

**Hove Learning Federation EFGB  
PORTLAND ROAD  
Tuesday 19<sup>TH</sup> September 2023, 18:00pm**

**Objective of EFGB meeting:**

- Identify the school's next steps following financial modelling for the LA
- Review LA's proposed PAN changes to reorganise the schools
- Consider the process of due diligence with AAT and other academy explorations
- Agree as an FGB if we have enough information to decide about starting the consultation to join an Academy Trust, or do we need more information ahead of our FGB on 10th October, where we plan to make the decision.
- Provide an opportunity to discuss the issues and answer questions

<b>GOVERNORS</b>	Lisa Marshall (LM) - Co-Chair, Louise Wilkinson (LW) - Co-Chair Maddie Southern (MS) - Headteacher HJS Marcel Amour – Co-opted Governor Jo Corbett (JC) – Co-opted Governor Lorna Cummings (LC) - Head of School HR, Staff Governor Emer Gardener – Co-opted Governor Nick Jefferson – Co-opted Governor David Karp (DK) – Co-opted Governor Ella Livingstone – Co-opted Governor Ben Massey (BM) – Head of School SR
<b>OTHER PARTICIPANTS</b>	Niamh O'Shea– Associate Member Rachel Jeffers - DHT HJS, guest
<b>APOLOGIES</b>	Barbara Bush – Co-opted Governor, Abby Hedger-Jones (Associate Member), Sam Ledger – Associate Member, Chelle McCann (Clerk to Governors)
<b>#</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Apologies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Chair opened the meeting with a warm welcome.</li> <li>● Apologies were noted and accepted from Barbara Bush, Sam Ledger, Abby Hedger-Jones and Chelle McCann</li> </ul>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Objectives of the meeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Chair reminded governors of why the meeting had been called and that the objectives of the meeting were to discuss the future of the schools and show due diligence to the options available to the schools.</li> <li>● Chairs acknowledged the sensitivities of the situation and topics for discussion, as they impact many jobs and families. Attendees are invited to contact chairs directly if they wish to discuss any matters separately to this meeting.</li> <li>● The presentations for this meeting have been uploaded to the GVO.</li> </ul>

- LM provided an overview of the background to the situation the schools find themselves in, recapping budget deficits, lack of LA support and continued requests from HLF for their support
- Chairs and HT have created a communication log evidencing the lack of support from the LA
- LM provided governors with an update of recent actions taken by SLT and Chairs regarding the future of our schools:
  - licensed deficits have been approved for both schools
  - There has been an application for additional support via School Resource Management Adviser (SMRA) and although this has been approved by the LA this has not moved forward yet.
  - On 23rd August Chairs wrote to Richard Barker expressing concern about the level of support from the LA, reiterating that urgent need of strategic support to make informed choices that are in the best interests of our schools, the community and the PAN situation across the city. Chairs added that they were also concerned that SLT and governors don't have capacity or resources to manage a full restructure and that there were also concerns about the cost of restructure
  - Due diligence around academisation options has been very thorough and has taken a huge amount of time and work to complete
  - Chairs and HT are meeting the LA 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2023, with Cllr Jacob Taylor and Cllr Lucy Helliwell – Lead Members for Children's Services.
- LM provided governors with an update on our due diligence on Aurora Academies Trust
  - We started the due diligence process on 24<sup>th</sup> Feb 2023
  - Aurora will be confirming if they wish to proceed to academisation with HLF on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023, ahead of the FGB meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023
  - Chairs reminded governors that a decision to proceed with an academy consultation on 10<sup>th</sup> October does not commit the federation to academisation. A final decision would be taken once the consultation has been completed.
  - LM talked governors through the timeline of due diligence with Aurora and a future potential timeline should governors agree.
  - EHT, SBM and Chairs have liaised with AAT around a restructure proposal. The restructure consultation would take place this term, with a view to changes being implemented by September 2024.
  - The restructure consultation can run concurrently with the academisation consultation
  - Governors were given a summary of the options available.

