

Governors Present: Sean Devlin (Chair) Alex Gwinn
Matthew Adams Sheena Payne-Lunn
James Adnett Wendy Pickess
Elle Beale Chantal Pottage
Grahame Davies Paul Rushton
Andrew Forth Ed Senior
Tom Gregory (*arrived 5.56pm*)

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

1. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

Sean Devlin and Sam Wilson were appointed as Chair and Vice Chair respectively for the 2025-26 academic year.

2. Apologies: Sam Wilson and Wisal Bishar.

2. Opening Standing Items

- (i) There were no declarations of interest relevant to the agenda.
- (ii) A confidential and urgent matter was identified. This would be taken at the end of normal business with governors who were also employees of the Trust requested to withdraw.
- (iii) No urgent business was identified.

3. Minutes

(i) Minutes of the meeting on Wednesday, 4th June 2025

The minutes were **confirmed** as a correct record and signed by the Chair and an update was provided on the action points. It was noted that the risk register will be reviewed ahead and relevant risks shared with committees at the autumn term meetings.

5. Quality

(i) Quality Update including Results Overview

The Vice Principal presented the key points from her update including the following points:

- The performance in A Level subjects was strong with all measures improving, notably the percentage of A* grades being higher than the selective sister college within the Trust which is testament to the hard work of teachers;
- The A Level subjects being support by subject improvement all demonstrated improvement including Biology which was positive given concerns in recent years, however, the value added score was disappointing, Outcomes in Law and Criminology remain a concern;
- The strength of Chemistry outcomes was noted with an upward trajectory since the appointment of the current Head of Department. This HoD has shared good practice at a recent staff meeting;

- Applied outcomes were disappointing in value added terms and the focus remains on increasing the number of high grades, sharing of good practice between departments and a review of marking and standardisation. The first T Level end of qualification results seemed positive, however, value added was disappointing;
- Achievement in all GCSE subjects was strong with English and Maths far exceeding the national rate, in particular, in English where outcomes were outstanding;
- Other measures of progress include an increase in the number of students progressing to Russell Group universities and the 50% reduction in the number of U grades;
- The cross-College focus on narrowing the disadvantage gap has been effective in the sense that disadvantaged students performed well compared to their peers, particularly at A Level;
- In reflecting on what has made a difference, it was felt that a mandatory resit for students who fail their end of year 1 exams and the work of the pastoral teams in reviewing programmes of study had been effective. Similarly, the improvements to in-year tracking and a focus on establishing high expectations around behaviour and study habits along with continuing with teaching and learning priorities had all been contributory factors.

In response to challenge the following was noted:

- Although Maths GCSE results were above national rates, they had fallen compared to last year, but were still strong;
- The College would be reporting on students who progressed to Sutton 30 universities as well as Russell Group outcomes and this would be shared with the Curriculum and Quality Committee. It was also acknowledged that neither of these measures considered universities who offered the best courses in particular subjects but were not with the Russell or Sutton groups of universities. Examples of successful progression in this respect would be identified;
- The College entered a total of 12 students for the lesser AS qualification – this was with their agreement, where it would enable them positive progression and if it was the difference between leaving with a qualification rather than not. The College was against using this as a means of off-rolling and welcomed governor scrutiny of this.

The Principal acknowledged the work of the Vice Principal in her focus on developing clear progression for level 2 students, the work around interventions and disadvantage.

The Local Governing Body congratulated the College on strong academic performance and progression outcomes and asked that particular congratulations be shared with the Chemistry department on their behalf.

(ii) Quality Improvement Plan 2025-26

The Vice Principal presented the first iteration of the Quality Improvement Plan with a continued focus on the same areas.

Governors made reference to Pakistani students not performing as well as other groups and also their limited enrichment uptake and asked how the College planned to respond to this. It was suggested that focus groups were planned to identify how this group of students could be supported to make better progress and what enrichment they would like to be involved with. It was suggested that the College look to liaise with a college where Pakistani students make better than expected progress to identify if there are particular strategies that contribute to this.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the Quality Improvement Plan.

6. Strategic

(i) Summary of the Heart of Mercia Trust Board meeting

The summary was received. It was noted that Sheila Boniface has been appointed as Chair of the Trust Board.

(ii) Principal's Update Report

The Principal presented his update report noting the following points:

- The fire safety improvement works were completed over the summer with snagging remedial works to be completed during October half-term. The work provided opportunity to improve the aesthetics of the main staircase with a new balustrade and carpet and carpeting installed on some corridors. This provides a template for future such work as resources allow. It was noted that only the tutorial area, PE and Performing Arts areas had not been included in the fire safety work to date. Whilst this might be undertaken in future, these areas were lower risk given that they are on the ground floor with multiple fire exits and alternative means of escape;
- Enrolment went well, however, the highest ever number of applications did not translate into significant increased enrolment which was attributed to the belief that many more young people make duplicate applications to other more selective institutions. If the retention of students in the first six weeks follows more typical years, it is possible that the student number will be inline or slightly higher than last year. It was noted that the year 11 cohort this academic year sees more of a jump and, if the College maintains its usual share of this, then there will be a need to address capacity issues in preparation for next year;
- The College's emergency response consultants reviewed our emergency response documentation and whilst they felt that these were sound, it was advisable to have a separate Critical Incident Plan which should remain separate from Business Continuity Plans and procedures for dealing with lockdown etc. SLT have undertaken some scenario training using the new Plan as a basis and this worked well;
- Of the 28 students who accepted unconditional offers from the University of Worcester, the net effect was a net decrease of 38 grades against target and a 4% decrease in attendance. The College, along with other colleges in the Trust, are in dialogue with the university with some ideas put forward around students being required to demonstrate good study habits etc to benefit from lower offers.

