

# LIVERPOOL GOVERNANCE FORUM

Minutes of Committee Meeting held at 10:15 on 24.5.22 at  
Moss Pits Lane Primary School, Moss Pits Lane, Liverpool L15 6UN.

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## 1.0 STANDARD ITEMS:

### 1.1 Welcome and Apologies

**Present:** Michael Morris (Chair), Maureen McDaid (Vice Chair,  
David Blythe (Hon Secretary), Cliff Barton, Dave Cadwallader, David Owens,  
Marlene Taylor, Richard Lovegrove,

**Visitors:** Joyce Smith, Peter Devaney Governor

**Apologies:** Andy Chadwick, Mary Donohue, Avril O'Brien, Kathy Desmond

**Guest speaker:** Jonathan Jones, Director of Education, Liverpool City Council

### 1.2 Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

There was no alteration to the existing declarations

### 1.3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting had already been agreed by email and posted on the LGF website.

### 1.4 Matters Arising

Summary of Actions	
Governor's News to be contacted re Energy usage in schools <b>Actioned</b>	MM
Liverpool Safeguarding Partnership to be contacted re information <b>Covered by the agenda</b>	DC

## **2.0 LGF Matters and Events**

### **2.1 Finance**

DB confirmed that the LGF bank account balance is £ 3857.00 as of 1.5.22.

It was noted that there are outstanding LGF subscriptions. Secondary and special schools' payments are still outstanding. A possible increase in subscription charges is to be discussed at the next LGF meeting.

### **2.2 Feedback from Events**

Not applicable.

### **2.3 Future Events**

The next LGF meeting will be held at Archbishop Blanch School, 80 Earle Rd, Liverpool L7 6HQ at 10:00 on 12 July 2022. Elaine Rees of LLP is to address the next LGF meeting.

The date of the LGF Conference was confirmed as 2 July 2022. DC reported that it had been difficult to secure a venue for the conference. Gateacre School could provide a venue but no hospitality, Archbishop Blanch School are yet to provide a quote. Partnership for Learning can provide a venue and hospitality at a cost of £571.20 for 60 delegates. It was agreed to allow a few more days for Archbishop Balance to provide a quote. If it is not forthcoming, then Partnership for Learning's quote will be accepted. DC will confirm the venue asap.

The conference will begin with bacon barmes at 9:00, followed by a 9:30 start for the address from Neil Stanley on the subject of Sleep and its Importance in Education.

### **2.4 Website**

DB reported that the website is up to date. DC reported he was unable to view an item and had to download it to view it. DB to take this up with Peter Hartley.

### **2.5 Twitter Account**

Not applicable. An update is to be requested from Avril O'Brien – DB.

### **2.6 Others**

MMc informed the meeting that she is unable to act as LGF representative on the SEND Joint Commissioning Board due to other commitments.

MT is to forward any emails detailing the dates of future meetings to MMc who undertook to attend 1 meeting whilst a handover takes place. MM said he is not able

to attend any meetings that take place in June but can attend meetings that take place in July. MM undertook to act as LGF representative on the board from September 2022.

### **3.0 Feedback from Representatives**

#### **3.1 Liverpool Schools Forum**

N/A

#### **3.2 LLP Executive Board**

The next meeting will take place on 14.6.22. MM is to attend and will provide feedback at the next LGF meeting.

DB reported that he had attended an LLP meeting on 16.5.22 to review LLP's performance and service over the last 10 years. MMc commented that LLP had provided a professional service to many schools.

#### **3.3 LLP All Learners**

DO attended a meeting held on 11.5.22 where feedback was given on the recent Readathon. The Meet the Author event for primary schools had gone well. The Meet the Author event for secondary schools takes place in July. Feedback was also provided on the Read to the Bump initiative where parents are encouraged to read to their unborn child.

#### **3.4 LLP Learners Who Need More**

The next meeting will be held on 25.5.22. DB asked for a volunteer to attend the meeting as the date has been moved and he is no longer able to attend. DO is to attend the meeting which is to be held via zoom at 8:30 am. DO is to provide feedback at the next LGF meeting.

