

LIVERPOOL GOVERNANCE FORUM

Minutes of Committee Meeting held at 10:00 on 11.7.23 at
Archbishop Blanch C of E School, Earle Rd, Liverpool L7 6HQ

Meeting commenced at 10:05

Guest Speaker: Ahmad Dolani, Governor at Smithdown Primary School.

1.0 STANDARD ITEMS:

1.1 Welcome and Apologies

MM welcomed Ahmad Dolani who delivered an overview of his research exercise into Ethnic Diversity on the Board of Governors in Liverpool Schools.
Please see Annex A.

Present: David Owens, David Blythe, Maureen McDaid, Dave Cadwallader,
Michael Morris, Avril O'Brien, Joyce Smith, Richard Lovegrove, Cliff Barton

Apologies: Ian Smith, Danielle Azanuwha, Hayley Igbokwe, Barbara Murray,
Andy Chadwick, Peter Devaney

1.2 Declaration of Pecuniary Interest

No changes to previous information were declared.

1.3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

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

1.4 Matters Arising

Actions	
1. R Naik to be contacted re the expansion of parent training provided by Hope School. The programme is being reviewed currently. Training could be provided in the next academic year.	DB
2. R Naik to be contacted re potential Attachment training for governors. See 2.2	DC
3. AO'B to be contacted re an End of Year Report on the LGF Twitter Account. See 2.5	PA

2.0 LGF Matters and Events

2.1 Finance

DB confirmed the LGF bank account stands at £5179.22 as of 31.6.23. Payment from Primary Heads Association and special schools have been received however the LASSH invoice is still outstanding. DB has written to LASSH regarding the outstanding amount. It was noted that Martin Davis, Treasurer of the Primary Heads Association is to retire and his assistance and cooperation will be missed.

DB informed the meeting that he had contacted the non-attendees from the LGF conference held in May and has received 5 £15 payments as a result. There are a further 2 payments outstanding.

LGF members confirmed their prior instruction that the existing LGF HSBC bank account be closed due to the charges imposed on the account and a new LGF account be opened with Lloyds Bank. DO confirmed that a new account had been opened as instructed, he was in receipt of a cheque book for the account and the final paperwork regarding LGF's tax status will be completed asap.

DB confirmed he had the necessary forms to close the HSBC account and will proceed with the process. DB and MM are to sign the closure forms. LGF members agreed that a sum of £2000 should be transferred to the new account to ensure financial continuity. Any outstanding balance from the HSBC account will be transferred to the new Lloyds account once the account is finally closed.

P Anderson left the meeting to allow a review of the fee for LGF administrative support to be discussed. It was later confirmed that the members had agreed a fee of £75 per session to cover attendance at LGF meetings, minuting and timely distribution of the minutes, agenda etc.

2.2 Feedback from Events

Training provided by R Naik – It was agreed that LGF would be supportive in advertising the availability of RN to provide training on Attachment and Trauma to educational establishments however individual establishments governors/headteachers should approach RN directly to request training.

2.3 Future Events

Draft Annual Review 2022/23

DB had shared the draft Annual Review 2022/23 prior to meeting. The draft report was approved by LGF members. DB is to complete finance information etc as appropriate and publish it in September 2023. The report is to be widely circulated as usual.

RL informed the meeting that he had not been invited to a meeting relating to the financial procedures in the school where he is chair of the governing board. The meeting was with Eno Akinyande and members of the school's management. LGF members expressed shock and surprise that the chair of the governing board would not be welcome at any meeting concerning the school.

2.4 Website

DB reported that the website is up to date. Currently the website has been 'visited' 1875 times.

2.5 Twitter Account

AO'B provided the following information: The LGF Twitter account has 679 followers and is following 511 accounts. Relevant posts from the 511 accounts are retweeted as appropriate. The latest campaign being shared on Twitter is advertising for new volunteers to the LGF for primary, secondary, and special education sectors.

