

Governors Present: Gill Slater
Matthew Adams
James Adnett
Matthew Bennett
Emma Bridges
Paul Cumming
Sean Devlin

Phil Douce
Joe Durnall
Sam Lifford
Sheena Payne-Lunn
Wendy Pickess
Ed Senior

In Attendance: Luke Moseley (Vice Principal)
Jo Payne (Clerk to the Local Governing Body)
Craig Holden (Trustee as an observer)

1. Apologies and appointments

Alex Gwinn, Jane Jenkins and Cherry Yau.

2. Opening Standing Items

- (i) No interests were declared.
- (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) An update on Capital Project bids would be presented under Finance and Resources.

3. Governor Training: 'Managing Staff Workload'

The Senior Leader for Subject Improvement provided an update to governors as part of the annual training programme. The following key points were raised:

- A document was circulated the steps the College had taken thus far to respond to staff workload;
- Workload had significantly increased since 2010 as a direct consequence of cuts caused by austerity measures. This was supported by numerous surveys around staff workload;
- The College's next steps included addressing the issue of Head of Department workload. Given the importance of these middle managers in driving change, this was important;
- Considering ways to reduce the caseload of staff would have significant implications for workload;
- The Staff Satisfaction Focus Group would be reintroduced led by the Vice Principal (Curriculum) with a bottom up approach with staff concerns and possible solutions in relation to workload and wellbeing more generally;
- The Employee Workload Forum had provided a means of a cross-section of staff discussing issues and possible solutions which were routinely discussed with the Principal.

In response to questions it was advised that:

- In hindsight, the College's delay in embracing linearisation through retaining AS levels had impacted on workload with preparations required for the different assessment of both exams;
- Increased accountability including preparing for Ofsted clearly had workload implications;
- The College had embraced the sharing of good practice including the ideas and enthusiasm of the Early Career Teachers with strategies aimed at responding to workload issues.

The Local Governing Body **thanked** the Senior Leader for Subject Improvement for the training which ensured that governors were better informed in relation and able to challenge in relation to the College's response to staff workload.

(The Senior Leader for Subject Improvement left the meeting at 6.09pm).

4. Minutes

(i) Minutes of the meeting on 24th November 2021

The minutes of the meeting were **agreed** as an accurate record and the action points updated with the following observations:

- In relation to a previously completed action point in relation to Black Lives Matter. The Vice Principal (Progression) commented that the College was considering the updated guidance for educational establishments on political speech;
- The issue around MAT employment policies was raised at the Trust Board. The Chair who attends the Board meetings as an observer advised that another strand of work was underway in relation to Trust policies.

5. Management & Strategic

(i) Principal's Update Report

The Principal presented his report and the following key points were noted:

- The actual student number for the current academic year was 1584 rather than 1588. This was the result of a difference between two ILR submissions. This represented an increase in 96 students which would result in an increase in funding for next academic year;
- Data on the size of the year 11 county cohort was considered and it was pleasing to see that the College's recruitment this year represented a further increase in its percentage share – an increase from 15.3% to 16.1%. The College had seen an increase in its student number of 18% over three years compared to an increase of 3% in the demographic. This was particularly positive given that a large number of Worcestershire schools provide post-16 provision;
- A strategic update would be shared with staff and governors outlining key areas of focus and planned staffing levels for next year. It was pleasing that the significant increase in staffing last year was cost accurately, however, it was noted that there would not be the need for a similar increase in staffing levels for next academic year.

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

(ii) Ofsted Preparedness

The Vice Principal (Progression) presented a summary of the key themes identified in inspections that had taken place in post-16 providers since the start of the academic year along with questions that had been asked of leaders and governors more generally and specifically in relation to safeguarding, for example. It was noted that the Vice Principals recently visited King Edward's, Stourbridge, to participate in a mini-inspection which proved interesting and useful.

In response to questions it was explained that:

- The College had a Teams folder with all of the documentation held centrally that might be needed once an inspection was announced. At this point, relevant information would be shared with governors;
- The detail on the highest and lowest performing subject areas omitted from the crib sheet would be updated and shared with governors as needed.

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

(iii) Heart of Mercia Update

The Local Governing Body **noted** the Trust update and extended their thanks to the Trust CEO for the report noting the Trust newsletter which was a good opportunity to celebrate success across the three colleges.

6. Stakeholder Voice

The link visit reports from the CEIAG Link Governor, the College's Designated Safeguarding Governor and the Trust Vice-Chair were **received** and the contents **noted**.

