

**Minutes of the Holyrood Academy Local Governance Committee Meeting  
held at 17.00pm on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at Holyrood Academy**

Attendees	Initials	Attendees	Initials
Peter Chapple	PC	Daniel Pritchard	DPr
Ali Collins	AC	Richard Poole (via MS Teams)	DPo
Jonathan Farey	JF	David Pugh	DP
Barney Haydon	BH	Jason Swarbrick	JSK
Pauline Lamond	PL	Kate Yamada	KY
Kathleen Lemon	KL		
Dave MacCormick	DMc	Paula Gibson - Clerk	PG

Apologies / Absence (reason if required)	Initials	In Attendance	Initials
Lorraine Heath, CEO	LHE	Tina Coles – Business Manager	TC
		Sam Davison – Senior Deputy Headteacher / DSL	SDa
		Jo James – Assistant Headteacher	JJ

Signed as a correct record of the meeting: .....

Date:.....

## 1. Welcome and Apologies

DP welcomed all to the meeting – apologies were received from Lorraine Heath (LHE). DP introduced Kathleen Lemon (KL) as the new staff Governor.

## 2. Curriculum Review / Teaching for Excellence – Jo James, Assistant Headteacher

DP introduced Jo James, Assistant Headteacher, who circulated a report to Governors.

### Curriculum Review

JJ explained that in 2019/20 lead staff for Teaching and Learning, Curriculum and CPD had worked together to form a cohesive plan and that HA had moved from a two year Key Stage (KS) 3 to a three-year KS3 offer. JJ updated Governors on what had been achieved this academic year and what the next steps are, including the development of a second curriculum offer of cultural capital experiences.

**Governors ASKED** if the second curriculum offer was explicit in its offer of “cultural capital”? The phrase is used by Curriculum Leaders, but is not explicit in the second curriculum intent statement, although the intent is clear that every student should have the opportunity for high quality provision of access to the Arts and External Visits, which would also encompass exposure to different literature, arts, and music. Greg Ireland (GI), Assistant Head, is leading on this element, and once finalised he will present to the LGC and start to raise parental awareness about the offer.

**Governors ASKED** how the Academy could measure the success of the second curriculum? It is GI's role to engage with students and parents, which will be via Parent / Student voice. The success will also be seen in the classroom via creativity and quality of students work, rather than a quantifiable success, although the take up of external visits, sports events etc. can be measured for disadvantaged and SEND students. **Governors AGREED** that some firm evidence would be needed beyond take up, but DMc reminded all that it was also about creating a sense of belonging, which may have a positive impact on attendance, but it would be difficult to specifically understand without student voice.

**Governors ASKED** about how quality assurance (QA) assessments take place? JJ clarified that this was about how students work is assessed and how this is used by staff, rather than on staff performance.

### Teaching for Excellence (TfE) Model

This had been introduced in September 2019, and JJ updated Governors on what had been achieved this academic year and what the next steps are. The 2019/20 CPD program had been tied into the TfE model.

JJ detailed the ‘Teaching Walk’ approach that has been used to support staff and standardise advice provided across the Academy. This is being used to help change the culture of teaching practice and to move away from ‘judging staff’ to ‘coaching staff’. The coaching model will be led by LHE, DMC, JJ and KL who will then cascade the training downwards – this could take up to two years to implement for all senior and middle leaders being trained as coaches.

**Governors ASKED** how new staff are introduced to the TfE model?

JJ explained that this is not HA specific as some elements are common to all schools as they are recognised as techniques that work. TFE forms part of the CPD entitlement and that NQT's have a bespoke package that include activities such as planning and delivery. All staff have access to a number of different modules of CPD.

**Governors ASKED** if any of the TFE model was subject specific?

No, these are expected principles, but there remained room for individuality in teachings styles or subjects such as Science, Art, PE. This model outlines what the non-negotiables are and sets high standards with QA assurances built in. The coaching model will help to address gaps between high performing staff and those experiencing difficulties and will be rolled out via the new staff induction process.

The aim was to build faith and trust in the process with transparency being key. DMC made Governors aware that there was some risk that the Trade Unions would not agree to the number of meetings, but he pointed out that the in school TU reps are supportive and will provide relevant feedback to the process as necessary.

**Governors ASKED** how SEND students are incorporated into this model.

TFE model breaks down ceiling barriers and JJ explained that research has taken place in and CPD offered on modelling, removal of temporary scaffolding, guided improvement and collaborative learning and these have all involved the SENDCo.

