

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

Alex Gwinn  
Sam Lifford (*arrived at 5.40pm*)  
Wendy Pickess  
Ed Senior

**In Attendance:** Jane Jenkins (Vice Principal Designate)  
Luke Moseley (Vice Principal Designate)  
Jo Payne (Clerk to the Local Governing Body)

The Chair welcomed governors to the first in-person meeting for some time. The Vice Principals and newly appointed governors were welcomed and introductions were made.

#### **1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Paul Cumming, Joe Durnall, Sheena Payne-Lunn, Abi Stephenson

#### **2. Opening Standing Items**

- (i) No declarations of interest relevant to the agenda were raised.
- (ii) Those parts of the agenda, where applicable, 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. Minutes**

- (i) Minutes of the meeting on Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2021  
The minutes were **confirmed** as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

An update was provided on the action points. The Clerk advised that she had investigated the possibility of hybrid Local Governing Body meetings, however, a recent trial at a meeting with Heads of Department was not successful as participants joining remotely could not hear. IT Support were exploring technology that could be purchased to facilitate this. In the meantime, it would be possible for governors to join committee meetings remotely if needed as the meeting room could be used as the venue and the visual and audio was of a high quality.

#### **4. Strategic & Governance**

- (i) Heart of Mercia Chief Executive Officer's Update  
The Local Governing Body noted the contents of the Chief Executive Officer's update. A concern was expressed about the potential for high schools to join the Trust and the possible detrimental impact on the ability to ensure quality sixth form provision. The Principal advised that the

Chief Executive Officer shared these reservations although there was a need to respond to opportunities and threats e.g. the possibility of the new Worcester high school being designated as 11-18 rather than 11-16. The Principal added that the Trust intended to choose partners carefully and might devolve responsibility for 11-16 partners if the hub model were to be developed.

The Clerk reported that the Trustee's Conference was being held on 20<sup>th</sup> November and the focus of this would be the strategic direction of the Trust. Governors **agreed** it would be useful to invite the Chief Executive Officer to the November meeting.

(ii) Principal's Update Report

The Principal presented his update report and noted the following:

- The grades the College awarded as part of the TAG process were in line with sixth form colleges nationally and demonstrated the rigorous and consistent approach that was adopted. Students awarded GCSE TAGs should be congratulated on their success and there was no excuse for this group of students to be less successful than their predecessors;
- Thirteen centre review requests were received in total with 9 grades being increased as a result of four of these. Examples of the administrative errors identified included an incorrect record of the mock exam grade and a raw mark rather than a percentage being noted and considered in the awarding of the overall grade. The deadline for an appeal to the exam board was 17<sup>th</sup> September;
- Staff and students were all pleased to be back at College although some colleagues were nervous;
- Two members of staff were currently absent due to a confirmed or suspected case of COVID along with three students with confirmed cases and seven awaiting the outcome of PCR results;
- Autumn term onsite testing was successful with 1,725 tests conducted. This identified five positive cases in students who were asymptomatic. Twice weekly home testing had now resumed and would be reviewed by the government at the end of September;
- Baseline safety measures remained in place e.g. maintaining hand and respiratory hygiene and ventilation, this the addition of a one way system on the main staircase. Members of staff with underlying health conditions had discussed any concerns with the Principal and additional measures agreed as appropriate, e.g. maintaining the 2 metre exclusion zone or when not teaching, working in a separate office;
- The health protection team issued thresholds and, if reached, the College would contact them to discuss our risk assessment and whether any additional safety measures were required;
- The College was focussed on the recovery curriculum and high expectations were continuing to be set for students. The Vice Principal (Curriculum, Quality and Implementation) was considering the setting of targets and diagnostic assessments to ensure that teachers knew with confidence what students needed support with. The Vice Principal (Curriculum, Quality and Implementation) advised that bridging tasks and early homework tasks were being used to gauge the skills gap and teachers had been asked to provide examples of the feedback that had been given in relation to this work;
- The impact of additional timetabled support and enrichment would be measured. It was noted that the recovery curriculum was an area where governors would be expected to challenge College leaders;
- The 'Everyone's Invited' website had drawn the attention of Ofsted and the government to sexual harassment and violence in educational establishments and, in the absence of evidence, it should be assumed that it is happening. The College took that matter extremely seriously and had reason to believe its response was robust. The Designated Safeguarding Lead continued to provide support in individual cases and the College had engaged with the police when students reported sexual harassment on public transport. Social media was frequently misused and the College promoted awareness about online safety and had E-safes keystroke technology on all computers;
- In a survey of students they identified the Cafeteria and car park as areas at College where inappropriate comments might be made. Senior Leaders were continuing to be a presence around College particularly in these areas and the appointment of a Site Security Officer provided additional support. Teachers had been reminded of their responsibility to challenge inappropriate comments of behaviour in class

