



GOVERNORS' MEETING

Minutes of the meeting on 10 March 2022 in the College Meeting Room

Present: Mr Andy Clarke, Mr Peter Cooper, Mr James Miller (Chair), Rev Kina Robertshaw, Mrs Nicola Taylor, Mrs Catriona Ward. (6)

In attendance: Mr Robert Gorman (Clerk), Mrs Sallyanne Griffiths (Finance Director), Mr John Pratt (Director of Studies)

The Chair welcomed back the Clerk following his absence.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Ian Archer, Beth Rudolf, Danielle Thompson, David Langley, Andrew Roberts, Felix Smithson. (6)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS AND GIFTS

None.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2022

The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The Principal confirmed that work on the new build project was underway with the temporary buildings moved.

5. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

The Chair had circulated the HEI Destination data for HSFC's 2021 leavers by subject and by university. 19 students took places at Oxbridge and 54 at Cardiff.

6. CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk thanked Governors for their cards and messages of support over the last two months or so, which were much appreciated. In relation to the Skills Audit questionnaires, a few still outstanding were being chased. A summary report would be prepared for the next meeting in any case.

8. FINANCE REPORT

The Finance Director presented the Summary and College Financial Results for the 5 months to 31 January 2022, adding that the funding increase for each College in the MAT had been received.

The surplus to January £272k remained well ahead of the budgeted deficit of £112k due to the front-loading of EFSA funding. Earnings before Interest, Taxation, Depreciation and Amortisation (EBITDA) for HSFC of £1067k, at this stage, were well in excess of the £234k budget. Other factors adding to the Surplus included lower transport costs due to lockdown and savings on teaching staff costs. £50k had been included for summer works expenditure. The Principal confirmed that the financial funding settlement had helped this year.

In response to a Governor's question about fuel costs, the Finance Director confirmed that College supplies were purchased through West Mercia Energy and currently increases were relatively small. The College, through the Estates Manager, working on a strategy, was starting to see benefits from lowering usage.

The updated forecast produced a deficit for HSFC of £450k, at this early stage, in line with the budgeted deficit, with EBITDA at £547k against £550k budget. The forecast includes the pay award, and 5% general inflation. The forecast for July return shows

no significant variances at this stage. The Chair commented that the ESFA's financial health measure seemed to favour the generation of surpluses by colleges.

The Finance Director indicated that the Balance Sheet remained strong.

Governors **NOTED** the Summary and College Results for the period to January 2022.

Andy Clarke joined the meeting at this point

7. **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

The Principal presented his report, already circulated to Governors. The College's rugby team had been successful in getting to the final of the West Midlands Championships on 30 March. Some tickets were available for any Governors to attend. The Chair wished for congratulations and best of luck to be passed on.

A summary of Attendance and Retention statistics for 6 years to 2021/22 included in the Report, indicated on overall Attendance of 89.6% for 2020/21 (95.3% 20/21), and Retention at March of 95.8% (97.9% 20/21). The figures, down on the previous high standards, reflected the 'Covid' effect.

HSFC intention at this point is to focus on teaching and work towards the taking of examinations. The Principal went on to outline briefly some recent staff changes. A lot of new staff appointments have been made due to retirements and changes in recruitment patterns. The next 18 months could see important changes affecting the local environment and schools within it, which in turn could affect the MAT and demands on the Principal's time. The Principal was committed to ensuring that HSFC continued to operate successfully.

It was thought that an Ofsted inspection could be expected at any time now.

Governors **NOTED** the report.

9. **STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

The Principal presented the Heart of Mercia's Strategic Development Plan 2021 to 2024, explaining that the Plan had been brought together by 2 or 3 people from different areas within each College of the MAT. The Plan shows much of what the Colleges and the MAT are doing and trying to achieve. The MAT's Vision and Values and Strategic Objectives, derived from its Vision and Values, are included in the Strategic Development Plan.

The Plan outlines the MAT Governance and Operating Structure, Challenges facing the College, including maintaining numbers in the face of increased competition.

Other Key challenges included:

- continuing to develop curriculum to meet needs of students
- meeting the challenges of funding pressures
- maintaining quality of outcomes and experience for students despite funding challenges
- developing an effective operating and governance structure for the MAT.

The Operating Plan contains detailed actions for 2021 to 2024 with timescales, and a Progress Update report to date, across 4 sections:

- Educational Excellence
- ensuring Sustainability
- ensuring students are Ready for the Real World
- creating an Enjoyable Experience for All

In relation to point 1 of the section 3, and raising aspirations, the Chair felt that something different could be done to encourage students from across the social spectrum, especially with lower achieving feeder schools. The Chair also noted that

WSFC is to implement a mentoring programme with Worcester University for current year1 students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Principal explained how the MAT's vertical and horizontal model was unique in the country. Key is having leaders to sustain the model at its various stages. The Principal added that HSFC could use the same model of Strategic Development Plan and monitoring.