AO'B is to review the accounts followed over the summer to ensure their relevance. AO'B commented that she was pleased to note that individual teachers are also following LGF on Twitter.

AO'B requested that LGF members forward any suggestions for topics to be included in future tweets to be shared on behalf of LGF.

It was suggested that photographs of events such as conferences, guest speakers etc should be included in the tweets as this would be another way of sharing the work LGF does.

DC is to contact Ahmad Dolani to ask him to forward the photographs taken at today's meeting for inclusion in future tweets.

It was noted that the LGF Twitter account contains a link to the LGF website.

2.6 Others

N/A

3.0 Feedback from Representatives

Liverpool Schools Forum

CB confirmed a meeting is to be held on 12.7.23 where Balances for Maintained Schools and School Budget Outturn Figures will be discussed.

3.1 LLP Executive Board

The meeting held on 13.6.23 was attended by DC. He reported that LLP is about to undertake a review of the service they provide as they have been in operation for 10 years. A working party will be set up to conduct the review. MMc expressed an interest in taking part in the review. It was noted that subscription to the LLP service had reduced due to academisation. LLP are seeking external grant funding.

3.3 LLP All Learners

The meeting held on 17.5.23 was attended by DO who highlighted the following topics discussed at the meeting:

- A Reading Festival was held from 26/01/23 to 08/02/23. The online format Streamyard On Air was used to involve as many pupils as possible. 17,000 pupils participated in the festival.
- An event for year 5-8 pupils was held at Edge Hill College on 16/06/23 featuring a picture book representing Black people was presented. The book aims to foster conversations between children and adults regarding racial characters.
- Maths Party will take place on 29/09/23 where Math's Through Stories and Counting etc. for early years will feature.

- Transition – it was noted that the systems for collecting contact details for nursery and primary/secondary provision differ which is problematic. A Transition Day for special needs pupils was held on 05/07/23 involving the HEARTS program.
- Inspiring Young Artists – Event to be held at the Walker Art Gallery.
- Mental Health – Critical Incident Training is to take place in September 2023. Story Stacks are to go to primary schools and Alder Hey Hospital.

3.4 LLP Learners Who Need More

The zoom meeting held on 24.5.23 was poorly attended. DB, AO'B attended on behalf of LGF. The topics covered in the meeting are included in the weekly LLP Briefings circulated by DB.

3.5 Liverpool Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP)

RL attended the recent meeting and commented that, of approximately 50 people present, only 2 were from schools.

The meeting discussed the recent review of Ofsted inspection of the council /care. As part of the meeting attendees took part in 2 workshops, on 'How do we improve partnership working?' and 'What are the main barriers and challenges to partnership working, and how do we overcome them?'. RL commented that the parties represented at the meeting do not appear to have open lines of communication. He highlighted that speaking with the young person involved in any process is very important.

3.6 Other

The SEN Joint Commissioning Group's next meeting is to be held on 19.7.23. MMc to attend.

4.0 Other Items:

Academisation – MMc expressed concerns regarding MATs and their unaccountability, excessive paperwork and not receiving response to requests for information or explanation. MM highlighted that MAT's are 'administration heavy' which can result in funds being directed away from the needs of the pupils.

MM – sought clarification regarding the status of governors and therefore their eligibility to serve on the LGF committee once their school becomes part of a MAT.

MM pointed out that legally it is only the Directors on a MAT Trust Board who are governors, not the local governors/members of local school councils. He asked if the constitution of LGF needs to change? DC suggested this was a topic to be discussed at the forthcoming LGF AGM.

Interschool Arrangements - MM asked for clarification of the term 'interschool arrangement' and how this effects LGF members responding to requests for participation in exclusion/disciplinary panels etc. from other schools. DC agreed that this was a difficult area as panel membership is often influenced by the wording of individual school policies. He noted that there are also different rules for independent schools and MATS. DC highlighted that this situation can be circumnavigated by schools setting up a School Collaboration Arrangement with another school but this would have to be done prior to a request for assistance being made.

