



# GOVERNORS' MEETING

## Minutes of the meeting

### on 18 November 2021 in College room R206/7

**Present:** Mr Adrian Allan, Mr Andy Clarke, Mr Peter Cooper, Miss Lois Knight, Dr David Langley, Mr James Miller (Chair), Mrs Vicky Orsmond, Rev KIna Robertshaw, Ms Beth Rudolf, Mr Felix J Smithson, Mrs Danielle Thompson, Mrs Catriona Ward, Sarah Woodall. (13)

**In attendance:** Mr Robert Gorman (Clerk), Mrs Sallyanne Griffiths (Finance Director), Mark Ridgeway (IT and MIS Director), Mrs Catherine Brearey (Vice Principal), Mr Paul Rogers (Estates Manager).

The Chair indicated that the agenda items would be taken in revised order.

#### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Andrew Roberts. (1)

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS

The Chair had received the offer of two complimentary ticket for the 'Messiah' at Malvern Priory.

#### 3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 OCTOBER 2021

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

#### 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The Principal confirmed that the College had heard a couple of weeks ago that the bid based on a 2 storey building had been successful, with the profile of costings to be submitted by 25 November. The Principal was delighted that the College had secured the funding, adding that flexible generic space is more viable. Copies of architects drawings and artist's impressions of the proposed build had been circulated to Governors.

The bid for a 2-storey building was based on £2.7m costs, and a 3-storey build would likely incur additional costs of £700k to £900k, funded from College reserves as discussed at the last LGB meeting. The whole development would include relocation of dance studios and sports facilities, removal of mobile classrooms and more classroom provision. One mobile unit would be temporarily relocated to be used while work is completed. Governors asked questions about:

Commitment to reusing space	- More space would be created including student social space
Projected finish date	- Build to start in February/March 2022 with expectation of being ready in summer 2023
Any funding loss if project overruns	- No consequences.
Any student involvement in planning	- Feedback from student perception surveys had been taken into account. Plans include increased social area.

The Finance Director confirmed her satisfaction with funding arrangements for a 3 storey build, and builders identified through the tendering process were set to go. Governors again confirmed their agreement to the 3 storey build, and spend from Reserves up to £900k. Governors **AGREED** that the Chair and Vice Chair were to be consulted as to the final figure, and had delegated power to agree.

There were no other matters arising.

*Adrian Allan joined the meeting at this point and Principal and Estates Manager left.*

## 8. FINANCE REPORT

The Finance Director presented the Summary Financial Results for the 2 months to 31 October 2021, stating that, at this stage results do not include the roll-forward of opening debtors and creditors, and the forecast has not been restated. The external audit has now been finalised and there is nothing troubling in the management letter.

The Teachers' pay award was 1%. SFCA are still in negotiations on the College's behalf for Support staff. In response to a Governor's question about the Chancellor's Budget and any effect on funding, the Finance Director confirmed that ESFA Pay Award and Pension funding streams would continue, and would be included the 3 years of College budget.

Overall Earnings before Interest, Taxation, Depreciation and Amortisation (EBITDA) for the MAT of £850k at this stage, well in excess of the £198k budget.

The Finance Director indicated that she felt comfortable about HSFC finances. The Balance Sheet remaining strong, with net current assets of £2.8m.

Governors **NOTED** the Summary Results for the period to October 2021.

*The Finance Director left the meeting at this point.*

## 5. CHAIR'S BUSINESS

The Chair reported that the Search Committee had met on 21 October to consider the appointment of a new governor. The notes of the Committee meeting were approved.

The Chair, being aware that the Board included several newer members and that Covid restrictions had affected the usual induction, asked Governors for suggestions as to what induction training there should be, and what might be included in any induction pack. Any comments could be sent to the Chair or the Clerk.

In response to a question from the new Student Governor about Board structure, the Chair outlined the composition of the Board with Staff, Student, Independent Governors and the Principal.

## 6. CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk indicated that, as last year, the Governors' Skills audit would use the National Governance Association's template. The latest version had reduced to 29 questions in 3 sections, including self-evaluation. It was intended to email out the dashboard to Governors, to be emailed back to the Clerk once completed. Governors were in agreement.

