

Governors Present: Sean Devlin (Chair), Matthew Adams, James Adnett, Paul Cumming, Tom Gregory, Kelvin Hard, Sam Lifford (via Teams), Sheena Payne-Lunn, Wendy Pickess, Ed Senior and Caroline Shaw

In Attendance: Peter Cooper (CEO), Andrea Marshall (Trust Improvement Officer), Jane Jenkins (Vice Principal Curriculum), Luke Moseley (Vice Principal Progression), Jo Payne (Clerk to the Local Governing Body), Ron Hill (Stone King)

1. Apologies

Duncan Clark, Phil Douce, Alex Gwinn, Beth Hallam, Paul Tamas.

2. Opening Standing Items

- (i) Paul Cumming declared his role as a governor at The Chantry.
- (ii) An item of confidential business would be raised at the end of the meeting.
- (iii) There were no urgent items of business identified.

3. Feedback on Inspection

The Vice Principal (Curriculum) advised that the Ofsted report from the January inspection remained embargoed and, therefore, she was unable to share any of the findings. A brief presentation was shared outlining what the inspection had involved and the themes the College had identified as areas of primary focus.

The Local Governing Body thanked the Principal, Vice Principals and all college staff for their efforts leading up to and during the inspection.

4. Minutes

(i) Minutes of the meeting on 23rd November 2022

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

- Further to governors scrutiny of the College's response to meeting the local skills need, the Clerk has prepared a report to be added to the College website. This identifies actions for the College in relation to developing strategies for more aspirational progression aims, increasing numbers participating in organised work experience, reviewing level 2 offerings to ensure appropriate progression routes, developing student IT skills and engaging with Local Skills Improvement Plans.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the updated and **endorsed** the actions identified in the report on meeting the local skills need.

5. Management & Strategic

(i) Heart of Mercia Update

The CEO presented his report, with updates also from the Trust Improvement Officer, and the following key points were noted:

- The biggest issue facing the Trust was the way in which the funding had been handled in recent times in ways that made planning for the following year challenging. In response, the CEO and CFO had meet with the Principals to consider possible cost-saving measures that do the least damage to the frontline offering. Options would be shared with Governors at a future meeting;
- Following the inspections at both Worcester and Hereford Sixth Form Colleges, it was possible that the Trust might be subject to a MAT Summary Evaluation. The Trust had also had meetings with the ESFA around finances;
- The applications of The Chantry School and John Kyrle High School to join the Trust would likely be approved at the March Headteachers' Board meeting. Given the expected growth of the Trust, specific business groups had been introduced to work with respective colleagues across the Trust in relation to safeguarding, IT, health and safety etc. The person with Trust responsibility for each area would then report back to the Executive Group;
- The Senior Leader for Subject Improvement at the College was undertaking an important role in introducing Trust policies both to ensure statutory compliance and to ensure a consistent approach across Trust institutions;
- The Trust training event for support staff was held in February and received extremely positive responses. Whilst such events may not be feasible on an annual basis, the Trust wants to maintain the momentum of shared training opportunities;
- Quality Visits had been conducted at Trust institutions prior to inspection and provide useful preparation for the real thing.

In response to challenge, the CEO advised that other establishments had approached the Trust to express interest in joining. Whilst the Trust is keen to work with other partners, careful consideration is being given to potential partners to ensure the Trust has the expertise and resource to provide appropriate support.

The Local Governing Body noted the update provided and commented particularly on the feedback of support staff to the recent event.

(ii) Strategic Development Plan

The Principal presented the updated Strategic Development Plan and directed governors to consider the progress update report. The following points were highlighted:

- The aim of enrolling more students on Core Maths where they are not studying either A Level or GCSE Maths has been hindered due to the changes to funding for advanced Maths qualifications. The consequence of this reduction in funding is that the College cannot continue its current Core Maths provision for next year and will either have to change how it is delivered or withdraw it entirely which would be disappointing;
- Governors had challenged the College at the annual conference and more generally, to review the support for students seeking apprenticeships, in particular, in relation to improving their IT skills. In response, the College has appointed a Microsoft Certification Co-ordinator with an initial focus on students who have not applied to university and do not have a clear progression aim.

In response to challenge, it was noted that:

- The support for staff new to College was felt to be strong and this was endorsed by a staff governor who was part of the new staff induction programme last academic year – even as an experienced teacher, it was useful as a welcome to College and an introduction to College systems. The Senior Leader for Teaching and Learning is collaborating with the Chantry School on the programme of support for Early Careers Teachers;

- The College would continue to offer GCSE resit Maths and this was not impacted by the advanced maths funding;
- Whilst the College runs a Creative Writing enrichment and there were opportunities for extended academic writing as part of the Ambition Programme and the Extended Projects Qualification, there was no general offering aimed at promoting literacy skills similar to how Core Maths develops numeracy skills;
- The Virtual College project was ongoing with the aim of having four modules online for the start of the new academic year. There were currently no plans to monetise the concept and the focus was the roll out across the three colleges within the Trust and getting students to engage with the platform;
- The College does receive County Council data on school cohort sizes, although this becomes less reliable for year groups below year 9 and pupils appear to go missing from the data from one year to the next.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the update on progress against the actions identified in the Strategic Development Plan.

