# Minutes of the Board of Directors' meeting
# Thursday 9 July 2026
# Held at King Edward VI College, Stourbridge

**Present:** Sheila Boniface (Chair)
Jane Britton
Peter Cooper
Marion Hawkins
Peter Jackson
Tim Newsholme
Daniel Pearce-Higgins
Shirley Tully

**In attendance:** Sallyanne Griffiths (Chief Financial Officer)

Linda Watkins (Director of Governance)
Holly Bembridge (Principal KEVI) [Left after presenting report]
Sarah Mackenzie (Safeguarding Lead) [Left after delivering safeguarding training]

**Action**

1. **Apologies for absence**
   Craig Holden and Katie Jackson. Samrawit Geday was unable to attend the meeting and would commence her term in September. Andrea Marshall (Director of Strategy and Improvement).

2. **Opening standing items**
   I. Declarations of interests: There were recorded from the Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Chairs regarding appointments for 2026/27. Directors would be requested to declare interests during the summer which would be published and submitted to the external auditors as part of the regularity audit.
   II. Discussion deemed to be confidential during the meeting would be recorded in a separate minute.
   III. There was no urgent business to be transacted at the meeting.

3. **King Edward VI sixth form college update**
   The Principal of King Edward VI College provided an update on college developments. On behalf of the Trust Board, the Chair thanked the Principal for her presentation and for the continued work of staff.

4. **Safeguarding training**
   The Board received safeguarding training from the Safeguarding Lead. Directors were reminded of their responsibilities in accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

5. **Chair's Report**
   The Chair thanked Directors and officers for their support throughout the year. She reported that she had attended the Executive Strategy Day held the previous day,

where discussions had focused on the development of the Trust's strategic roadmap to prepare the new strategic plan.

The Chairs of the LGBs had met in June when the Chairs had expressed their appreciation for the support provided by the Trust. The Chair also reported that she had met with the HR Director to discuss progress on the development of the Trust's People Strategy. She had met with the Principal at KEVI to discuss mechanisms to gain uniformed feedback from stakeholders.

**6. Minutes of the last meetings and matters arising**

The Board agreed to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 30 April and 15 June 2026. There were no matters arising.

**7. CEO's Report**

The Chief Executive Officer had prepared a written report. He reflected on discussions held during the recent Executive Strategy Day when there was particular consideration to the challenges and opportunities facing each academy and the benefits of collaborative working across the Trust.

Trustees were advised that the Sixth Form Colleges Association had reservations regarding current apprenticeship arrangements. The Board also noted confirmation of the national pay award which would be outlined further as part of the budget. The CEO reported that new Head at WSFC and JKHS would commence at the start of the next academic year, both following successful internal appointments.

**8. Finance report to May 2026**

The CFO presented the management accounts to May 2026. Directors noted an EBITDA position. The CFO advised that, notwithstanding this variance, the Trust was expected to achieve a broadly breakeven position following the receipt of National Insurance and pension grant funding covering the period April 2026 to March 2027. The Board further noted that the Trust's balance sheet remained strong.

**9. Trust budget 2026/27 and 3-year financial forecast**

The CFO presented the budget for 2026/27 and the three-year financial forecast as recommended by the Finance and Resources Committee.

Directors noted the assumptions underpinning the forecast, including funding rate increases and projected pay awards. It was reported that the budget projected a deficit of £127k in 2026/27 before returning to surplus in future years. The Board also noted changes to employer pension contribution rates, with the Teachers' Pension Scheme rate reducing from 28% to 17% and noted that schools would experience differing contribution levels.

The budget had been prepared based on 0.5% funding increase for post-16 provision. Subsequently, DfE had announced a revised increase over 2 years of 3.5% and 3% in years 1 and 2 respectively. Funding in schools would be different.

