

BEAUMONT SCHOOL (Company Number 8104190)
MINUTES OF MEETING OF GOVERNORS HELD ON
Tuesday 19th March 2013 at 7pm

Governors Present:

Alex Hall (“AHa”) (Chair of meeting for all items except item 3), Liz Hitch (“EHi”), Josephine Chu (“JCh”), John McAlister (“JMI”), Judy Fingland (“JFi”), Steve Jump (“SJU”) (items 6 – 15), Mike Cameron (“MCA”), Martin Atkinson (“MAT”), Morag McCrorie (“MMc”), Chris Aikman (“CAi”), Natalie Moody (“NMo”), Lucy Sidney (“LSi”), Karen Trounson (“KTr”), Natasha Armstrong (“NAr”), Rena Prindiville (“RPr”), Kevin Doyle (“KDo”), Alison Wallis (“AWa”) and Gary Kellett (“GKe”).

In attendance:

Ed Jones (“EJo”) (items 1 – 6)	Facilities Manager
Andrew Brenton (“ABr”) (items 1-6)	Former Governor
Simone Kilka-Green (“SKi”)	Clerk to the Governing Body
Jamie Renfrew (“JRe”)	Chair of Sixth Form Council
Ben Hughes (“BHu”)	Vice-Chair of Sixth Form Council

Actions Agreed at the meeting:

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale
1	Committees to review the new draft PSI and also continue to monitor the current PSI to ensure that all actions are completed and outcomes recorded.	Committees	Ongoing
2	SKi to email those non-staff Governors who have not booked exclusions training and those governors who have not booked Safeguarding training.	SKi	ASAP

1. Apologies for Absence and welcome to new community governor

Apologies for absence had been received from Lianne Sherwood and Hakim Kadodia. Consent was given to their absence.

AHa as acting Chair welcomed the new community governor and all governors introduced themselves. AHa also welcomed to the meeting Jamie Renfrew and Ben Hughes the Chair and Vice-Chair of Sixth Form Council as well as Ed Jones and Andrew Brenton who were attending to assist the discussions under item 6.

2. Declaration of any conflict of interest foreseen in relation to agenda items and undertaking to declare any that arises in the course of the meeting- Governors were reminded that anyone with a conflict of interest must declare it, withdraw from the meeting and take no part in any discussion or decision on the matter. None was declared.

3. Ratification of appointment of AHa as Acting Chair and discussion regarding the position of Acting Vice-Chair *Actions*

SKi acted as Chair for this item on the agenda.

SKi referred Governors to her email in which she informed them that Rena had stepped down as Chair of Governors and AHa as the Vice-Chair had agreed to take on the role of Acting Chair. All governors confirmed that they agreed with and ratified AHa’s appointment as Acting Chair.

AHa confirmed that he was willing to stand as Chair of Governors and AWa agreed to put herself forward for the role of Vice-Chair, in both cases until the first meeting of the next Academic year.

No other nominations were received and AHa and AWa were unanimously elected as Chair and Vice-Chair respectively until the first meeting of the Academic year in September.

4. To receive notification of any other business for item 14

One confidential item was raised.

5. Approval of minutes of the meetings on 17th January 2013 including Part 2 Confidential Minutes and notes of Extended meeting on 13th February 2013 and matters arising

All minutes were agreed as drafted.

The action points from the meeting on 17th January 2013 were considered as follows:

	Action	Responsibility	Timescale	
1	Freedom of Information Publication Scheme to be approved at the next meeting.	FGB	Next Meeting	On agenda
2	SKi to chase those governors who have yet to complete the skills questionnaire.	SKi	ASAP	Completed
3	JCh, KTr and NAr to email SKi with details of what documents they found most useful in the new governor induction pack and any other feedback on the new governor induction process.	JCh, NAr & KTr	ASAP	Completed
4	EHi, AHa and others to meet with potential new community governor as soon as possible.	EHi, AHa and other governors	ASAP	Completed
5	Governors to respond to Sue Parsons with their availability to attend the staff interviews.	All	ASAP	Completed, AHa thanked the governors involved in the staff interviews
6	The Admissions Group to consider all feedback following the end of the consultation period on the admissions criteria and will report back to the next FGB meeting for the final criteria to be adopted.	FGB	Next Meeting.	Completed and on agenda
7	All non-staff governors who do not have current exclusions training will book onto an exclusions course as soon as possible.	All	ASAP	On agenda

6. FAB Milestones – update and discussion (including discussion with Andrew Brenton and Ed Jones on the pros and cons of the HCC Framework)

AHa apologised for the lateness of the paper for this item. He explained that the FAB group had been waiting to hear from HCC on its position on the procurement of the works, which keeps changing, and it was better to wait to let governors know the up to date position.

