



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

Meeting held on 8th October, 2020

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

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 Hereford SFC LGB), Gill Slater (Chair WSFC LGB),
Remley Mann (Principal, KEVI College ,Stourbridge), John Hodt (Chair, KEVI),
Mark Ridgway (Head of IT)

1 **Apologies for absence:**

There were no apologies for absence.

2. **Declaration of interests and gifts**

None was declared

3. **Chairman's Remarks**

1. The Business continuity group established to deal with matters requiring urgent consideration between Board meetings had not needed to meet.
2. Meetings would still need to be held using 'Teams' and MR was thanked for the helpful guidance he provided.

ACTION

3. A Directors conference should take place to discuss strategic issues, update on key issues and meet MAT staff. Following discussion, it was agreed that this would be possible as an online event if Covid restrictions still applied but a non-socially distanced meeting would be much preferred. A meeting from 10.00-4.00 could perhaps take place on a day between the scheduled March and June Board meetings. The proposal will be reviewed in January.
4. The DFE have recently produced a useful summary of Academy Trust Structures and Role Descriptors. An electronic copy will be sent out with the minutes.

4. **Minutes of the meeting of 25th, June, 2020 , matters arising, outcome of action points**

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

Outcomes of action points:

PC is seeking to recruit BAME directors from current parents.

GS will attend the next WSFC local governing body meeting.

PC had established a protocol for dealing with complaints arising from CAGs.

5. **Update on local governing body meetings**

There were no issues arising which were not covered in this meeting's agenda.

6. **Minutes of Executive Group meeting**

The following points were noted:

KE Vi Stourbridge: RM and JH reported on progress with academisation. 1st February remains the target date, as suggested by ESFA, but this could be put back if necessary.

Due diligence by KE is almost complete and will be discussed at a governors' meeting on 4th November. The public consultation was initiated on 1st October. There have been no responses. TH raised the issue of the MAT's leasing buildings and the possibility of changes to rent and repair costs. It was noted this would be covered in the Due Diligence being carried out for the MAT. Approval to lease buildings will need to be gained from ESFA.

Collaborative Activities: An event has been arranged for departments and cross-college staff in all three colleges to meet on-line on 4th January.

Covid 19: PC reported on SFCA data which suggests that only one third of SFCs are like HSFC, WSFC and KE open completely, with the majority offering a combination of on-line and face to face teaching and a very small number still operating on-line only. All colleges reported the hugely positive response to returning full-time from students and parents and attendance has been very good.

Only a small number of complaints had been received.

All colleges have back-up plans in place should on-line teaching be required.

Work related activities: The University of Worcester have been helpful in organising activities and events in Arts and Humanities

MIS and IT: A team has been established to cover IT across the MAT, comprising the Network Manager (based in Hereford), the assistant Network Manager (based in Worcester and a Systems Engineer (based in Worcester). Joint systems and collaboration have resulted in increased resilience without increasing staff costs. The common MIS system operating in Hereford and Worcester allowed on-line registration to take place which reduced the time students needed to be in college during enrolment and significantly reduced staff work loads.

7. **Executive Principal's Report**

The report was noted. The following points were raised in discussion:

National CAGs showed significant grade inflation which was less apparent in those awarded by the 3 colleges, reflecting the rigour and objectivity brought to the process. The ongoing debate regarding the future of GCSEs and A levels over the method and timing of assessment mitigates against any planning in the short term. Obviously changes could impact on recruitment, guidance, curriculum, teaching methodology and progression.

Recruitment: The pleasing increase in recruitment at WSFC and the impact of school assessed GCSE grades on level 2 retake numbers in both colleges were noted.

Transport for Wales have provided one extra carriage in the morning but problems still persist. PC is continuing to apply pressure and Jesse Norman, the Hereford MP has arranged a further meeting. Jesse has suggested that one course of action could be to seek a Judicial Review into whether Transport for Wales is meeting its contractual obligations. The issue has been aired in the local and regional media.

Growth of the MAT: PC reported on Cirencester College which has decided to delay a decision on joining until at least 2022. It was suggested that one option to achieve growth to 5 academies, which would result in designated Capital Funding, would be to include PRUs or Special Schools. It was noted that the current growth strategy assumed an SFC-based grouping, building on existing expertise and the priority was to ensure KE Stourbridge were successfully integrated before further expansion was contemplated.

8. **Minutes of Committee meeting Meetings of 24th September, 2020**

Audit Committee

Following discussion, the minutes, Internal Audit Reports, Audit Plans and Annual Report of the Audit Committee were approved.

Finance and Resources Committee

Following discussion, the minutes and Finance Report were approved.

Curriculum and Quality Committee

Following discussion the Minutes were approved.

9. **MAT and College Strategic Plans**

The Strategic Plans for the MAT, HSFC and WSFC were discussed. It was noted how difficult long-term planning was in current circumstances. All plans were approved but will be reviewed in the New Year.

10. **Any other business**

There was no other business.

Date of next meeting: 10th December, 2020 at Worcester SFC.