#### **3.5 Liverpool Safeguarding Board/Partnership**

DC to ask for clarification on the correct name. Partnership or Board?

#### **3.6 LCC Priority**

See Jonathan Jones' presentation – Annex A

#### **3.8 Other**

Not Applicable

## 4.0 Other Items

### 4.1 NGA

DC reported that NGA regional conferences are starting up again. Members were advised to check the NGA website for dates.

### 4.2 Other

N/A

The meeting concluded at 11:50

<b>Summary of Actions</b>	
LGF Conference venue to be confirmed	DC
Clarification re name of Liverpool Safeguarding Board/Partnership	DC
P Hartley to be contacted re viewing items on the LGF website	DB
A O'Brien to be contacted re Twitter account update	DB
SEND JCB emails to be forwarded to MMc	MT

### **Next meeting:**

Archbishop Blanch School, 80 Earle Rd, Liverpool L7 6HQ 10:00 on 12 July 2022.  
Guest Speaker Elaine Reeds, LLP.

## Annex A

Jonathan Jones, Director of Education, Liverpool City Council, was introduced to LGF members and visitors.

JJ was invited to provide an update on Academisation. He invited questions and highlighted the following:

The recently published Schools White Paper and SEND Green Paper refer constantly to academisation. There is a clear direction of travel for schools. If schools are not already part of a Multi-Agency Trust (MAT) by 2030 they will be in the process of joining one.

The White Paper formed part of the recent Queen's speech and will be passed as soon as parliamentary time allows, within the coming year. The shadow Secretary of State has indicated that if there were to be a change of government they would be concentrating on standards, not structure. It is expected that there would be no major changes to the content of the White Paper.

Nationally 87% of secondary schools and 36% of primary schools are currently academies. In Liverpool 67% of secondary schools and 9% of primary schools are academies.

Identification of Education Investment Areas (EIA) information was also released at the same time as the White Paper. JJ referred to the original Opportunity Areas (12 areas nationally including Oldham, Blackpool, Stoke etc.) these were not solely for education. 55 EIA's have been identified where there is the lowest combined end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 scores. 24 'hotspot' Priority Education Investment areas within those 55 areas were identified, Liverpool was one of the identified as were the existing 12 Opportunity Areas. This means Liverpool will be prioritised to accelerate the actions detailed in the White Paper. Funding will be available, but no details are available yet.

JJ has identified Early Years, Attendance and the proportion of young people not engaged in education or training as areas needing particular attention. It is hoped to have further detail by the end of May.

JJ referred to the 4 main themes of the White Paper: Recruitment - retention, and development of teachers, Support for schools that need it most and Curriculum with the ambition that 90% of pupils will achieve expected standards and the Accountability of LA's and MATs.

JJ commented that White Paper acknowledged loopholes within the Academies Act of 2010, and he felt it was more 'pro' for LA's than he had expected.

The White and Green Papers will decrease LA's responsibilities around standards but increase responsibilities around admissions, SEND, exclusions, attendance etc. The LA will get greater power around issues relating to context and place, but school improvement and standards will be the responsibility of MATs.

JJ commented that the White Paper set out the concept of LAs ability to set up their own MAT. Emerging details indicate that the LA would be able to appoint and have control of the members of the MAT but when it came to trustee/director level the LA can only have up to 19.9% control. It would effectively function as any other MAT would.

At present if a new school was needed a LA would have to approach a MAT and ask them to build and establish a new school. In future if there was a LA MAT, they could proceed with this themselves.

JJ noted that the unions are not in favour of LA MATS and would try to block any progress to develop one.

JJ said that if there were not a local alternative available then school governors will look towards the larger MATS. JJ gave the example of Manchester where the 5 secondary schools are all part of a single MAT as opposed to Blackpool where there are 27 MATs (single or 2/3 schools in a MAT).

JJ said that governors needed to be pragmatic rather than ideological as the needs of the pupils must be paramount. His concern is that if the LA does not begin the process soon then schools will feel pressured to act and align with an existing MAT. Noted the Archdiocese, which makes up 47% of Catholic schools (does not include Religious Order schools) across the city is about to consult on this issue.