and through the tutorial programme students were advised how to report incidents which included a reporting form on the College's. This was clearly also an area where governors were expected to challenge senior leaders;

- Governors were reminded that the College's financial planning was based on an additional 33 students although to ensure there were sufficient teaching resource should growth exceed this, staffing was based on 70 additional students. At present there were 109 more students (47 in year 1) compared to the same point last year, but the funded number would not be confirmed until all students had attended for six weeks. It seemed likely, however, that growth would be between 33 and 70.

In response to questions it was advised that:

- Enquiries were made about hosting a vaccine clinic onsite, however, in sampling students 85% had received the first dose. It was not yet confirmed whether 16-18 year olds would receive a second dose;
- Governors could provide challenge in relation to the recovery curriculum through a link visit perhaps to meet with the Vice Principals to consider the recovery curriculum and impact of additional support;
- The Curriculum and Quality Committee would receive further detail on any differentiated support targeted at students from an economically disadvantaged background;
- The College had an anonymised record of any incidents of peer on peer abuse and this was routinely reviewed with the Safeguarding Link Governor;
- The performance subjects had under-recruited which was perhaps unsurprising given the impact of the pandemic on the creative industries. Staff in these subjects, however, had responded well and were offering additional enrichment and considering outreach work to encourage an increase in uptake next year;
- Where staff were on part-time variable contracts consideration was given to deploying them in other subject areas if they had relevant experience and a willingness to do so. The hours of part-time staff overall and the impact on the budget would be presented to the Finance and Resources Committee for governor scrutiny and challenge.

The Local Governing Body thanked the Principal for his report and **noted** the contents.

(iii) Clerk's Update Report

The Clerk presented the update report and highlighted the following points:

- There were a range of training webinars available for governors via the Sixth Form Colleges Association and the Education and Training Foundation;
- A draft training programme for the academic year was based on feedback from the governors' training needs questionnaire. It was intended that governors' training would continue to take place at the start of Local Governing Body meetings with the exception of the conference;
- A draft conference programme was put forward with a focus on Ofsted readiness and outlining the strategic planning processes with opportunity for governors to consider and contribute to the setting of strategic direction.
- One governor expressed interest in the SEND link governor role and the Clerk would recommend the appointment at the first opportunity. A governor also expressed interest in the Careers Link Governor role although consideration would be given as to whether this could be undertaken remotely during the autumn term.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the contents of the report and **approved** the training and conference programmes.

(iv) Marketing Annual Report

The Marketing Co-ordinator presented the annual Marketing report and noted the following:

- The bank of video content had increased significantly and represented a success on the position last year;
- It was not possible to hold any events in person last academic year so the College had to respond with virtual events. The importance of providing applicants with opportunity to visit was a high priority as restrictions permitted and approximately 200 young people and their parents attended for individual or small group tours during the summer holiday period. This year's Open Events were currently planned to take place in-person with some management of numbers through Eventbrite, however, the College was confident it could adapt should restrictions be reintroduced;
- Communication with applicants through keeping warm activities remained a focus with new initiatives such as 'meet the teacher' introduced with a view to adding a more personal touch. This initiative was to be further developed;
- Social media acted as a means of mirroring key messages and was aimed at further improving the College's reputation as opposed to sharing frequent messaging;
- Alumni continued to be an area of importance with plans to introduce an Alumni Mentoring Scheme in conjunction with Student Services.

The Principal added that although the demographic shift was favourable, the College had increased its market share possible due to an increased and consistent focus on support for individual students.

It was commented that the Virtual Open Event webpage and the look and feel of the College's website more generally was impressive, honest and authentic.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the contents of the report and thanked the Marketing Co-ordinator and her team for all their efforts.