It was suggested that in future policies should follow the example of NGA and refer to governors as 'those responsible for governance' as this would allow greater freedom within the guidelines for inclusion on panels etc.

Resignation- C Barton indicated that he will be standing down as a governor of Sudley School and will therefore no longer be eligible to be a member of LGF. MM thanked CB for his support and hard work during his time as a LGF member.

The next LGF meetings will be held on:

19.9.23 - Committee Meeting

7.11.23 - Committee Meeting and AGM

5.12.23 - Committee Meeting

Venues to be confirmed.

The meeting concluded at 11:50

Annex A

Ahmad Dolani (AD) delivered an overview of his research exercise into Ethnic Diversity on the Board of Governors in Liverpool Schools.

He explained that he was in his fourth year of his doctorate and was gathering evidence for his thesis. He shared that he had had a varied professional life including working with the Police Commissioner Office as well as previously being a governor at St Hugh's School and currently being a governor at Smithdown Primary School.

AD confirmed that governing bodies want to be more diverse and people from diverse backgrounds want to be involved in governance but neither party fully knows how to go about achieving their goals.

He explained that to complete his thesis he needed to decide upon the theory, methodology, presentation of his finding etc. and also, to decide where he stood regarding his role as a governor and a member of the community.

AD explained that in beginning his research he had reflected on his own journey that had brought him to this point, the challenges he had faced as a person and as a governor, what he had expected from the role of governor and what other governors and parents/community had expected from his role. AD commented that often he was conflicted by the expectations of the role.

AD highlighted that 95-97% of governing bodies are from a non-diverse background. He said that although this figure exists there is no background information to explain why it is so. This is often the case with number-based research.

AD decided to restrict his research to the Liverpool area as this was a manageable study group to concentrate his research on. He identified that certain areas within the Liverpool boundary had diverse communities but this was not reflected in the membership of the governing body.

AD said to attract governors from more diverse backgrounds the governing bodies must be aware of what motivates people of different backgrounds to want to volunteer to become governors and potential volunteers must understand the role and perceive it as a prestigious thing to do. He said that governors should always look positively at what needs to be improved and how to achieve it. AD hopes his research and qualitative approach will help with this.

AD stated that he had an assumption that if the role of governor were explained more and simplified then this would attract more people wishing to become governors. Designing the governing body to include the skills offered by the community would also help. Prospective volunteers need to know that governors do not all have to have an educational background.

AD said that currently he has 17 theories that are forming the base for his research e.g., social interactive theories, social justice theories, mingling and interaction theories etc. He said it was important to understand all the practices of governance based on the theoretical aspect.

He made clear that the theories were not designed to judge governors but to provide more self-understanding.

AD said his research methodology will use several ways e.g., interviewing chair of governors, interviewing governors from diverse backgrounds, questionnaires etc. The data collected so far had been fed into an AI programme. As a result, the programme stated the outcome of the research/improved framework would be: enhanced presentation, improved decision making, increase cultural competence, have positive educational outcomes, and provide inspiration/role models and strong community engagement.

MM asked AD what he meant by 'our community' as he used the phrase several times during his presentation. AD explained the phrase referred to the whole community of Liverpool, the base for his research, and included all diverse communities including minority ethnic groups, LGB community etc.

RL asked how governors could get the message of needing diverse governors out to the public when governors have little access to the public in general. AD replied that the message must be holistic and geared towards the triggers of the target group, appropriate wording must be used and a friendly approach was essential.

MMc asked how much time has been allocated for the research. AD replied he had 18 months to complete his research after which time he hoped Liverpool would be 'on the map' of research areas

MM thanked AD for his informative presentation and said that LGF aims to be the voice of governance in Liverpool and invited AD to contact LGF if there was any way they could contribute to the research.