RL asked what is the benefit of combining Primary and Secondary schools in a MAT? JJ replied that the benefit is the natural transition of Key Stages. Liverpool schools' admissions are not community based; pupils do not automatically go from their primary school to an associated local secondary school.

JJ expects that a LA MAT for Liverpool will almost certainly be primary based.

Noted schools cannot join a MAT if a school has a deficit budget this includes a historical deficit. This will rule out several secondary schools in Liverpool.

It was noted that of 172 Liverpool schools, over 100 schools have a surplus budget despite years of underfunding.

It is expected that there will be 3 Archdiocese MATS in Liverpool, 1 of which will be All Saints MAT.

JJ expressed concern that Liverpool schools could end up splintering and joining nationwide MATs. The future of Learning Networks was highlighted in light of schools joining different MATS especially as each of the 11 primary networks contain several catholic schools.

MM asked for clarification regarding Anglican schools, many of which are single (standalone) trusts but need to become MATS. JJ replied that he had not heard or anything of a diocese strategy but cautioned that action needs to be taken urgently. He believes there will be a thrust to get Single Academy Trusts to join a MAT sooner rather than later. JJ highlighted that Liverpool LA will not be waiting for other sections to act to see how their actions impact on LA schools. The LA intends to be proactive.

Noted to access funding from the DFE such as conditional improvement grants, building grant etc schools must be part of a MAT.

MMc made comment that when policy is made at government level that affect LAs it does not understand the importance of implementation at local level by utilising existing infrastructure. MMc acknowledged the need for external scrutiny. JJ replied that MATs are concerned that LAs can direct areas such as admissions, exclusions etc as laid down in the 2022 White Paper. JJ said the accountability for standards will sit with the Regional Directors for DFE (previously Region Schools Commissioners). Ofsted can conduct MATEs (Multi-Accademy Trust Evaluations) which will take a broad view of the effectiveness of the MAT but will not make any judgements. Ofsted would like powers to inspect MATS.

JJ highlighted DFE statistics that show there are currently more schools in MATS that require improvement according to their latest Ofsted inspection than in LAs e.g., only 9% of the 42% of secondary schools that currently require improvement are LA schools.

Government have released their response to the attendance consultation that was conducted and said by 2023 current attendance guidance will be made statutory. The response acknowledges that schools cannot be expected to take sole responsibility for pupil attendance and there must be a multi-agency approach.

JJ stated that he meets with the DFE every 2 weeks and with Ofsted every 6 weeks where aspects of mutual interest are discussed. He also meets with the Liverpool City Region Directors of Education and the Manchester Region Directors.

RL asked if there is any benefit of 'Levelling up.' JJ replied that this is where the Education Investment Areas initiated and commented that relatively speaking Liverpool is well funded for Education, particularly for SEN and Capital. Noted that Liverpool is 1 of 8 LAs that are not overspent on the High Needs budget (152 LAs in total). JJ highlighted that it would only need 13 SEN pupils to be educated independently, out of city, to push the High Needs budget into deficit.

JJ stated that the SEN system nationally is broken, and this is what the Green Paper is designed to address. JJ believes that if all recommendations in the Green Paper are implemented then there will be improvement however the Green Paper is out for consultation until the end of July 2022 and therefore will take time for a beneficial impact to be felt. After consultation, the paper will need approval from the House of Lords which may not be forthcoming.

JJ said that the proposed recommendations of the Green Paper will give more power to professionals and include making mediation statutory before tribunal.

JJ acknowledged that SEN is a very emotive subject and understands that parents are prepared to fight for their child's needs to be met.

JJ was thanked and left the meeting.

Members passed comment that they appreciated that JJ had been open with his information and wondered if governor training will be offered on this subject.

MM commented that schools in Single Academy Trusts need to act sooner rather than later. MMc said that she believed that there has been some liaison between the diocese and archdiocese regarding this matter. DC commented that it is better to control and manage the transition to a MAT rather than being forced into joining one. It was noted that in a MAT the governors no longer have responsibility for strategic decision making and the headteacher will have to answer to the Trusts' board.