

Priestley College

Meeting of the Priestley College Governing Body
held at 4.30pm on Thursday, 21 April 2016 in the Conference Room (P1.16)

MINUTES

Present	Mr R Haslam	Chair
	Mr A Cannell	
	Mr P Dyke	
	Mr A Farquharson	
	Mr M Grant	Principal
	Mr G Hill	
	Mrs K Hope	Staff Member
	Mr D Hudson	
	Mr J Monaghan	
	Mr D Mowatt	
	Ms H Roach	Student Member
	Mrs B Scott-Heron	
	Mrs S Yates	
	Mrs C Owen	Clerk to Governing Body
Also in attendance	Mr G Contos	Vice Principal (Curriculum & Standards)
	Mrs J McCann	Vice Principal (Resources)
	Mr D McGuire	Director of Finance
	Mr D Cathie	Item 5 only

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Ms K Simcock, Mr P McGerty and Mr M Salmon

2. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 February were accepted as an accurate record subject to the addition of apologies from Mrs B Scott-Heron and signed by the Chair.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising not on this agenda.

5. Area Review:

a) Feedback: The emerging options for Cheshire and Warrington

The Principal outlined current discussions taking place between other GFE Colleges in the Area Review process with a variety range of possible mergers. Due to the lack of any agreed preferred options from other institutions, the AR meeting scheduled for next week has been postponed until 9 May. He reminded the meeting of the current position of each of the other Colleges involved the Area Review process including possible mergers amongst them.

To date Priestley has expressed the desire to become a MAT alone with a strategy for growth, a MAT or remain as an individual 6th Form College. The timeline for confirmation of the outcome of Area Review is confused due to the delay in responses from other Colleges. However, by 9 May P must confirm its

preferred option to Area Review group.

b) Learner Voice: Area Review LV Report – Cheshire & Warrington

Ms Roach presented the document 'Learner Expectations of Further Education' which focussed on the day to day development of provision and highlighted the input from Priestley students shown in red. These included consideration of breaks throughout the day, the length of taught sessions and travel between sites in the future. She suggested a review of College Council roles and responsibilities in order to share workload. Allocation of funds to be managed by the College Council was requested. It was noted that the College Council website is freely provided by Wickes and this hosting was another suggested item for review.

The Chair thanked students for their significant input into the document.

6. Area Review: The Academy Option

a) The Challenge MAT Option: for and against

This is the preferred by Government as referenced by the Secretary of state in March 2016 and seen as the most effective way to drive up standards through collaborative leadership and peer accountability. The meeting explored the evidence for this in Warrington.

The Challenge Academy Trust

The meeting noted the working groups comprising staff and governors across potential partner institutions which had been developing the way forward for the creation of a Multi Academy Trust. The focus groups had considered the following areas for collaboration:

- Governance
- Finance
- Teaching, Learning & Achievement
- Growing the Multi Academy Trust

The potential financial savings and resource efficiencies were discussed at length. It was acknowledged that this would enable school leaders to focus on the core business of improving educational standards.

The proposed Multi Academy Trust comprising equal partners of Priestley with Bridgewater and Penketh was seen as providing a collaborative which would benefit to all of the young people of Warrington. Governors noted one particular strength of the proposal which was the ability of each institution to retain its own identity.

b) The Academy Option: for and against

The Principal referred to the previously circulated paper outlining the advantages and disadvantages of possible conversion. Governors asked the priority areas which he outlined as:

For

- School facing rather than FE facing
- Current Government agenda
- Financial gains through VAT recovery providing a more secure financial footing
- 6th Form sector is reducing due to other mergers taking place in other areas.

Against

- Change to Governance with slight reduction in autonomy
- More bureaucracy and regulation

Governors discussed the structural change of the College and stressed the need to ensure that the educational benefits for students should be the key driver for any change of status.

It was agreed that financial gains would provide the ability to enhance the experience and offer to students and the College would also be able to play its part in developing Teaching and learning/School to School Support through opportunities currently not available to 6th Form Colleges. This includes Teaching School status and the Teaching Leaders initiative.

RH suggested that Governors considered the proposals as presented by the Principal and vote on each Individually.

Proposal 1: To work with partner institutions to form a Multi Academy Trust.

There were 11 votes for the proposal, 0 votes against with no abstentions. Unanimous decision.

Proposal 2: to work to become a single Multi Academy Trust and to further develop closer working relationships with partner institutions.

There were 0 votes for the proposal, 11 votes against with no abstentions. Unanimous decision.

Proposal 3: that Governors and Managers continue to develop the plans with Bridgewater and Penketh High Schools.

There were 11 votes for the proposal, 0 votes against with no abstentions. Unanimous decision.

Proposal 4: that following the conclusion of the Area Review, Priestly College will proceed to make an application to form a Multi Academy Trust and begin the due diligence process with potential partners.

There were 11 votes for the proposal, 0 votes against with no abstentions. Unanimous decision.

RESOLVED

- 1. To work with partner institutions to form a Multi Academy Trust.**
- 2. That Governors and Managers continue to develop the plans with Bridgewater and Penketh High Schools.**
- 3. To make an application to form a Multi Academy Trust and begin the due diligence process with potential partners.**

7. Staffing Update

The meeting noted that the necessary staffing reduction had been achieved without the need for compulsory redundancy

The Principal wished to thank staff for their cooperation with the process.

AOB

The meeting noted the exemplar work on display which was produced for the successful STEM reaccreditation process. Governors were represented by Mrs Yates and Mr Haslam. The Chair wished to express their thanks to Ms Costello for leading on this project.

8. Date of Next Meeting (5 May 2016 at 4.30pm)

The meeting closed at 6.30pm

Carole Owen
27 April 2016

Accepted as a true record and signed by the Chair

Signature

Date