	<p>- LM/LW have met with Aurora today and they are open to discussions with the LA regarding the PAN challenges faced.</p>
<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p><b>Future of Our Schools</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● MS summarised the previous discussions at FGB, challenges that have been presented and worked through with the Governing Board and talked governors through the information submitted to the GVO for this item.</li> <li>● MS shared that there is a meeting with the LA on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September, and that Aurora is holding its board meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> October where they will decide whether they wish to invite HLF to join their trust.</li> <li>● It is important that the challenges discussed show integrity and keep the children at the forefront of decision making</li> <li>● It was acknowledged that there has been a lack of support from the LA however, there has been a numerous amount of support and discussion with AAT around the future of the school, regardless if the governors approve to join the AAT</li> <li>● The rationale for change has been thoroughly reviewed and submitted for governors in the GVO</li> <li>● The restructuring must take place during this academic year, even if governors do not decide to join an academy trust. A consultation would be set for the Autumn term to be in place from September 2024</li> <li>● The retention of Holland Road requires significant restructure regardless of any decisions made about academies, and governors will need to consider the needs of the pupil community. Any financial recovery as the results of a restructure will not be immediate and would be realised over a period of time</li> <li>● Consultation documents will need to be drafted in coming weeks ahead of the FGB</li> <li>● Governors were told that there are multiple schools in the Hove Partnership who are already part of a trust, have or will be launching consultation, or are in early discussion stages with academy trusts. This includes the diocese schools who have been told they have two years to choose their trust (from a choice of 2). The partnership discussed developing its own academy but was unable to mobilise this.</li> <li>● Being part of an academy does not preclude being part of the Hove Partnership</li> <li>● Any governor decisions will have to consider the financial implications, as well as the needs and aspirations of the schools</li> <li>● MS has thought very carefully about moving to each of the academy chains and feels that there has been thorough due diligence and transparency in the process</li> <li>● MS felt that there is a huge amount that WHIS/HJS have to give to any academy chain and that AAT want to build on the successes of the schools as well as learn from them</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MS shared findings from the due diligence with EKO but there would be further exploration needed to ascertain if this is a viable option to pursue, given the effort and time involved in getting as far as we have with AAT.</li> <li>• Governors will have to balance decisions over whether to stay with the LA or move to an academy chain along with what is the best option for the schools and their communities</li> </ul>
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Presentation, including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Aurora Academies Trust (AAT) - Due Diligence Process</li> <li>○ AAT Academisation Consultation Timeline</li> <li>○ Miro Feedback and Analysis</li> <li>○ ██████ Trust - Due Diligence and timelines</li> <li>○ Four options for PAN reductions</li> </ul> <p><b>GVO Questions:</b></p> <p>Questions have been submitted to the Miro board uploaded on the GVO here</p> <p>See updates on the Miro Q and A</p> <p><i>Why have we not produced a financial model (and corresponding re-structure plan) that involves Holland Road staying open as a 1-form entry site? It may be difficult for governors to engage in strategic decision-making without having these numbers.</i> We did not produce this as the LA were clear with myself and the co-chairs that they want the site to close down and it is not viable. The modelling was done with the LA. A restructuring process must take place this academic year preferably starting in October 2023 and finishing by December 2023 for implementation by September 2024 at the earliest and would need to be started as part of reducing financial costs. This is not optional.</p> <p>This would include complete removal of ██████ positions completely, streamlining of offices at SR/PR and the removal of either the ██████ ██████ role or ██████ role to work towards a primary model at the site.</p> <p>MS will proceed with a draft consultation paper for approval and share with Chairs within the next 2 weeks.</p> <p>Other mitigations include removal of weekly time for ██████ posts. Time would be given on a request basis only. Removal of ██████ would not be effective as they are pay protected for 3 years. On average we pay out 13 half days for each year/phase lead a week. Cost of two F/T ██████ at an average of £24,000. All are UPS2 or 3 teachers.</p> <p>████████ also receive time which can be up to another 2.5 days each week across the federation</p>

This restructure plan involves keeping Holland Road open and would reduce the SLT primarily at the SR/PR sites thinking of the two sites as one primary.

**Governor Questions:**

*Governors expressed concerns about disappointing results from schools in the AAT.*

Governors referred to the response from ATT to this question (response paper on GVO) which can be found here: [Hove Learning Federation GVO | HLP Governor Questions | GVO \(thegvoffice.com\)](#)

BM shared that on visits the impression was given that AAT keen to also learn from HLF. Whitehawk are doing strong work with DA children & inspirational work with families. James CEO of ATT reiterated that he is keen to maintain standards. HLF are also keen to work with schools that help them improve and AAT has good model for making RI schools good.

*There is a sense we feel we have an obligation to cooperate with LA. However – we should be mindful that as a GB we have a legal duty - obligation to work in the best interests of children in this school and community. Immoral to close HR without exit strategy for children and staff – esp. given the disruption caused by the pandemic, disruption of move from CR to HR.*

- At meeting with LA - if their proposal is to close HR we will need to find out about exit strategy for our children – have they modelled where children would go?
- LA – treated school, community and staff – without support – lack of duty
- Chairs have written letter to MP Peter Kyle about frustrations we are facing and requesting support
- Chairs have created log of requests to the LA for support

*Action: At LA meeting – if the LA proposal is to close HR LM/LW/MS to find out what the LA exit strategy is and what their plans are for the children allocated a space or currently attending*

*Do we need to seek assurance form AAT that they won't seek to close sites?* This is unlikely. AAT has said that as part of their due diligence, there is no evidence that this would be possible to achieve in a way that would resolve the financial challenges faced and be in the best interests of pupils and staff.