**Governors ASKED** how identified models and examples are used to support students?

Staff know students and get to a point where they are able to use different strategies.

There were no other questions, and Governors thanked JJ and she left the meeting at 17.49pm

### **3. Declarations of Interest**

Parent Governors were mindful of any discussions, which may pertain to the re-opening of particular year groups.

### **4. Minutes of the Meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2020 and Matters Arising**

DP signed the minutes as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting held on the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

- 1) The Chair sent a letter to the LA regarding concerns about the length of time that EHCP applications were taking to process. Since then, the LA have had an Ofsted SEND review, which identified significant weaknesses and LA Senior Leaders have been told that they have to address these concerns. AC explained that the Primary Heads have written a joint response and DMC has provided his response to the SASH (Somerset Association of Secondary Heads), in which he also raised concerns about the tone of the response briefing sent to schools from Julian Wooster, Director of Children's Services. Due to the inappropriate nature of this, DMC has chosen not to circulate to staff and reminded all that EHCP statutory assessments as well as limited access to Educational Psychologists and CAMHS is not an issue for individual schools. SDA felt that the video briefing from the LA "passed the buck" from the LA to Schools.
- 2) The Chair sent a letter to the LA regarding concerns about attendance processes and the lack of support for schools – this has been acknowledged, but no further response has been received.
- 3) Health & Safety Policy – TC, BH and DPr met for a site walk during the February half-term, and TC, BH, DPr and DP had reviewed the policy. Questions had been raised about this policy and these have been fed back to the Trust – it had been agreed that the policy as presented

was more appropriate for a stand-alone school, and so this is being redrafted and is being more appropriately integrated/contextualised.

## 5. Safeguarding Update – Sam Davison, Senior Deputy Headteacher / DSL

DP introduced SDA who has completed a very significant piece of work following the Safeguarding Review, which took place at the start of the year. An updated action plan was circulated to Governors, which also included -

- a draft Safeguarding Matters newsletter which is to be rolled out in September,
- a draft Safeguarding Report, devised with support from DP and KY, which SLT and Governors will be provided with at end of each term and
- a breakdown of the concerns raised during the COVID19 period.

SDa took Governors through updates in the Safeguarding Action Plan and explained that staff have also undertaken online training in My Concern as well as Unconscious Bias.

The budget does not allow for student counselling however, the PFSA is training to be an Educational Psychologist and has offered some free counselling as part of her own training. The Student Wellbeing Offer will be in place for the academic year 2020/21.

**Governors ASKED** how COVID had affected Safeguarding needs now and going forward?

SDa referred Governors to the circulated welfare report and explained the differences in Level 4, Additional Welfare and Vulnerable students. SDA explained that since COVID there has been a reduction in the highest priority Level 4 (Child Protection, Children in Need) students – this is not indicative to an improvement in their circumstances but rather on the pressures of Children’s Social Care (CSC). SDA and her team continue to support these students as if they remained at Level 4.

SDa explained that the list provided by the LA for vulnerable students was not comparable to the list of students known to the school and that the LA had been unable to explain the reasons for their vulnerability, other than they may have accessed support outside of a school setting. Phone calls have been made to these families and many of these students have been persuaded to return to school, which has been very positive. **Governors ASKED** if this had raised identifying which students are vulnerable – this has not been the case, students are known as Priority Groups not as Vulnerable. SDA explained that the only issue from this had been the formation of a few unhelpful relationships being built between students, but that in the main the experience had been very positive. The negative influence of some peer groups may return once students return school full time. SDA will hold reintegration meetings with some students to assist with their transition and to reiterate expectations.

**Governors were CONCERNED** about the differences in the Vulnerable List provided by the LA – both SDA and DP have raised these concerns to the LA and at an appropriate time, it was hoped that reflections could be made.

SDa explained that Social, Emotional, Mental Health (SEMH) concerns were likely to increase on return to school. All students with an EHCP have been risk assessed as safe to remain at home; some have chosen not to return to on site provision despite being encouraged to do so.

DMc noted that under SDA’s leadership, provision for key groups had been excellent and that she had done an excellent job in producing such a comprehensive action plan. KY reiterated

DMc's confidence explaining that in her role as Safeguarding Governor she had been impressed by the Academy and by SDa.