Following discussion, Directors approved the budget recommended by the Finance and Resources Committee for submission to the DfE. A revised budget would be presented to the Board for adoption in the autumn taking account of the additional funding. SAG

**10. Summary from Committees: June 2026**

The Committee Chairs referred to the minutes and highlighted key points from the meetings with the following key items approved at the recommendation of the Committees:

I. Audit & Risk Committee: 11 June 2026
   a. RSM's audit needs strategy 2026/27-2029/30
   b. Cooper Parry's external audit memorandum and letter of engagement to 31 August 2026

II. Finance & Resources Committee: 11 June 2026
   a. Health and safety policy
   b. Sustainability policy
   c. Whistleblowing policy

III. Curriculum & Quality Committee: 11 June 2026

IV. Search and Governance Committee: 1 June 2026

**11. Governance: Appointments to the Trust Board 2026/27**

[Sheila Boniface and Peter Jackson left the room for items i and ii and the Director of Governance presented the items for approval]

The Board considered the recommendations for governance appointments for the 2026/27 academic year and agreed to the following appointments:

I. Chair: Sheila Boniface
II. Vice Chair: Peter Jackson
III. Audit and Risk Committee: Craig Holden
IV. Finance and Resources Committee: Shirley Tully
V. Curriculum and Quality Committee: Daniel Pearce-Higgins
VI. Search and Governance Committee: Peter Jackson
VII. Remuneration Committee: Craig Holden
VIII. Designated Directors: Links in 2026/27: Careers Information and Guidance (Marion Hawkins), Safeguarding (Katie Jackson), Inclusion and SEND (Tim Newsholme) and Digital (Peter Jackson)
IX. LGB Chairs:
   a. HSFC: Danielle Thompson
   b. WSFC: Sean Devlin
   c. KEVI: Jules Singh
   d. The Chantry: Esther Campsall
   e. JKHS: Paul Deneen
X. Kevin McGuiness, appointed as an independent Governor at KEVI for 4-year term in office
XI. Tom Gregory and Rachel Dobson appointed as independent Governors at WSFC for 4-year term in office

The Board placed on record its appreciation for the contribution made by John Hodt during his long service as Chair of Governors at KEVI.

[Jane Britton joined the meeting]

**12. Stakeholder engagement feedback**

The CEO presented the annual stakeholder engagement feedback report explaining that most measures remained on track and that the executive team had undertaken a comprehensive review of the outcomes.

The Board noted that Prevent was marginally lower at KEVI with assurance of measures implemented to address; this included the appointment of student prevent ambassadors and developing tutor programme schemes of work to further embed the Prevent Agenda.

The Chair reported that she had met with the Principal at KEVI before the meeting with discussion about timescales and processes for stakeholder engagement in the colleges.

**13. Committee items for information**

The following items had been discussed by the Committee and were presented for information and assurance.

I. Audit and Risk Committee
   a. Risk register Trust Portal Home
   b. Cybersecurity, data protection and fraud report
   c. KEVI Free School Meals

II. Finance & Resources Committee
   a. Estates report
   b. Health and safety report
   c. HR report

III. Curriculum and Quality Committee
   a. Labour market, case studies and Oxbridge offers report
   b. Safeguarding report
   c. Data report
   d. Quality report

V. Search and Governance Committee
   a. Board and Academies Trust Code self-assessment (RAG rated)
   b. Training, development and engagement report 2025/26
   c. Governance development plan 2026/27
   d. Calendar of business 2026/27

**14. Summary from LGB meetings**

The summary was noted with recommendations for approval already endorsed by the Board. Minimal reporting following changes agreed to reporting. Governorhub has all information accessible to Trustees. Avoiding duplication but ensure Ofsted framework covered. Streamline reporting into concise and same format. Schools to do same in phases with a KPI sheet for each. Need reassurance that scrutiny is taking place by the LGBs. Develop KPIs for SFC and schools

**15. Any other business**

The Chair thanked Trustees for their commitment, support and contribution throughout the year.

**16. Date of Next Meeting**

Trust Board: **Thursday 15 October 2026** commencing at 6.00pm at The Chantry (venue TBC)