It was noted that various officers within HCC are meeting on 9th April to discuss the potential precedent which would be set if the school were to procure the works and the issues which arise from that. HCC have stated that this discussion will not hold up the project and in the meantime they are taking steps to appoint consultants on the construction of the replacement playing fields.

AHa reported that HCC have asked for information from the school as to why it wants the ability to procure the works itself so that it can consider that at its meeting. EJo and ABr were in attendance at the meeting to assist with this discussion.

Governors then debated the options at length.

Type of Contract

ABr referred governors to the brief paper distributed before the meeting which outlined the differences between:

- a. The traditional procurement route – where a design team is appointed to prepare plans, specifications etc. which are then put out to contractors for tender. This route tends to take longer than a design and build contract but enables the school to be more specific about its requirements; and
- b. The Design and Build route – where the basics of the build are specified and contractors then quote to design and build it. The contractors are appointed much earlier in the process with this route and it is usually used when time is short and the project has to be completed quickly.

ABr stated that the significant difference between the 2 routes is control of the quality of the build. The traditional route allows control of the quality and specification throughout, whereas with the design and build route, whilst some level of detail can be specified (although if the specification is too detailed it could reduce competition when it is sent out to tender), under the standard JCT contract (which is likely to be used), the contractor can substitute similar products for those specified. This can lead to significant arguments with the contractor and, if the school then makes changes to the specification, there can be large costs consequences.

ABr gave an example of a recent contract placed by a County Council on a design and build basis. The contractor used cheap roofing materials which meant that the lifespan of the roof is not as long as was expected. This will therefore give the County Council a maintenance issue in the future.

It was noted that HCC tend to place design and build contracts and the use of Employer's Specifications, which EJo is working on with HCC, supports that. There are also now fewer project officers within HCC which means that they have to hand more work over to contractors as they do not have the capacity to do the work internally.

It was agreed that the nature of the contract which would be placed by HCC needs to be clarified as Governors favour the traditional route in order to:

- i. Retain control of the detailed specification; and
- ii. Ensure that the buildings are of good quality with an adequate lifespan - without future maintenance and repair issues which the school would have to deal with.

Risk

It was noted that if the school were to procure the works, then the risk of the project would be with the school. This risk can be passed contractually to the lead consultant who will have indemnity insurance.

It was noted that, if there is a problem, it can take several years for a consultant's insurers to pay the claim which would cause delay.

If HCC were to procure the works the risk of the project would be with HCC. It was noted that HCC have not contractually accepted the responsibility to provide the facilities to the school however much they cost. The wording of the Letter of Intent signed prior to the conversion to Academy status (which it was noted is not contractually binding on either party) provided that HCC would apply the proceeds of the FAB scheme to the building of the facilities for the school. There is no commitment to top up those funds if necessary, which means that any unexpected costs will come out of the overall scheme pot.

The reality then is that, if there are significant issues with the build, this will affect what can be built rather than simply being financed by HCC.

Procurement routes

The procurement routes were discussed in detail and Governors expressed some concern that the applicable HCC Framework is limited to 3 contractors. It was noted that a local school in a similar position which is placing the contracts itself put the work out to 7 contractors to ensure proper competition.

It was noted that procurement law would probably prevent the contracts being divided up so that a different part of the HCC Framework can be accessed.

The possible application of the Official Journal of the European Union ("OJEU") procurement requirements (if the school were to place the contract itself) was discussed (the limit is £4.2m). EJo reported that he is part way through an OJEU procurement procedure for the school windows. The procedure is lengthy (the windows procurement started in mid November, around 17 responses were received, and the final decision will be made next week), but it is all prescribed and has to be followed exactly.

It was noted that following the appropriate procurement requirements would not delay the project as the replacement playing fields work will be underway so there is time to deal with this. The main advantage is that any number of contractors can be approached and there are no restrictions.

The question of the VAT position was discussed. It was agreed that this is crucial, and definitive advice needs to be obtained on this. It was noted that other schools have built their own sports halls (with similar Community Use Agreements having been imposed as part of the planning process) without having to pay VAT.

Governors discussed the possibility of delays in the build if the contracts were placed by HCC, as HCC appear to have many complex systems to follow before decisions can be made. Concern was expressed that this could lead to delays on the project.