**5. Quality**

(i) Exam Results and Six Dimensions

The exam results and six dimensions data were noted. The Vice Principal (Curriculum, Quality and Implementation) said that the overall pass rate was good. The Vice Principal (Progression, Quality and Impact) offered to provide some overview training on interpreting the Six Dimensions data and it was felt this would be valuable for members of the Curriculum and Quality Committee.

(ii) Quality Assurance Update

The Vice Principal (Curriculum, Quality and Implementation) referred to the end of year report on subjects which had been supported through a Subject Improvement Review. This included details of subjects who would be supported this year. In many cases, it was felt that progress had been made but departments valued the support and there had yet to be a set of externally validated results for these subjects to demonstrate impact of the support.

Cross-College learning walks were taking place with themes identified for these in advance. A designated member of the Senior Leadership Team and a Head of Departmental would also undertake a department learning walk which was an additional to the quality assurance programme this year. Feedback from the first 'welcome walk' to find out how new students had settled was overwhelmingly positive. If areas for improvement were identified or suggestions made, it was intended to provide feedback to students on any action taken or considered as a result of their feedback.

There was a clear policy for lesson observations in place focussing on Early Career Teachers, staff new to College and those in areas involved in Subject Improvement Support.

The Local Governing Body thanked the Vice Principal (Curriculum, Quality and Implementation) for her update.

(iii) Quality Improvement Plan

The Vice Principal (Curriculum, Quality and Implementation) advised that the Quality Improvement Plan had been updated ahead of the priorities for this year being confirmed. There would continue to be an Ofsted focus, reflecting on the recovery curriculum, meeting the needs of disadvantaged learners etc. Ensuring that students have ready access to online resources and emphasising the importance of independent study skills though the umbrella of the Worcester Working Week would also be priorities.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the updates to the Quality Improvement Plan. Governors requested an update on plans to promote and celebrate the Black Lives Matter movement.

**6. Finance & Resources**

(i) Budgetary Update

The Principal referred to the surplus position of £153,000 after the MAT charge and the EBITDA of 11% which was a significant achievement given that an EBITDA of 8% was deemed to be an outstanding financial position. This reflected a growth in numbers over a two year period and a controlled staffing budget, however, the College had invested significantly in IT infrastructure and network and in providing timetabled support and enrichment. No redundancies were made during the pandemic and, for example, the Cafeteria had been able to cut costs which mitigated lost income to a degree. Some additional deprivation and in-year growth funding as well resulted in a strong financial performance.

The Principal advised that the surplus/deficit position was significant in terms of requesting capital investment from the Trust and noted his concern that it took an outstanding EBITDA performance to have a surplus. It was not desirable to have such high margins. The Principal noted he had raised some concerns about how the MAT charge was being allocated unfairly across the colleges in the Trust. The Chief Executive Officer was responsive to this feedback and agreed to reflect on the arrangements.

The Local Governing Body reflected on their previous discussions and requests to be given a breakdown of the MAT charge and how this was used to ensure transparency. Governors requested to know the outcome of the discussions around the MAT charge.

One of the Parent Governors commented that a number of students commented that the costs in the Cafeteria appeared to have increased to the point where they were making decisions about whether to bring a packed lunch as an alternative. The Principal said he would ask the Catering Manager to provide an update.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the update.

(ii) Property Strategy

The Principal presented the updated Property Strategy. It was noted that further to a Fire Risk Assessment, a programme of replacing compartmental doors would be added along with a number of other items. A decision in relation to the capital bid for the second phase of the Science Centre was not expected until December.

Governors **noted** the updated Property Strategy.

## 7. Stakeholder Voice

The Vice-Chair reflected on his two visits in the summer term. One was a half-termly meeting with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the second participation in virtual training on sexual harassment which was informative. It was noted that the College performed well in an audit by the County Council in terms of its safeguarding arrangements and procedures and the Single Central Record was deemed to be in good order.

The Chair thanked the Vice-Chair for his feedback.

## 8. Policy Reviews

### (i) Student Union Constitution and Code of Practice

The Vice Principal (Progression, Quality and Impact) noted minor changes to the Constitution and Code of Practice to reflect that there would be cohort rather than tutor group representatives. The changes were **approved**.