6. Stakeholder Voice

The link visit reports from a visit to focus on the College's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion and the latest visit by the Designated Safeguarding Governor were **received** and the following was noted:

- It was felt that there was energy and enthusiasm from those leading on EDI and students who were part of the LGBTQ and Christian Union felt that the College provided a supportive and inclusive environment;
- It was evident that the College was compliant with the Equality Duty;
- Mental Health was clearly a prevalent issue among students;
- A check of the Single Central Record was conducted and all in order;
- Safeguarding arrangements in relation to contractors were in place and being routinely reviewed.

Governors noted that at the time of the Safeguarding link visit there had been 18 students on a waiting list to be seen by the Mental Health and Wellbeing Mentor and requested assurance that these students had received support or been signposted to external support. The Principal confirmed that this was the case and assured governors that students are triaged to identify need for access to the College Counsellor and the Mental Health and Wellbeing Mentor.

The Clerk advised that following details of the Mental Health and Wellbeing link governor role being shared with governors, there had been an expression of interest. The Local Governing Body, therefore, duly appointed Sheena Payne-Lunn to this role.

(Paul Cumming left the meeting at 6.30pm).

7. Quality Assurance

(i) Curriculum & Quality Committee minutes: 08.02.23

The Chair of the Curriculum and Quality Committee presented the minutes and the key areas of focus were noted.

The Principal advised that since his update on funding, the allocation statement for 2023-24 had been received and the following update was provided:

- There will be a 2.2% increase to the per student funding rate and the College will receive additional funding for 114 more students;

- Due to changes to additional funding e.g. advanced Maths premium, student financial support and retention factor, the College's funding will only increase by £140,000 and the funding per student actually decreases when this is taken into account. There will be additional students and the need, therefore, to appoint 4-5 more teachers at a cost of approximately £300,000;
- The College is in a sound financial position so the challenges from the reduction in funding will be manageable, however, there were still unknown variables including what the pay settlement would be and how much energy costs would increase;
- The cost saving options being considered would be shared with governors in due course.

Governors requested an explanation of the planning process and what the policy was for deciding on what additional staff appointments would be required. The Principal explained that the initial aim is to increase class sizes to ensure efficiencies of scale, but this typically was limited to 24 per group with the exception of subjects like Art and Food Science where equipment restrictions limited the size of groups. Whilst ideally the students retain the same teacher from one year to the next, if efficiencies could be made through not doing so, this would be considered. It was explained that the other consideration for next year was the pinch point in relation to rooms, particularly if the science centre project meant that the new rooms were not available at the start of the year. Where it will not be possible to respond to increased applications in particular subjects by adding more groups, a system to ensure that those who applied first are enrolled first will be adopted.

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

8. Finance and Resources

(i) Finance and Resources Committee meeting minutes: 15.02.23

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

- The recommendations from the Fitness to Study Appeal hearing were approved and the College was tasked with reviewing the actions identified;
- The Green Travel Plan was recommended for approval.

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

(ii) Green Travel Plan

The Clerk presented the Green Travel Plan which includes progress against the actions identified in 2017 and new actions to take forward.

In response to governor challenge it was noted that:

- The College had invested in security for bicycles and there are ongoing discussions about a bridleway. Concerns about cycle safety along routes to College will be raised with the Highways department of the County Council;
- The percentages in the staff and student survey do not add up to 100% and the survey allowed respondents to say that they walked to College one day a week and got a lift on others, for example.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the responses provided and **approved** the Green Travel Plan.

9. Trust Policies

The Clerk referred to the latest Trust policies that have been approved by the Trust Board. In the case of the Safeguarding, Managing Allegations and Pay Policy and Procedures, local policies remain in place. In order to create equality of treatment and commonality of approach for all Trust employees, the Staff Code of Conduct, Staff Disciplinary, Grievance and Senior Post Holders Grievance policies replace the local equivalent.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the Trust approved policies.

10. 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

Governors' concern in relation to cycle safety was noted.

(iii) Risk Management

No additional risk management issues were identified although the need to rescore the risk in relation to funding was identified.

(iv) Impact

Governors consideration of the funding challenges and the College response to this was to ensure the best provision of education to students.

(v) Any Urgent Business: No additional items were raised.

(vi) Date of Next Meeting: The Clerk advised that neither the Chair or Vice Chair were available for the scheduled meeting on 7th June. Governors will be consulted on a suitable alternative and this would be confirmed.

The meeting closed at 7.11pm.

Signed:
Sam Lifford (Vice Chair)

Date:

LGB ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 1ST MARCH 2023

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
LGB/01.03.23/5i	Provide an update on the Trust's response to funding challenges.	PC	June 2023	
LGB/01.03.23/8ii	Raise concerns about cycle safety along routes to College with the Highways department of the County Council.	EYS	ASAP	

ACTION POINTS BROUGHT FORWARD

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
LGB/23.11.22/5iii	Prepare and publish on the website a report on how the College is responding to local skills needs.	JJP	March 2023	

ACTION POINTS COMPLETED

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
LGB/23.11.22/5ii	Populate Strategic Development Plan progress report and share at the next meeting.	EYS	March 2023	✓
LGB/23.11.22/5iii	Feedback to the Clerk, as appropriate, on the review of the College response to meeting local need.	Governors	December 2022	✓

* Denotes amended action point.