*The GB agreed that they would require more details on AAT's specific costs savings ahead of the FGB – regarding how they would address the deficit as well as how they would deliver forward financial sustainability within context of local PAN picture.*

*Action: EHT, LM & LW to work with AAT and provide this information ahead of FGB meeting*

*Action: JC to be included in this work*

**What is their thinking about HR being 1 form entry?** We haven't discussed this as our modelling show not financially viable

**How do admissions work and who sets the PAN – what happens if LA reduce PAN this year before academisation.** Probably can't do this without GB support – Our modelling shows this isn't viable. Academies can adjust their own PAN. **Action: LM/LW To check with AAT**

**Would we do this if weren't facing financial difficulties?** This is the direction of travel for schools. Put aside difficult decisions about changes to restructure – we recognise there are exciting opportunities around academisation. Important to consider.

**Could the GB/Schools look at other academies?**

We have done research on other academies, and spoken to another in recent weeks, but we believe that given the strong fit of ATT this would not be in our interests. There is also not time to spend another 6-9 months on due diligence. MS shared that in an ideal world would have loved to set up our own Trust within the Hove Partnership – but this isn't happening so much now – it's on a larger scale - and that doesn't help us in the position we are in. Hove Partnership explored creating an academy but given numerous issues, including Covid, leadership capacity, etc. – decided not to.

**Can we keep our values, vision – or do we need to cleave to AAT?** No, we believe we can keep our own but that we are already closely aligned. **Action: GB requested an AAT/HLF alignment around vision summarised on a page for FGB**

**Who leads on the day to day communications to parents, etc. – do AAT direct this?** No, all personalised by each school but AAT can provide support, including PR and marketing support, and advice on relationships with TU.

The GB agreed that due diligence is required when making their final decisions but understood that there is a time sensitive need which requires action. [REDACTED] academisation took 18 months of discussions and planning.

Other areas Governors wished to consider:

- Curriculum – AAT's developed between existing 7 schools. Keen to review – and learn from HLF – e.g. learning ladders, knowledge notes, localised curriculum. Might need more details for staff.
- AAT doesn't sell themselves well with website, etc. but acknowledge this needs to change

Both AAT and HLF driven towards school improvement. AAT strong drive for school improvement – has taken on some schools in challenging circumstances but there is strong alignment with HLF. Governors felt that this could be opportunity for real partnership with academy.

HLF approached AAT, and it was also recommended by [REDACTED] who was previous [REDACTED], is a SPA in the City and is also [REDACTED] for City Academy Whitehawk. ATT have been asked by DfE to grow and extend – asked to take on 3 RI schools. However, they would like to take a different approach and grow with a more diverse range of school such as ours.

	<p><i>Action: GB to discuss extending invitation to AAT to a meeting with governors.</i></p> <p>EHT felt that would need compelling reason to put AAT on hold in order to progress with [REDACTED] or another MAT.</p> <p><i>Do AAT – CEO – have vision for whether two primaries, one primary, 2 heads, etc.</i></p> <p>Financial modelling shows in our interests to remain as 2 separate schools - infants and junior school with a primary feel. on each site. DK expressed concerns that having 2 separate heads might not be beneficial for our schools as could lead to divergence.</p> <p>Governors reflected that understanding the LA position is critical to making our final decision.</p> <p>Governors were invited to send any additional questions to Chairs</p> <p><i>Action: Chairs to collate questions, answer outstanding question, send any outstanding questions to AAT for their response and circulate this to governors ahead of FGB</i></p> <p><i>Action: Chairs will feedback to GB after meeting with LA on 22<sup>nd</sup> September</i></p>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>What do we need to make the AAT academisation decision on 10<sup>th</sup> October FGB?</b></p> <p>The next steps have been captured in relation to each agenda item.</p>
<p><b>7.</b></p>	<p><b>AOB</b> - The meeting ended at 20:00</p>

**Supporting Papers:**

- Future of Our Schools – update - GVO
- Aurora Trust Due Diligence
- Eko Due Diligence
- Miro Board feedback and analysis – will be on GVO by the meeting
- Maddie Presentation – to be tabled
- Supporting documentation on the OneDrie – including academisation process, staffing structure charts, research on other academies, example of academisation consultations in B&H, etc.

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