The Vice Principal (Progression, Quality and Impact) reported that two new members of staff were supporting the Union this year and were enthusiastic to help build a vibrant committee. The first meeting would take place next week with plans to prioritise Black Lives Matter and other social issues. It was also intended to put on some form for student social event

### (ii) Governors Handbook 2021-22

The Clerk confirmed that the updated handbook had been emailed to governors in full. The changes to the handbook, as outlined, were **approved**.

### (iii) Management of the College Policy

The Local Governing Body **approved** the proposed changes to the Management of the College policy to reflect the roles and responsibilities of the Vice Principals.

### (iv) Quality Assurance Policy

The Local Governing Body **approved** the changes as outline to the Quality Assurance policy.

### (v) Freedom of Speech Policy

The Local Governing Body **approved** the minor change to the Freedom of Speech policy.

### (vi) Early Career Framework Policy

The Principal outlined how the College had responded to the government's initiative to provide two years of support for Early Career Teachers. The Senior Leader for Teaching and Learning had been allocated time to mentor ECTs and a weekly programme of induction and support was in place.

The Local Governing Body **approved** the new Early Career Framework policy.

(vii) Safeguarding Policy

The Clerk had circulated the updated policy by email prior to the meeting and explained that the Designated Safeguarding Lead had updated the policy to reflect key changes as a consequence of Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2021. Subsequently, there were now standalone policies on anti-bullying and peer on peer abuse and also procedural guidance on managing allegations.

The Local Governing Body **approved** the Safeguarding Policy. It was queried whether the College was aware of the need for shortlisted candidates to complete a self-declaration of their criminal record or information that would make them unsuitable to work with children prior to the DBS process. The Principal agreed to check this with the DSL and Personnel Officer.

**9. Closing Standing Items**

(i) Chair's Action

Further to a proposal to increase the pay of support staff on the lower points of the pay spine at the June meeting, the additional information that governors requested was shared. Feedback to the Chair was supportive of the proposal and, by use of the Chair's action, the increase in pay was **approved** and communicated to relevant members of staff. The use of the Chair's action was **noted**.

(ii) Health and Safety: Governors noted their consideration of the College's COVID risk assessment and outbreak management plan.

(iii) Risk Management: Governors agreed that they needed to reflect on the staffing budget and the impact of an increase in proportions of part-time staff.

There was some discussion of recent cyber attacks on establishments and how prepared the College was in the event of such an attack. It was noted that the College had achieved the JISC Cyber Security Essentials Plus a year ahead of schedule. Huge improvements had been made over a 12 month period including investment in new servers and back up arrangements, the roll out of two factor authentication and work across the colleges by the Trust's central IT team. A report on cyber security would be presented to the Finance and Resources Committee.

(iv) Impact: Governors consideration of quality assurance procedures and finances were to ensure the best education and value for money for students.

(v) Any Urgent Business: No items were identified.

(vi) Date of Next Meeting: 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021. The Governors' Conference will be held on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2021.

The meeting closed at 7.20pm.

Signed: .....

Gill Slater (Chair)

Date: .....

**LGB ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 15<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021**

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
LGB/15.09.21/4(i)	Invite the Chief Executive Officer to the November meeting of the LGB.	JJP	ASAP	
LGB/15.09.21/4(ii)	Report to Curriculum & Quality Committee on specific support for economically disadvantaged students.	JLJ	November 2021	
LGB/15.09.21/5(ii)	Provide update on plans to promote/celebrate Black Lives Matter.	JLJ/LIM	November 2021	
LGB/15.09.21/6(i)	Advise governors on the outcome of review of MAT charge.	EYS	November 2021	
LGB/15.09.21/6(i)	Report back on costs of food in the Cafeteria.	EYS	November 2021	
LGB/15.09.21/8(vii)	Check whether shortlisted candidates sign a self-declaration around criminal records.	EYS	ASAP	
LGB/15.09.21/9(ii)	Report to Finance & Resources Committee on actions taken in relation to cyber-security.	EYS	November 2021	

**ACTION POINTS BROUGHT FORWARD**

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check

**ACTION POINTS COMPLETED**

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	✓

\* Denotes amended action point.