The Clerk presented the updated HSFC Governance Procedures, and confirmed that the procedures ran to 12 pages, the remainder of the document comprising appendices. The updates were mainly due to changes to dates and references of guidance including the DfE's Governance Handbook for Academies October 2020. Appendix 13 of the previous version had now been removed, and other appendices updated.

After a brief discussion, Governors **APPROVED** the HSFC Governance Procedures 2021-22.

## 7. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

The Vice Principal presented the Principal's report which had been circulated to Governors, and commenced by drawing Governors' attention to data on average group sizes over the last 3 years. A level and Level 2 group sizes had reduced slightly since 2019, and reasons were outlined. Balancing of group sizes across all groups helped to balance the College's budget. In response to a Governor's question about benchmarking, the Vice Principal indicated that experience was shared with other SFCs.

The College had recently worked with another SFC which had been inspected this year, and the Vice Principal outlined their Ofsted experience, and in particular what was involved in the Inspectors' meeting with Governors. A list of questions posed to Governors was circulated, and the Vice Principal went on to discuss how HSFC might address the questions and others around HSFC's areas for development, safeguarding, leadership and curriculum. In response to a Governor's question about length of Inspection visit, the Vice Principal confirmed that a college would typically have a phone call on Friday, Inspectors come on Tuesday for 4 days.

The College was making efforts to increase contact with more local feeder schools. The average conversion rate from feeder schools was around 50% but there was a considerable variation between institutions. Some School Heads had suggested that school's teachers meet up with HSFC heads of department to learn more about the College's A Levels provision.

The Chair commented on the disappointing academic record of the secondary schools in the county – significantly below the national average. Governors discussed this with the Vice Principal.

*Adrian Allan left the meeting at this point*

Attendance overall at 91.8% is down on previous years. Retention to November at 96.3% was also down on last year. Covid is clearly a factor and comparisons with previous years are problematic.

MAT issues discussed included staff development and virtual college programme where more was being done on-line.

In relation to transport issues, the Principal reported that transport links seemed to be working smoothly compared with last year.

Governors **NOTED** the report.

## **10. ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION**

The Vice Principal presented a chart showing HSFC attendance over the last 5 years and confirmed the fall over the last 12 months in overall College attendance has been experienced by other colleges, and went on to outline what HSFC staff do to react to changes in attendance, and their follow-up actions. Colleges have seen student anxiety and stress increase over the lockdown period. HSFC wellbeing coordinators are holding workshops to offer help and the number of counsellor hours have increased.

The College is taking a strong line in not becoming a virtual college, believing it is better to be in the classroom.

The Vice Principal presented a chart showing HSFC retention over the last 5 years and confirmed the fall in Retention to November at 96.3%, previous year 97.1%. Several points were considered in relation to the retention figures, and the Vice Principal went on to outline what the College is doing to improve retention.

## **9. IT, HARDWARE AND NETWORK UPDATE**

The IT and MIS Director presented an update report on developments since the previous report in November last year. Support staff rollout of laptops is targeted for completion this year.

The report went on to the Digital Technology Strategy 2021-24, including expected capital projects and spend over the strategy period. A spend of £40-70k for 2021/22 is involved in the upgrade of the Wireless network, and a significant amount is spent each year on replacing devices in line with the College's replacement programme.

The strategy includes Teaching and Learning and Compliance Objectives. Copies of the strategy had been circulated to Governors.

The update in relation to IT Recovery included improvements in cybersecurity posture, and further actions planned to increase protection further.

The Chair felt that a great deal had been learnt from IT use during the pandemic and felt that this was a good time to take the pedagogic elements forward with no preconceptions. A Governor commented on the beneficial effects of a 'disrupter' in her organisation.

A Staff Governor noted that the IT network support during the pandemic restrictions had been exceptional. The Chair thanked the Director for doing such an excellent job in this critical area.

Governors **NOTED** the report.

**11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 20 January 2022, at 6.00pm.