It was agreed that the FAB group will go back to HCC to clarify the nature of the contract to be placed and put forward the reasons that the school would like to place the contracts itself. The discussions with HCC will continue and the FAB group will put a formal proposal to the FGB for consideration and determination.

Governors thanked EJo and ABr for attending the meeting and for their useful input. It was agreed that any further questions can be put to ABr by email. EJo and ABr then left the meeting.

7. Chair's Update including feedback from Governors' Extended meeting on 13th February

AHa apologised for the late service of the Notice and Agenda for the meeting. All governors confirmed their consent to the short notice.

AHa stated that this half term is short and very busy and he thanked all staff and the Leadership Team for all their hard work. AHa noted that in her Head's Update EHi has reported on Ofsted and the work the school is doing to continually improve and also the Data Dashboard which has been published for Governors. It was agreed that Governors already receive a large amount of data on the school.

The Extended meeting in February was discussed and it was agreed that it was a worthwhile day. AHa asked for any comments or suggestions for future years to be sent to him or SKi.

8. Head's Update including:

- **Herts for Learning – Voting for the Non-executive Director**
- **Update on the School's Self-Evaluation Document (SED) and Plan for School Improvement (PSI)**

Governors had considered the Head's Update, which had been circulated before the meeting and discussed the following:

- PSI – EHi reported that more detail needs to be included before the draft is re-circulated. The 9 priorities on page 2 of the draft circulated were noted – the plan will be built around these. It was agreed that the detail of the next draft will be reviewed in sections by the relevant committees (starting with CTL next week) and then the final version will be brought back to the FGB. Governors asked that steps be taken to ensure that all actions from the current PSI are completed and recorded as such. Any items that are not completed should be carried over to the next PSI, particularly if an outcome is awaited, e.g. exam results which will not be known until the summer. It was agreed that this will be dealt with by the relevant committees.
- Pay progression for teaching staff was discussed. EHi reported that she has attended some training and is due to attend more. The changes coming into effect are significant, the existing pay structures will end and the governing body has to decide what to put in place. This has to be put in writing by September 2013 ready for staff appraisals during 2013-14, although it will not come into effect until September 2014. It was noted that Hertfordshire Heads would like to put in place similar structures. This will be looked at in detail by the resources committee.
- The purchase of share in Herts for Learning was noted. It was agreed that EHi and AHa shall agree how to use the 2 votes the school has for the appointment of the non-executive directors.
- Governors noted the key areas for Ofsted of pupil premium and robust staff appraisals, both of which were covered in the Head's update document.

Committees

EHi reported that 17 teachers within the school had been nominated for teaching awards including Teacher of the Year. The Music Department has also been nominated for best Music Department in national awards being presented at the Barbican tomorrow night. Governors congratulated all staff involved.

Governors were invited to the Easter Concert on Tuesday 26th March at 7pm.

EHi thanked governors for all their hard work supporting the school. She asked that any governor who is concerned about their workload speak to AWA.

9. Admissions 2014 Consultation – update and discussion and approval of the final admissions criteria

It was noted that, at the last FGB meeting, the new admissions criteria were approved for consultation purposes. That consultation has now finished and Governors have received copies of the 4 responses received, all of which support the draft criteria.

The admissions criteria were unanimously approved to take effect from the Academic year 2014/15.

10. Discussion of the appropriate committee structure

Governors had considered the papers prepared by KDo and AHa distributed before the meeting.

AHa reminded governors that this arose from a concern expressed previously about the large number of areas of work to be covered by the resources committee and also KDo's experience at his other school of reducing the numbers of meetings per year.

Governors noted that the PSI is geared towards the work areas of the 3 committees and that has worked well. It was questioned whether this is the right time to be looking at a re-structuring when there is a lot of other work underway and to be done.

