



Minutes of the Heart of Mercia Multi-Academy Trust incorporating Hereford and Worcester Sixth Form Colleges

Meeting held on 25th June, 2020

Owing to guidance on limiting the spread of the Corona Virus This meeting was held using Teams

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

In attendance: Jonathan Godfrey (Clerk to the Trust), Sallyanne Griffiths (Finance Director),
Andrea Marshall, Remley Mann (Principal, KEVI College, Stourbridge), John Hodt
(Chair, KEVI),
Peter Holmes (Chair, Cirencester College).

ACTION

KH noted that this would be Andrew Parsons final meeting as an HSFC governor and latterly a MAT trustee. Andrew was thanked for his hard work and enthusiasm and the great expertise he brought as Chair of the Audit Committee. All offered their best wishes for the future.

1. **Apologies for absence:**

There were no apologies for absence.

2. **Declaration of interests and gifts**
Gillian Slater Chair of Governors of WSFC

4. **Minutes of the meeting of 19th March, 2020 and matters arising**

These were approved as a correct record. There were no matters arising.

5. Minutes of the Executive Group Meeting

The minutes were noted and actions taken in response to the Corona virus crisis discussed. PC summarised the actions taken:

1. Providing safe working environment for a return to college on 15th June.
2. Gaining support of unions, students and parents.
3. Providing a blended delivery, comprising actual lessons, live and recorded transmission of lessons, virtual meetings with students and on-line resources.

Student attendance in college for lessons has been 18-20%. This has enabled social distancing to be maintained while those not attending have followed courses on-line. Student feedback has generally been positive with 70% stating they were happy with the approach adopted, 22% stating they were finding it hard but managing to cope and 8% feeling left behind.

There has been sharing of ideas and good practice on the blended learning approach between HSFC and WSFC.

RM and JH reported that similar approaches had been adopted at KEVI and Cirencester which were proving effective. Attendance in all colleges was similar. All reported problems with transport and IT issues relating to bandwidth and access.

All colleges are planning for a return to normal attendance by all students in September but will be able to use the blended learning approach if that is still necessary.

In addition to collaboration on blended learning other activities have continued on quality improvement and IT.

Updates on Hereford and Worcester SFCs

Hereford (JM)

- 6 3 new governors have been appointed all of whom run local businesses, with expertise in Conveyancing, IT architecture and Design. There is still a need to recruit a BAME governor. Feedback from local governors on meeting always in full rather than using committees is very positive and it has been agreed to continue this arrangement.

Worcester (GS)

A parent governor has recently been appointed but there are still board vacancies, including for a BAME person. GS suggested a MAT approach to LGB and Trustee recruitment be considered. WSFC still operates with committees but GS will observe a Hereford meeting to see how the whole board meetings work.

PC

GS

Executive Principal's Report and IT Update

The report and IT update were noted. PC opened his remarks by adding his thanks to Andrew for his support on many issues and most recently on Risk Management.

7. The following issues were raised in discussion:

'Centre-assessed' grades had now been returned. It was noted that since these would be moderated by the Boards using historical value-added data for the last three years

they could not be used to assess departmental performance in the usual way in September.

Freedom of Information requests by students for CAGs will be responded to using an agreed protocol and only senior staff will communicate with students or parents if requests come in.

Recruitment for next year is uncertain owing to a large number of issues - demographic growth, potentially increased numbers of GCSE and retake A level students impacting positively while impact of the Corona virus reducing a willingness to use public transport and increased competition from schools could reduce numbers. All colleges, including KEVI and Cirencester reported the same issues, although the former have a waiting list.

Growth plans for the MAT are progressing. Both KEVI and Cirencester have Head Teacher Board approval. Due diligence is ongoing with KEVI and a target date for joining is April 1st 2021. The Cirencester board are still assessing options for the future. A capital project which requires a loan would prevent their considering joining in the short term. PC had prepared a document summarising ongoing discussions with the Potteries Educational trust which is led by Stoke SFC. This existing MAT includes secondary schools and a primary school. It was agreed that PC should continue to discuss combining the two Mats and report to the Board. It was noted that if this were to happen the enlarged MAT would receive automatic Capital funding (~5% of the revenue funding of the MAT) each year. Some concern was expressed about an enlarged MAT resulting in increased bureaucracy. PC suggested the Hub model which gives significant autonomy to each College and any associated schools should mitigate this. It was stressed that any future enlargement proposals would need to be approved by the MAT board.

Minutes of Committee Meetings of 5th March, 2020

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Audit Committee

The minutes of the meeting were approved and DPH was welcomed as a member. Given that AP is leaving the Board there will now be only three Trustees on the Committee MH, GS and DPH. It had been noted previously that the RSC had insisted that no Trustee should be a Local Governor. This resulted in TH and SB both resigning from the Worcester SFC board. GS is currently still Chair of the WSFC board. A commitment having been made to the RSC and ESFA that GS would not occupy both roles it was agreed that GS would make a decision which role to relinquish. It was noted that JM, as Chair of HSFC attends MAT board meetings as an observer and GS could do this if she resigned as a MAT trustee.

Finance and Resources Committee

The minutes, monthly management accounts and staff pay award were approved. Following discussion the Budget for 2020/21 and the Financial Forecast were approved. It was confirmed that cancellation of transport owing to the lockdown had resulted in savings and no cancellation fees had been paid to contractors.

Curriculum and Quality Committee

The minutes were approved.

PC

9. Minutes of the meetings of MAT Chair and vice-chair with LGB Chairs and EP Of 22nd May and 12th June.

TH explained the rationale for setting up the meetings which was to provide support and formal approval for the MAT colleges' responses to the Corona crisis which needed to be implemented prior to the scheduled MAT board meeting. At the first meeting KH informed the group that he had taken Chair's action to approve Capital spending on IT at Worcester and temporary accommodation at Hereford.

Following discussion the minutes of the meetings were approved and the decision to instruct the Executive Principal to inform the Hereford Planning Officers that HSFC would initiate its building plans prior to receiving formal approval were supported.

It was agreed that this 'Business Continuity' group should meet when circumstances required and that SB, as nominated Safeguarding trustee, should be invited to attend as a member of the group but should not be required to attend if she did not identify any safeguarding issue likely to arise.

It was recognized that the group would invite any other Trustee to attend as circumstances might require (for example ST as chair of Finance and Resources).

10 Appraisal and remuneration of senior post-holders

The summary of agreed procedures was noted. It was agreed that since the Executive Principal is currently a Local Principal his appraisal should be carried out by the MAT Chair and LGB Chair. It was further agreed that the Remuneration Committee should comprise the MAT Chair and vice-chair and the Chair of the MAT Finance and Resources Committee and that on completion of appraisals the committee should meet before the end of term to agree on any salary changes.

11.. Committee membership and calendar of meetings

The committee membership and calendar for next year was noted.

12. Any other business
None

13. Date of next meeting:

**Committees: 24th September 2020 at Worcester Sixth Form College
Board : 8th October 2020 at Hereford Sixth Form College
(The format of the meetings will be confirmed nearer the date)**