**KY REQUESTED** that all Governors complete the online training in KCSIE, Prevent and Safer Recruitment.

**Action:** TC to provide link to training and ALL to complete

Governors thanked SDa for her comprehensive update and she left the meeting at 18.30pm

## **6. Budget Update – Tina Coles, Business Manager**

DP welcomed TC to the meeting, who clarified that the Academies financial year ran from September to August. Detailed papers have been circulated in advance of the meeting.

**Governors ASKED** for clarification about the UAT Top Slice – this is standard across all Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) and is expected as part of DfE MAT applications. This is currently 4.1% of GAG funding (the main school budget) and is used to meet certain centralised services. TC pointed out that UAT have a small central team, but it was also used to fund elements such as school improvement, HR, Payroll, Trust Finance as well as the CEO role. TC explained that these were recognised as a low expense and otherwise these costs would be included in the individual school budgets. TC explained that the average MAT top slice is 5% and AC pointed out that in a maintained school, costs for these services would likely to be more. DMc noted that there are intangible benefits to support from the Trust, which are very beneficial and that he had been very impressed by the support offered by the Trust both during the current Covid crisis and during his time as Headteacher.

TC explained that the Top Slice % is set by UAT Directors and % is the same for all schools, as this is the fairest way. She confirmed that the Trust was not sitting on large reserves, but that the Trust and Schools needed to be sustainable and that this was incorporated into the Reserves Policy.

TC explained that the financial impact of COVID was not yet known, and that school funding and staff pay rises were still not known. Currently the DfE have requested a one-year budget to be submitted given the number of unknowns. TC explained that Governors should not be concerned about the Year 3 predictions and that these were common across most schools. HA has generated a surplus this year and is predicting a surplus in next year's budget. The Trust does not currently pool these surpluses and has supported the Academy in making savings and giving them the freedom to use the surplus budget as necessary for their site. **Governors welcomed** this position.

TC explained the budget setting process, which is initially set by TC / DMc, a forensic review then takes place with LHE. Following that, the Trust Director of Finance scrutinises the budget for logical consistency before consolidating the budget into the Trust budget. TC explained that main costs relate to staffing so a curriculum led budget is set.

**Governors ASKED** about the Director of Finance's (DoF) role in the Budget process, TC explained that this role was strategic and included items such as contracts, compliance, financial reporting etc and this is why local context provided by the Business Managers was vital and taken into account when setting the budget.

**Governors ASKED** if that role (DoF) provided value for money. TC - Yes, but things have not always been easy due to systems in place, but these will move forward and will be fit for all. The DoF has undertaken a big piece of work in the alignment of services and contacts and that the DoF also carries out the legal due diligence work on behalf of the Trust. A Governor stated that the role was advertised at a large salary, and TC explained that this was a role with huge responsibilities and is less than would be offered in the private sector. DMc reminded Governors that the Trust is still being developed and the full value was yet to be seen. He reminded all that LHE, since September, had also undertaken the HA Executive Head role for the Autumn term as well as her own CEO role and that she had then had only 8 weeks before COVID had impacted upon all.

TC clarified that the DoF is a strategic role, that the School Business Manager's role was an operational one, and that the DoF was involved at a level across all schools in both finance and other areas such as compliance.

The 2020/21 Budget has been shared with the SLT and requires ownership by all and is a collective responsibility. Income is based on lagged funding (student numbers at January 2020 for Years 7-11 and student numbers at October 19 in the Sixth Form), therefore smaller cohorts impact upon the budget in the following year. Student number predictions are used – the Trust, as the admissions authority, has agreed to take only the Planned Admission Numbers (PAN) in 2020/21 as there is a current bid for expansion funding. The 2021/22 cohort is predicted to be 250 students (PAN is 232) which would be difficult to accommodate in the current site arrangements.

All recruitment opportunities are reviewed and capitation budgets have been reduced across all areas. From 2021/22 a zero budget based budget arrangement is likely to be used with departments having to identify their own needs.

**Governors ASKED** if the Academy was submitting a COVID claim? No as the additional costs have been small and that the Academy had been able to make some savings. All PPE will have to be replaced as it was donated to local hospitals at the start of the COVID pandemic.