The Board **NOTED** the MAT's Vision and Values, Strategic objectives and the Strategic Development Plan 2021 to 2024, and viewed the strategy and approach favourably.

The Principal went on to present an update report on **HSFC's IT Hardware and Network** from HSHFC's IT and MIS Director, and outlined developments since the previous report in November 2021. The rolling replacement programme for computers is now complete for this academic year. The upgrade of HSFC's wireless network infrastructure is to be explored with vendors. The aim is to have equipment installed for the new academic year. Governors **NOTED** the report. The Chair stressed the importance of a good level of funding for IT.

10. **STAFF PAY POLICY**

The Principal reported on the MAT's Pay Policy review January 2022. Copies of the Draft Revised Policy v1 and Explanatory note v1 had been circulated to Governors, for consultation within the MAT and with LGBs. The note summarised the MAT's powers and duties in relation to the setting of staff pay, with the Executive Principal with local Principals being responsible. Governors **NOTED** the documents and were in agreement.

7. **STAFF WELL BEING AND PULSE SURVEY**

John Pratt, Director of Studies, presented a report on **Staff Well-Being**, and outlined how the College is complying with HSE standards and ongoing Health and Fitness events and activities. The Chair felt that activities should generally be free, and the Principal agreed to investigate.

The College has also signed up to the Education Staff Wellbeing Charter. [DfE's Education Staff Wellbeing Charter is a declaration of support for, and set of commitments to, the wellbeing and mental health of all working in education in England, including temporary and support staff. All state funded schools and colleges are invited to sign up to the charter, as a shared commitment to protect, promote and enhance the wellbeing of their staff.]

The DOS went on to outline the Virtual Staff Room held on MSTeams. Operational targets achieved and planned for 2021-22 were discussed. A Teacher Workload forum held before half term in January identified 5 areas:

- teachers' concerns and responses
- impact of Covid restrictions on students
- technology
- personal tutor system
- teaching commitment

Staff Governors expressed support for the initiative as very positive. The Chair commented that staff are the biggest and most important resource and a top priority.

The DOS then reported on the **Staff pulse survey**. The survey is a short, quick survey sent out to staff on a regular monthly basis to provide a pulse check on satisfaction, job role, communication, relationships, and work environment. The survey is anonymous and can be benchmarked. On a key question of would staff recommend HSFC as a place to work, 88% said yes.

Governors thanked the DOS for all his work **NOTED** the reports.

11. **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION REPORT**

John Pratt, Director of Studies, presented the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Report 2020-2021 for HSFC. Copies had been circulated to Governors.

The DOS took Governors through the comprehensive Report, highlighting:

- Summary of events and activities to advance and celebrate Equality, Diversity and Fundamental British Values across the College. The summary is posted on the College website, but Covid arrangements have meant that a number of activities had been cancelled or postponed. Where opportunities arise, teachers make explicit reference to these themes in lessons and students are reminded of them in tutorials
- Updated data from Summer 2021 exam results and destinations according to Protected Characteristics
- Student laptops and 16-19 Bursary Fund
- Staff wellbeing and protected characteristics survey.

The College is open access with students from all levels and disadvantaged backgrounds. Governors discussed widening access with particular emphasis on Free School Meals students, and the DOS indicated that he would review the current objectives in the light of the discussion. Alis Ever6 free school meals data included in the report demonstrated that the College was in line with national data.

Data on Students' Protected Characteristics (including race and ethnicity, gender, religion and belief and disability as defined by DfE) is gathered from Application Forms and Enrolment Questionnaires. Value-added according to protected characteristics is monitored, and the College strives to reduce the achievement gap between different ethnic groups, though the small numbers involved meant that statistical significance was an issue. Individual BME students' progress is monitored closely by DOSs, so a narrative for each can be developed. Destination data by characteristic was reviewed.

Equality Objectives for 2020-21 including the achievement against targets were reviewed in the Report. A full list of objectives is posted on the College website. Equality objectives set for 2021-22 included:

- continue to raise awareness of ED&I and FBV issues raised in lessons
- review LGBTQ+ support
- update ED&I Policy
- monitor Gender Pay Gap and review relevant policies
- neuro-diversity training for staff

The College's Accessibility Plan 2021-22 was also reviewed and discussed. The College always seeks to improve accessibility for all groups to all curriculum areas.

The Chair thanked the Director of Studies for such a comprehensive report, and the huge amount of effective work within the College. The Board felt that no Governor was required to lead on E&D at present. The Board **NOTED** the Report.

12. **GOVERNOR INDUCTION, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

The Chair presented the updated Governor Induction, Training and Development Policy 2022-23, which had been circulated for comment. Governors were content with the updates, and **APPROVED** the Policy.

13. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None

14. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Thursday 5 May 2022, at 6.00pm.