



Minutes of the Heart of Mercia Multi-Academy Trust incorporating
Hereford Sixth Form College, King Edward VI College, Stourbridge
and Worcester Sixth Form College.

Meeting held using 'Teams' on 18th March, 2021

Present: Ken Hopkins (Chair),
Sheila Boniface, Marion Hawkins,
Toby Hooper (vice-chair),
Daniel Pearce-Higgins, Shirley Tully,
Peter Cooper (Executive Principal)

In attendance: Jonathan Godfrey (Clerk to the Trust), Sallyanne Griffiths (Finance Director),
James Miller (Chair HSFC LGB), John Hodt, (Chair KEVI LGB),
Gill Slater (Chair Worcester SFC LGB), Catherine Brearey (Deputy Principal HSFC)

ACTION

1. **Apologies for absence:**

None

2. **Chair's Introductory Remarks**

Ken Hopkins welcomed John Hodt to the first Board Meeting since KEVI College became members of the MAT.

3. **Declaration of interests and gifts**

None was declared

4. **Minutes of the meeting of 10th December, 2020, matters arising and outcomes of action points**

The minutes were approved. There were no matters arising and no action points.

5. Executive Principal's Report

Issues arising from the Executive Group meetings will now be dealt with in the EPs reports. Action Points from the meetings will be included.

Assimilation of KE VI College.

Peter Cooper echoed the welcome to John Hodt and thanked Jonathan Godfrey and Sallyanne Griffiths for their work in the conversion process.

Covid 19 issues

The mass testing system had been successfully introduced at all 3 colleges thanks to the hard work of staff. The number of positive tests is very low.

Teacher Assessed Grading of Exams

Catherine Brearey summarised the approach being adopted which is similar in all the MAT colleges.

There some differences compared with last summer – students do not have to be placed in rank order, the grade is not a projection but is based on a 'basket' of evidence which can be supplied to the board. This will comprise results of tests/ coursework set by staff and also externally set tests provided by the exam boards which will be run in May under exam conditions. These tests will be provided after Easter on-line to centres and also will be freely available to the public. It was noted that this could lead to different levels of pre-preparation for these exams depending on the schools and assistance provided by parents. Based on information provided staff will advise students how best to prepare. There will be an external verification process comprising risk based and random sampling. Results will be issued on 10th and 12th August. Students will be able to appeal on the grounds of administrative flaws in the process or challenging the evidence used by the college to support the grade awarded. The evidence will be scanned and collated for each student in each subject at HSFC and WSFC. KEVI will use a paper-based system. Each subject in each college will have a marking/moderator lead.

The following points arose in discussion:

Students and staff well-being should be supported during this stressful process.

Complaints will be dealt with by senior staff following agreed procedures.

The MAT and LGBs fully supported the approaches to be adopted.

Recognising the workload on senior staff will which inevitably arise dealing with issues throughout the Summer holidays, all college Chairs agreed that there should be flexibility for senior staff holiday arrangements so that operational considerations became the priority rather than the college year. Toby Hooper suggested If complaints could not be satisfactorily resolved by senior staff, governors or trustees could be part of an appeal process and volunteered his services. Peter Cooper will examine whether the existing complaints procedure covers this or whether a specific escalation of complaints about teacher assessed grades should be produced.

Changes to MAT and College Management Teams

Peter Cooper outlined the rationale behind the changes: Low SLT capacity at WSFC, over SMT capacity at KEVI – comparative costs high, MAT central over reliant on the QA Director and Executive Principal causing HSFC SMT capacity to be reduced. Two excellent candidates with complementary skills emerged during the WSFC VP recruitment process. Both candidates were appointed with one position being split between the MAT and WSFC.

One member of the SMT from KEVI will join the MAT central team for half of their role. The Central MAT team, fully or partially employed by the MAT central 5% top slice, will now comprise: Executive Principal (50%), QA Director (50%), VP WSFC (50%), VP or other KEVI (50%), Finance Director (100%), IT Director (50%), Potentially HR position (?)

and administrative support (50%).

In addition, the two Principals of WSFC and KEVI will be part of the team, although funded from their college budgets.

This increases capacity and allows greater and faster development of priority areas. Areas to focus on include:

- Work related learning
- Enrichment activities, including key life and knowledge skills for whole person development
- Practical IT skills and usage tips
- Ofsted readiness
- Management and teaching development, PGCE and new teacher development

6 Updates from College LGBs by Chairs

Hereford: Applications are at their highest level in recent years. LGB is very impressed by the college's response to Covid testing and the return of all students. Attendance has been very good. The college Strategic Plan had been approved unchanged.

King Edward VI: Applicant numbers and attendance very good. LGB hopes to meet in person at their next meeting. There are two vacancies for co-opted governors and the National Black Governors network has been contacted for assistance in recruitment.

Elections for 2 student governors are currently taking place. LGB impressed by response to Covid 19.

WSFC: Applications also high. Similarly pleased by college handling of testing and return to college. LGB recently reviewed safeguarding.

7. Minutes of Committee Meetings of 4th March, 2021

Audit Committee

Marion Hawkins summarised the key points: overall assurance that Risk Management was fit for purpose and the proposed process for appointing new auditors.

The minutes were approved. It was noted that the External Audit had been able to take place with auditors in college but the Internal audit had been carried out virtually. The auditors were happy this had not impacted on their work.

Finance and Resources Committee

Following discussion, the minutes and January and February Finance Reports were approved.

The 12 month forecast predicts a deficit of £193k, £130k greater than the budgeted deficit of £63k. The ESFA's preferred measure of performance, EBITDA, is forecast to be +£558, £98k less than the budgeted EBITDA of +£656. The ESFA's forecast measure of financial health for the 12 months is therefore "Good", when the forecast cash reserves are factored in.

King Edward VI College's financial results and position are not fully integrated into the reporting of the MAT at present. As financial reporting converges, King Ed's will report as the other colleges. At present the Income & Expenditure Account is published via an appendix, and may not incorporate all transactions, such as direct debits processed by King Ed's old bank account, which will eventually be closed.

Pay is forecast for the 12 months to be £156k over budget, with Hereford £122k under budget, Worcester £244k over budget, and Central £34k over budget.

Sallyanne Griffiths summarised the projected budget. It was noted that this year's budget included the nationally agreed pay rises for teaching and support staff. Although a national public sector pay freeze has been announced for next year, it was agreed to include a 1% contingency increase for next year which may be given as an unconsolidated award.

Search Committee

John Hodt reported that currently no KEVI local governor wished to join the MAT Board. This was not a reflection of a lack of commitment to the Trust but a desire to retain a close connection to their college. The issue will be revisited at the April LGB meeting.

It was agreed that the proposed MAT Board conference in October should take place at KEVI Stourbridge to include a social event, the night before, (involving KEVI governors). The day would comprise input and discussions on the MAT and member colleges and involve some staff and students. Peter Cooper will produce a draft programme. It was agreed the annual conference should be held at each college on a 3 year cycle.

8. Review of Scheme of Delegation

Following a meeting between John Hodt, Ken Hopkins and Jonathan Godfrey, a number of minor changes and updates were proposed. These changes were approved.

9 Times of Committee meetings and date of next meetings

These were confirmed as

Audit 3.00pm, Finance 4.00pm, Curriculum 5.00pm, 10th June, 2021

10. Any other business

None

11. Date of Next Meeting: 5.00pm, 24th June, 2021

It was agreed that this should be a face to face meeting at Worcester Sixth Form College, commencing at 5.00pm to be followed by refreshments.