The carry forward is in excess of £100k and 2020/21 is predicted to have a small surplus. TC reiterated that Years 2 and 3 were difficult to predict, but that a surplus target of £50k per year has been set – there is no indication that the Trust will require surpluses to be set. If public sector pay rises are frozen, then the budget for Years 2 and 3 will be much better. TC reminded all that the surplus should be thought of as the contingency budget.

TC explained that the outcome of the two Capital Investment Fund (CIF) bids had been delayed – these were for £720K for boiler updates and approximately £750k for a rewiring project. Once the outcome of these bids is known, then the Devolved Formula Capital Grant (DFCG) of £22k may have to be used to support these projects.

**Governors ASKED** about the Gym opening. TC explained that LifeStyle Fitness was waiting for further advice about reopening from the Government, but it was likely to be September. The building is ready and staff have been appointed.

**A Governor ASKED** if there was a need for a link governor with a finance remit - DP explained that TC will provide the LGC with a six monthly update. TC explained that monthly updates were provided to the Trust Directors as this was a requirement of the Financial Academies Handbook

and that she regularly meets with the DoF, DMC and would raise any concerns with the Chair as necessary. TC reminded Governors that they were not responsible for setting the budget – this was at Trust level. TC's summary budget paper circulated to Governors reiterated that as per the Trust Scheme of Delegation the responsibilities of the LGC are :

- To receive the budget from the School Business Manager
- To receive and understand information on the financial performance of the School

RPo left the meeting at 19.13pm.

**Governors ASKED** how the Primary School catch up funding (Year 7 catch up funding) will be allocated this year? This is not yet known.

There were no further questions, Governors thanked TC for her comprehensive update and she left the meeting at 19.14pm.

## 7. Heads Report

This report was circulated in advance of the meeting and included responses to questions previously submitted by Governors via the Chair.

**Governors ASKED** about how staff were able to deliver blended learning and if training had been provided for them to do so. SDa has provided staff training for those staff returning to site and training had been provided to staff before lockdown on how to teach online which had included examples of best practice, lesson plans etc. Since then an updated Teaching and Learning Bulletin has been circulated to refine practices. The Sixth Form have returned to live online lessons.

**Governors ASKED** staff governors how they have found the experience. Initially very stressful, but it has improved over time, concerns about safeguarding has meant that live lessons in the Sixth Form have been audio lessons only. Curriculum teams have pooled resources and future provision will be much stronger for this collaboration. Submission of work has been easier using online provision such as My Maths and paper-based activities have supplemented online provision. Students who are not engaging in schoolwork have been identified and have been targeted as necessary. Staff Governors noted how much it had highlighted that schools were the front line for some families. **A Parent Governor** stated how impressed she had been with the amount and level of work set.

DMc recognised that there was some criticism that there were no live lessons for Years 7-9, but explained that there was a safeguarding concern in this provision and that all staff are available throughout the period of set lesson times. Key life skills had been learnt during this period such as time management and independence. DMc explained that rigorous leadership had now been embedded across the Academy and that confidence has been built in school relationships.

DMc explained the arrangements for the return of Year 10 students (25% of the cohort on each day) and that attendance had been approximately 65%. Year 12 have returned to academic tutorials and that they will return to site based lessons, via option blocks, from the 26<sup>th</sup> June.

DMc explained that staff have been excellent during this period, and that the TU representatives have been very supportive. Staff who have been shielding have been encouraged to seek medical advice, but those identified as high risk are not in school but remain able to work from home.

DMc explained that the Safe Working Practices documents, Re-opening Strategy and Risk Assessments, circulated in advance of the meeting had been written from scratch and had been reviewed by the Chair of Governors, the H&S Governor as well as the Trust.

**Governors ASKED** how helpful the advice had been from the Government. DMc explained that updates were not clear or summarised and that in one week there had been 41 guidance briefings circulated. Communications had been farcical and that it had been difficult to respond to staff and parents when there was no advance notice of public announcements. The details of the latest announcements about summer schools were not yet known, but DMc stated that disengaged students would be unlikely to engage in summer schools. DMc shared plans for how to deliver catch up next year's Year 11 students.

## **8. Standing Agenda Items**

### 8.1 Safeguarding.

This had been previously covered (note added after meeting : all relevant school policies now have a Covid 19 appendix, and they are on the website.)

### 8.2 LGC Membership

KL has been appointed as Staff Governor and there were two outstanding vacancies. JSK and PL are both leaving the Academy at the end of the Academic year and thanks were given to them for their efforts and support.