In response to governor scrutiny, it was agreed to revisit the roles and responsibilities section as it currently reads that the Principal and Vice Principal cannot be out of College at the same time. Governors requested that reference be made to delegation to a senior member of staff in their absence.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the Principal's updated and **approved** the Critical Incident Plan subject to the revision requested.

(iii) Accountability Statement and Local Needs Duty

The Clerk presented the Accountability Statement for the 2025-26 academic year. The following points were noted:

- Whilst the requirements for 16-19 academies in relation to the submission and publication of the Accountability Statement were not the same as FE institutions, with the shift of the new Inspection Framework to include a judgement on how institutions meet the local skills need, it is important that the College fully engages with this;
- The report that HOW College have produced was kindly shared and assisted in the updating of the document. This now includes links to external sources of information about national and local context and data. Worcester, Wychavon, Redditch etc are now in the bottom 10% for social mobility when these areas were previously in the bottom 20%, This emphasises the importance of the College curriculum and links with local employers so as to promote opportunities for our students;
- The statement maps out how the College curriculum supports local need e.g. Health T Level providing future NHS workers;
- Progress against actions identified last year have been updated with new actions proposed for the coming year.

In response to challenge it was noted that it is hard to involve employers in discussions around the curriculum as specifications and content are set by exam boards, but the College continues to review skills shortages and how it might help respond to this. The College's success in significantly increasing the number of work placements undertaken last year was noted and the Principal invited the support of governors if there were able themselves, or had contacts, who could support with work placement opportunities. Governors suggested that an invitation for support from alumni via social media channels might be worthwhile considering.

The Local Governing Body **approved** the Accountability Statement.

7. Governance

(i) Clerk's Update

The Clerk provided the following updates:

- The current staff governor vacancy had been shared with staff and expressions of interest invited.
- Governors were required to complete the annual declarations and these would be shared via email along with the updated Handbook.
- The Clerk thanked governors for completing the training needs survey, the results of which would inform the training programme. Governors had indicated that their preference was to continue to incorporate training into Local Governing Body meetings and that additional twilight sessions for strategic discussion or training were preferred to a weekend event.
- The schedule of SFCA webinars for the 2025-26 academic year was shared;
- Governors were reminded of the link visit scheme and, if they identified a time when they were available to visit, the Clerk would look to identify suitable activities.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the contents of the update provided.

8. Stakeholder Feedback

- Two summer term reports from visits by the Safeguarding governor were received. Governors were reassured that this included a review of filtering and monitoring systems. A third report had been omitted from the papers but will be shared in agenda papers for the next meeting to ensure these were on the record.
- The Chair reflected on what he found to be another excellent display of student work at the annual art exhibition and the outstanding opportunities provided to students as part of the first Impact Week. Students had been fully engaged and appeared to enjoy the opportunity to be involved in these activities.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the updates provided.

8. Policy Reviews

(i) Student Union Constitution and Code of Practice

The policy was **approved** without change.

(ii) Management of the College Policy

The policy was **approved** with the minor changes as outlined.

(iii) Quality Assurance Policy

The policy was **approved** with the minor changes as outlined.

(iv) Freedom of Speech Policy

The policy was **approved** without change.

(v) Safeguarding Policy
The Safeguarding Policy was **approved** with the changes outlined to ensure compliance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 and to reflect the current composition of the College’s Safeguarding team.

(vi) Managing Allegations Policy and review of low level concerns
The policy was **approved** with the minor changes as outlined to ensure compliance with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.

The Principal referred to the summary of low-level concerns recorded during the 2024-25 academic year, the category of these, how they had been raised and the outcome. It was explained that the College perhaps uses this record differently to other institutions. A low-level concern is recorded where the harms threshold isn’t met, but there may be concerns around professional standards, safeguarding etc. This enabled the College to review entries and identify any patterns of behaviour.

The Local Governing Body **noted** the low-level concerns summary and were reassured by the most common way of the College being alerted to concerns being through staff raising these matters themselves which suggested an open and transparent culture.

9. Closing Standing Items

(i) Chair’s Action: No Chair’s action had been taken since the last meeting.

(ii) Health and Safety: The consideration of fire safety improvement works was noted in addition to the challenge provided in relation to the Critical Incident Plan.

(iii) Risk Management: No additional risk management items were raised.

(iv) Impact: Governors’ thorough scrutiny of students outcomes was noted.

(v) Any Urgent Business: Governors who were also employees of the Trust with the exception of the Principal and Clerk withdrew from the meeting so that a confidential and urgent matter could be raised.

(vi) Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 26th November 2025.

The meeting closed at 6.47pm.

Signed:
Sean Devlin (Chair)

Date:

LGB ACTION POINTS ARISING FROM MEETING ON 10TH SEPTEMBER 2025

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
LGB.10.09.25/5(i)	Report on positive progression outcomes outside of the Russell Group measure.	JLJ	November 2025	
LGB.10.09.25/5(ii)	Consider liaison with institutions where Pakistani students made better than expected progress.	EYS/JLJ	Ongoing	

ACTION POINTS BROUGHT FORWARD

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
LGB/04.06.25/9(iii)	Review the risk register to identify if there are any risks that can be closed.	EYS	September 2025	

ACTION POINTS COMPLETED

Report Reference	Action Point	Person Responsible	Completion	Check
LGB/04.06.25/5(i)	Clarify arrangements for financing the fire improvement works from the CEO/CFO and feedback to governors by the end of the month.	EYS	June 2025	✓

* Denotes amended action point.