021	
LGB/09.06.21/8	Investigate possibility of hybrid in person/remote model for governors' meetings.	JJP	September 2021	
LGB/09.06.21/8	Governors to express their interest in the link governor vacancies.	Governors	ASAP	

ACTION POINTS BROUGHT FORWARD

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check

ACTION POINTS COMPLETED

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
LGB/25.11.20/8	Consideration to be given to how staff governors might conduct a link visit to another area of College.	JJP	24.02.21	✓

* Denotes amended action point.