In anticipation of the next link visit of the CEIAG governor, the Principal noted that the progression of students was a significant focus for the College and the need to promote a sense of urgency in order to support those students who had not yet made an application to university was emphasised. The impact of the pandemic both in terms of the ability to provide work placements and the motivation of students to apply to university were identified as national issues which also meant that sixth form leavers were entering the work place without some of the basic skills and experience, e.g. reliance on remote methods rather than in-person interactions.

7. Quality Assurance

(i) Curriculum & Quality Committee minutes: 09.02.22

The Chair of the Curriculum and Quality Committee presented the minutes and noted the following:

- There was in-depth scrutiny of the subjects being supported by a subject improvement review in addition to examples of subjects deemed to be outstanding;
- The efforts of the Vice Principals since they joined the College were commended by the Committee.

The Local Governing Body **noted**.

8. Finance and Resources

(i) Finance and Resources Committee meeting minutes: 16.02.22

The Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee presented the minutes and noted the following:

- Recommendations in relation to a grievance appeal and a student exclusion appeal were made and these had been accepted by the College;
- Both committees received the Clerk's report on External Reviews of Governance. The Committee suggested an anonymous survey of governors focused on the role of the Clerk and the support provided as a means of providing assurance. Governors were reminded of the need to complete this with results to be shared with the Chair and Vice-Chair.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the minutes and the recommendations of the Grievance Appeal Panel and the Student Exclusion Appeal Panel were **agreed**.

Capital Projects Update

The Principal tabled an update report on capital projects which required Local Governing Body consideration and approval. The following updates were provided:

- A bid to the T Level Capital Fund was being prepared with a view to renovating three classrooms, one to support the clinical skills element required for the Health and Care T Level to be delivered from 2023-24 and the others to provide IT facilities etc. The project would likely meet the minimum threshold cost of £200,000 with 50% match funding. It was noted, however, that the deadline was 11th March. Whilst there was little expectation of success, it was hoped that the experience would ensure the College was in a good position to submit a bid next year;
- Professional services were supporting the College with a bid to the Post-16 Capacity Fund to complete the second phase of the Science Centre. Whilst the College's application last year was strong in terms of its growth in student numbers, the plans were not 'shovel ready'. This year full tenders would be completed. It was noted that the projected cost of the project last year was £2.3 million with 7.6% match funding. It was expected that the cost would be higher this year due to increase in construction and material costs. The Trust had agreed to support the College with the match funding which would be repaid by the College. Any application and contribution would ultimately need to be approved by the Trust CEO and Board.

In response to questions the Principal explained that:

- The only costs incurred if the bids were unsuccessful were those of the professional services;
- Tenders were also being sought for additional student study and social space. Whilst this would not be included within the bid, the Trust CEO advised that it would be more cost-effective to incorporate this into a funded building project rather than as a standalone project;
- The College's financial position next year was positive further to an increase in the basic funding rate and growth in student numbers so if ever there was a time to invest match funding to support capital projects it was now;
- The College's Health and Social Care three A Level equivalent was one area likely to disappear given a T Level option so this was the first the College would introduce possibly with others to follow in the 2024-25 academic year;
- The government's view was that T Levels would be afforded the same status as A Level routes. The removal of Applied options was significant for the College given that approximately 55% of students have at least one Applied course as part of their programme of study.

The Local Governing Body **approved** the capital project bids and match funding **in principle** subject to an affordability report in relation to the Post-16 Capacity bid to be **reviewed** by the Local Governing Body Chair, Vice-Chair and Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee.

9. Closing Standing Items

(i) Chair's Action

There were no actions taken by the Chair since the last meeting to report.

(ii) Health and Safety

The ongoing scrutiny by governors of COVID matters was noted.

(iii) Risk Management

No additional risk management issues were identified.

- (iv) Impact
The training on the College's response to staff workload better equipped governors to monitor and challenge in these areas.
- (v) Any Urgent Business: No additional items were raised.
- (vi) Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday, 8th June 2022 at 5.30pm.

The meeting closed at 6.48p.m.

Signed:
Gill Slater (Chair)

Date:

LGB ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 2ND MARCH 2022

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
LGB/02.03.22/5ii	Areas of highest and lowest performance to be updated in Inspection crib sheet for governors.	JLJ	ASAP	
LGB/02.03.22/8	Share affordability report in relation to Post-16 Capacity Fund bid prior to submission.	EYS	March 2022	

ACTION POINTS BROUGHT FORWARD

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check

ACTION POINTS COMPLETED

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
LGB/24.11.21/7(i)	Raise concern at lack of MAT personnel and safeguarding policies with MAT Audit Committee.	Trust Vice-Chair	December 2021	✓

* Denotes amended action point.