Governors debated the issue in detail and the following was discussed:

- Concern was expressed that reducing the number of Governors' meetings to one per term could result in Governors becoming dis-engaged from the school, which would be a shame given the outcome of the recent staff survey which rated Governors highly in terms of staff feeling that they are doing an effective job.
- This was countered by the suggestion that Governors could each take responsibility for a specific area of the Governing Body's work such that all Governors make a contribution at every meeting. Governors could write the reports for the meetings although this could possibly make their role more operational rather than strategic.
- The question of whether Governors should consider attending more lessons was debated at length. It was agreed that there is no question of Governors judging lessons but it was noted that Ofsted will be assessing Governors on their knowledge and understanding of the quality of teaching and learning within the school. This needs to be balanced against any anxiety staff may experience having a Governor attend their lesson. There may also be issues with Unions if staff attend lessons with Governors.
- Many options for governors attending lessons were discussed including:
 - combining them with Department reviews
 - learning walks
 - asking staff who is willing to have a Governor attend a lesson
 - Governors giving some lessons – this would increase their profile in the school and draw upon Governors' skills
 - Attending lessons as part of the annual Governors' Extended meeting

It was agreed that there is a value in discussing issues that arise collectively as different Governors raise different issues. It was agreed that the existing committee structure shall be retained but that in committees consideration shall be given as to whether Governors should write papers for the committee and take responsibility for certain tasks, rather than members of staff.

11. Policies:

i) Approval of the following:

a) Freedom of Information Policy

Governors had considered the draft policy which had been distributed before the meeting. It was noted that the policy has been approved by the Community Committee. The policy was approved with one amendment of the wording of the 4th bullet on page 1.

It was noted that under the terms of the policy the Head has various responsibilities. EHi confirmed that she delegates those responsibilities within school. It was noted that the terms of this policy need to be tight to restrict the information that a vexatious contractor could require from the school if the school were to place the FAB contracts itself (as discussed earlier in the meeting) and the contractor was unhappy with the outcome of the tender process.

b) Freedom of Information Publication Scheme

Governors had considered the draft policy which had been distributed before the meeting. It was noted that the policy has been approved by the Community Committee. The policy was approved.

c) Privacy Notice and the approach to the Data Protection Policy and its overlap with existing policies

Governors had considered the draft policy which had been distributed before the meeting. It was noted that the policy has been approved by the Community Committee. The policy was approved.

Governors thanked KDo for his work on these policies. KDo pointed out the overlap of these policies with other school policies such as those on data security and accessing pupil records. It was agreed that when these policies are reviewed the provisions of the Freedom of Information Policy and scheme will be considered.

ii) discussion and agreement on the best approach to the Best Value Statement

AHa reported that the school used to have a Best Value Statement as it was required by FMSiS and then by SFVS. As the school is now an Academy, advice has been sought from the appointed auditors. They have confirmed that the school is not required to have a Best Value Statement but that, if it has one in place, then it must comply with it and that will be audited.

It was recommended by the auditors that the school does not have a Best Value Statement, and this was unanimously agreed.

It was noted that in the opinion of the Governors there was no disproportionate benefit or detriment nor any discriminatory statements or adverse impacts in the policies adopted in this meeting. A statement to this effect will be included in all the policies as confirmation they comply with the school's Single Equality Scheme.

12. Committee reports and updates

A. Resources

Governors had considered the minutes of the last resources meeting, which had been circulated before this meeting. It was noted that the audit role can be fulfilled by the resources committee.

B. Community

Governors had considered the minutes of the last community meeting, which had been circulated before this meeting. The large number of fixed period exclusions this term were noted. It was also noted that this is being managed by the school.

C. Curriculum Teaching and Learning

Governors had considered the minutes of the last curriculum, teaching and learning meeting, which had been circulated before this meeting.

It was noted that the committee will review the Ofsted Dashboard in detail at its meeting next week and that the data on the Dashboard has been changed once already by Ofsted as the original data was incorrect. The committee will review the reasons for the school being in the various quintiles compared to other similar schools which include the impact of the GCSE English marking and also the school's decision to enter all students for double science, which not all schools do.

It was also noted that the committee had agreed to changes to the Fast Track languages such that the GSCE is to be taken in Year 10 and a bridging unit will be taught in Year 11 towards AS level. It was noted that a letter will be sent out to parents about this before Easter.

13. Governor Development Co-ordinator Update

In LSh's absence at the meeting, SKi reported that not all non-staff governors who do not have current exclusions training have yet booked onto a course. Also not all governors have booked safeguarding training. Those Governors still to do this were urged to book training as soon as possible. SKi agreed to email those Governors to prompt them.

SKi

12. To receive any other business as notified in item 4

One confidential item was raised which is recorded in **Part 2 Confidential Minutes**.

JRe and BHu left the meeting before this discussion; they were thanked for attending the meeting. They gave an update to Governors on the arrangements for Rob's Festival on Saturday 29th June.

13. Date of next meeting: Wednesday 5th June 2013 7pm

There being no further business AHa declared the meeting closed at 21.10pm.

Signed:
Chair of Governors

Dated:.....