8.3 Heads and Chairs have received a letter from the LA to state a Business Case for One-Somerset in that councils may be disbanded and form single Unitary Council was currently being considered.

8.4 (note added after meeting: PEX – a PEX meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> June had upheld the decision.)

8.5 (note added after meeting: PP Review – this will not be taking place this term, but will be identified in the Academy Improvement Plan (AIP) going forward)

8.6 (note added after meeting : Link Governor Visits – it is suggested that governors keep in contact with any staff they have been working with prior to lockdown to support and in some cases review progress or re-thinking of Academy Improvement Plans going forward. Governors are reminded that the revised Academy Improvement Plan is the main focus of the LGC meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> July, so any contact before that should be focussed and supportive, and not add to staff workload.)

### 8.7 Trust Update

The Clerk, on behalf of LHE explained

- The HR Manager vacancy is now on hold, as the appointed person did not take up the post . The Director of Finance and Resources post has been advertised – interviews are scheduled for the 3<sup>rd</sup> July. The Head of Business Support at US / UPS is providing Trust support in the interim.

### 8.8 Governor Visits

These reports had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

## 8.9 Clerks Update

The HA website has been checked for Governance compliance and a policy review has taken place. The Trust, following TU consultation, have circulated Flexible Working and Equalities and Diversity Policies for adoption.

## 9.0 Risks and Concerns to be passed to the Trust Directors:

- The 2021-2022 cohort is predicted to be 250 when the Academy PAN is 232 – concern was expressed about the Academy being able to accommodate this rise in numbers without a building plan being in place.
- The differences in the LA's vulnerable pupil list for the Academy was unacceptable.
- The, as yet, unknown increase in SEMH issues after lockdown and a return to school – whether sufficient staff would be available to deal with issues.
- The tone of the letter from the LA following Somerset's SEND Ofsted judgement, was insulting and unacceptable.

9.1 Meeting Evaluation AC : (note added after meeting – due to the LGC meeting over-running there was not time for a meeting evaluation. However, following the meeting AC received the following from governors:

*As Ali wasn't able to ask her questions about how we felt about the meeting yesterday, I'd like to just say that I found that an exceptionally inspiring meeting. There weren't a great number of questions, but I think that was probably a reflection on the quality of the information we were given. Quite a few people said "I was going to ask... but it was already answered."*

*It was great to have verification that HA is doing a "good" job in comparison to many other schools (of course that is anecdotal, but still great to hear and supports what I have been feeling from my own observations), was lovely to hear feedback from the teachers about life on the frontline (and as always so many thanks for that ongoing effort). I was very inspired by Jo's presentation on her "little yellow book" (sorry couldn't resist) and the new approach to coaching/CPD. That feels very exciting and I look forward to ongoing feedback on that. Tina, thanks for the massive amount of work you do on everything and for always explaining things in ways even I can understand. It is difficult for me to feedback on the safeguarding report as I obviously know it all in advance of the meeting, but I feel the information we are being given is very clear and comprehensive and if anyone needs clarification on any safeguarding point, please ask. I certainly believe the work we are currently doing on safeguarding is going "above and beyond" and is as thorough as it possibly can be. It is being given the absolute priority that it requires and that is great to see. Also interesting to hear Jason's points on how Covid is revealing just how vital schools are to the "social work" of this country.*

*Thank you to all, and Ali, I hope this answers the questions you were going to ask on our feedback.*  
KY

*Perfect thanks Kate.*

*I share your view and thought it was a very productive meeting.*

AC

*I also agree that it was a very good meeting, and the presentations were very informative and useful, also with a good level of contribution from everyone present. It's really helpful to be getting a feel for the practicalities of how things are operating now, and additional insights would be welcome going forward.*

*If I could make one suggestion, it would be that if possible we be sent all the handouts in advance, especially if quite lengthy and complex, as it's hard to focus on both new text and the speaker in the course of the meeting.*

PC

**10.Date of next meeting – Monday 13<sup>th</sup> July, 5.00pm –**

Presentation 'Behaviour Policy' – Jonathan Black (Deputy Headteacher) followed by discussion.

Main agenda item : Academy Improvement Plan 2020-2021 – Dave MacCormick (Headteacher)

The meeting closed at 19.52pm

**ACTIONS**

<b>Agenda item</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
5	TC to provide link to KCSIE, Prevent and Safer Recruitment training and ALL to complete	ALL	By September