

THE GOVERNING BODIES OF KIRKBURTON AND SCISSETT MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Minutes of the joint meeting of the Governing Bodies of Kirkburton Middle and Scissett Middle Schools held at 7.00pm at Scissett Middle School on Monday, 30 November 2015.

PRESENT

Mrs S Lord (Chair), Mrs J Adams, Mrs H Baxter, Mr M Bishop, Mrs R Coneron, Mrs S Farmer, Mrs C L Grainger, Miss V Green, Mrs A Greenleaf, Dr S E Brown, Mrs C Grainger, Dr A Harris, Mr M A Inch, Mr I Jackson, Mr G Johnson, Mrs M Morris, Mr J Papworth, Mr M Pitchford, Miss R Potter, Mr G Smith, Mr J Terry, Mrs L Wilkinson, Mrs S Wilkinson.

In attendance

Ms T Buxton (Minute Clerk)
Mrs Lynn Robinson (Associate Member)
Mr P C Stronell (Associate Member)
Mrs Natasha Greenough (Observer)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE, CONSENT AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Miss E Charlesworth and Mr N Gemmell (consent).

There were no declarations of interest.

2. NOTIFICATION OF ITEMS TO BE RAISED UNDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No items were notified.

3. TO CONSIDER THE RECOMMENDATION FROM THE NEXT STEPS GROUP AND AGREE A ROUTE FOR FUTURE JOINT DEVELOPMENT

Governors received a comprehensive presentation from the Chairs of the Governing Bodies regarding the Next Steps Group's proposal to proceed with a clear mandate to progress a multi-academy trust (MAT).

What is proposed and why?

It was noted that the proposal was a response to the Government agenda for education; more trusts were converting to academies and there was an increased body of evidence for the benefits of close collaboration within schools within a MAT. It was hoped that the proposal would dovetail with the recommendations of the Peter Laurence commission, the findings of which would be shared with the Head Teachers on 11 December 2015.

Key benefits of the MAT structure included:

- A 125 year lease on land and buildings, flexibility in the authority delegated by the Trust Board to individual schools and access to capital funding.
- Increased collaboration with shared accountability, the ability to pool resources and share expertise across staff and the Governing Bodies.
- Greater choice for parents

- Improved SATs and KS4 outcomes.
- Individual schools would retain their own names, governing bodies and DfE number and would receive individual Ofsted judgements.

Potential issues were identified as follows:

- Insufficient capacity within the leadership teams and governing bodies in terms of available time and resource.
- Increased financial accountability and complexity
- The need to appoint a Trust Board with specific skills.

Q: Was there likely to be opposition from staff?

A: There was likely to be some anxiety and staff would need reassurance, particularly on future employability. It was suggested that staff from other schools who had gone through the process could be invited into the schools to share their experiences.

Q: Would staff be issued with new contracts?

A: Yes, but staff would move across under TUPE with the same pension, continuous service etc.

It was noted that, if the proposal was approved, the Next Steps Group would liaise with the partner schools to create a clear vision and ethos for the Trust whilst maintaining the schools' individual characters with strong community engagement, financial procedures and commitment by school leaders. A draft mission statement and action plan including milestones and deadlines for implementation of the MAT would also be developed with a view to conversion with effect from 1 September 2016.

Q: What would happen if there was no interest from the First Schools?

A: It was proposed that the Middle Schools would still proceed and First Schools would be able to join at a later stage. If a minimum of 3 primary schools joined the MAT then it could apply for a grant of £100k.

Q: How long would the First Schools have to make a decision?

A: This would be factored into the timetable (to allow sufficient time for consideration by the First Schools) On application to the DfE the Schools had to confirm a date by when they planned to convert. It was hoped that First Schools would be involved in the planning stages but a longstop date for their commitment would be required, ideally the end of January/early February for a 1 September 2016 conversion date.

Q: Could a secondary school be one of the partners?

A: Yes, the MAT could approach whichever schools were considered to be appropriate.

Q: How would the MAT provide greater parental choice?

A: By strengthening and maintaining the 3 tier system.

Q: Was the timing right given that the outcome of the Peter Laurence commission was still awaited? What about the opportunity for collective discussions with the First Schools about the options?

A: Informal discussions had already been taking place.

Q: What are the other options for the First Schools?

A: Federation would be an alternative option.

It was noted that any agreement to proceed would be an in principle agreement and was not binding until the formal agreement was signed.

RESOLVED: That both Kirkburton Middle and Scissett Middle Schools should formally (unanimously) submit an Academy application to the Department for Education to form a multi-academy trust that both Schools would create as a result of their respective applications for an Academy Order. The application should propose a 1 September 2016 start for the new multi-academy trust and the schools within it. It was also agreed that the two Head Teachers would approach the non-Church First Schools explaining the above decision and asking them to consider joining the MAT as founding partners or later in the process.

Decide and appoint legal support

RESOLVED: That Schofield Sweeny be appointed as recommended by the Next Steps Group.

Consider the process

RESOLVED: That this be delegated to the Next Steps Group with feedback to the Governing Bodies in the New Year.

Consider the possible timetable

RESOLVED: That this be delegated to the Next Steps Group with a proposal to be presented to the Governing Bodies in the New Year.

Consider the appointment of a "Project Manager"

It was reported that the Head Teachers and the Chair of Governors at Scissett Middle had met with Gayle Kahn who had acted as Project Manager for 80 schools converting to academies.

Q: Was this affordable?

A: Yes, each partner school would receive £25k for set up costs.

Q: Would the Project Manager/Schofield Sweeny attend the Next Steps Groups meetings?

A: Yes, this would be key to their role. They would also attend any initial meetings with the First Schools and any presentations to staff.

RESOLVED: That Gayle Kahn be appointed as Project Manager.

The Chair thanked the Next Steps Group for their hard work thus far.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

5. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS AND POSSIBLE AGENDA ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the next joint meeting of the Governing Bodies would be confirmed at a later date.

6. AGENDA, MINUTES AND RELATED PAPERS – SCHOOL COPY

RESOLVED: That no part of these minutes, agenda or related papers be excluded from the copy to be made available at the School.