

KGA



**Minutes of the KGA County Assembly Meeting
Monday 12 March 2018 at 19.00 hrs
The Spitfire Ground St Lawrence, Kent County Cricket Ground,
Old Dover Road, Canterbury, Kent CT1 3NZ**

Welcome and Chairman's Report

The Chair, Janice Brooke welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked new governors for attending the meeting. There had been some agenda issues in the lead up to the meeting and Keith Abbott had agreed to step in in place of Matt Dunkley, unfortunately he was now stuck in traffic. Michael Roy from Inspiring Governance would start the meeting until Mr Abbot arrived.

The Chair updated governors on the Chairs' Forums. It had been the plan to circulate the questionnaire to Chairs and Vice Chairs during Term 4, but the planning had slipped and Julia Durcan, who was managing the project, had confirmed that the questionnaire would now be circulated to Chairs and Vice Chairs during Term 5. Flyers would also be available at the forthcoming Chair's Conference with further information. The intention for the Forums was to build and develop support networks for Chairs and Vice Chairs.

The NGA had recently been running a survey on Spotlight on disadvantaged children and how Pupil Premium was being used in the schools.

The Academies Roadshow would take place on 25 April 2018 at Excel in London.

Governors were asked to complete their online feedback forms after the meeting and any suggestions for forthcoming meetings. Comments regarding the venue would be helpful as it was the first time that this venue had been used for a long time.

Lastly, governors were asked to ensure that they signed the register indicating which governing body they were from.

➤ **Keith Abbott – Director of Education Planning and Access Working with the Regional Schools Commissioner**

Keith Abbot introduced himself to the meeting.

- **New Ways of Working – Who and What is the RSC**
- National Schools Commissioner – Sir David Carter
- 8 Regional School Commissioners Posts - created in September 2014

- Regional School Commissioners (RSCs) act on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education and are accountable to the National Schools Commissioner.
- Dominic Herrington is the RSC for South East England and South London
- He covers 22 Local Authority Areas – Bexley, Brighton, and Hove, Bromley, Croydon, East Sussex, Greenwich, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Kent, Kingston upon Thames, Lambeth, Lewisham, Medway, Merton, Portsmouth, Richmond upon Thames, Southampton, Southwark, Surrey, Sutton, Wandsworth, and West Sussex.

- **Key RSC responsibilities**

Initially responsible only for approving new academies and intervening in underperforming academies

- Remit has expanded considerably over time to now include:
 - Seeking the conversion of underperforming-maintained schools
 - Deciding which academy trust will sponsor an underperforming-maintained school
 - Deciding on applications from local-authority-maintained schools to convert to academy status
 - Taking action where academies and free schools are underperforming
 - Intervening in academies where governance is inadequate
 - Encouraging and deciding on applications from sponsors to operate in a region
 - Taking action to improve poorly performing sponsors
 - Advising on proposals for new free schools
 - Advising on whether to cancel, defer or enter into funding agreements with free school projects

- **National picture**

The position as at January 2018

- 7,472 state funded schools are academies (35% of all schools)
- 47% of all pupils attend an academy school
- 72% of secondary schools are academies, compared with 27% of primary schools (77% and 34% in Kent)
- The proportion of schools that are academies varies widely across England e.g. 93% in Bromley to 6% in Lewisham, Lancashire and North Tyneside
- Rates of academy conversion from maintained schools tend to be lowest in the north of England and in London

- **Working with the RSC**

- It is hard to isolate much of our work with the RSC
- Legislation over the past 8 years has created a complex and continually evolving landscape
- Our work with the RSC inevitably overlaps with work we do with the ESFA, the DfE and Academy Trusts as well as all LA Maintained Schools
- There are also the longer standing partnerships with stakeholders such as the three Dioceses in the county and District Councils as well as new partners such as KAH and teaching schools
- Key challenge for KCC is that it retains statutory duties for LA Maintained schools and Academies but many of the levers are now held by DfE – particularly true in respect of the delivery of new school places

- **Areas of KCC work with the RSC**

- Academy conversions of all types
- Academy re-brokerage
- Coasting Schools (incl LA Maintained)
- School/Academy Standards

- Sponsors
 - Free Schools/Wave Process
 - Presumption/competition
 - Place Planning
 - School/Trust Specific issues
 - MATs and MAT performance
 - Strategic School Impact Fund
- **Areas of KCC work with the ESFA**
 - Free Schools/Wave Process
 - Presumption/Competition
 - Place Planning
 - School/Trust specific issues
 - Academy revenue funding
 - LA/Academy formula budgets
 - Basic Need and Basic Need Funding
 - Post 16 funding and place planning
 - PSBP1 and PSBP2

- Keith Abbot explained that a lot of re-brokerage had been undertaken specifically with the Lilac Sky Trust schools.
- Any school that went into category had no choice but to go down the academy route
- The landscape was constantly changing
- In Kent there were 65 schools that had become stand alone trusts but the aim of the RSC was to get those trusts to join multi academy trusts.
- KCC were working with the RSC in relation to the 65 standalone trust going forward
- The RSC had now been given some funding by the government for school improvement which was the first time that had happened.
- KCC met with both the RSC and ESFA on a monthly basis and weekly conference calls took place by way of a regular update.

Questions

Governors asked the following questions:

Would a school have a say in which Trust it could join if it was part of a re-brokerage plan? The decision on brokerage sat with the RSC. There had been schools in Maidstone who had been with the AET. The standards nationwide were slipping with the schools in that Trust. The 4 schools in Maidstone were reallocated by the RSC. It was a harsh decision being a different system to what schools in Kent were used to and the issue of re-brokerage was increasing. The test would come with the new scheme of inspection that could shift things as well.

What was the LA's attitude about the capacity of Kent schools to be sponsors? Kent had built in 13,000 extra school places in its commissioning plan over the past 4 years and over the next few years a further 18,000 spaces were needed. Going forward, an increasing proportion would be brand new schools. Most of the existing schools had been expanded to their limit. The LA would be undertaking a lot of work with Kent Trusts and standalone Trusts to look at increasing the school places within those schools. A lot of work was needed in getting schools to sponsor new schools. The LA did not expect school rolls to peak until 2030. It was important that more sponsors came forward during the next 7 years.

With the need for extra places in 4 years' time and the 2 – 3-year delay with district planning, what mechanisms were in place for planning to be approved by the County Council Planning

Department? Keith Abbot explained that one of the ways to get around the issue of planning was if the funding for new schools was with the LA. The process had worked for one school in West Kent where the funding was routed directly to the LA and the LA built the school. That way the planning would be approved by the County Council and not the planning department at District council level. There was a route, but it was getting the Government to accept it. Everything now had to be done on a project by project basis. The LA was also working with schools and trusts with bulge year groups and temporary classrooms.

The Chair thanked Keith Abbott for his presentation to governors.

➤ **Suzanne Mayes – Current Governor Vacancies in Kent**

It was positive to see some new faces attending the Assembly meeting and Suzanne Mayes explained the governor vacancies across Kent. The vacancy list would be available on Kelsi with the minutes.

Total Governor posts in Kent	4587
Total Vacancies in Kent	910 (governors in post 3,677)
Parent governors	288
Local Authority Governors	136
Co-Opted Governors	248
Staff Governors	136
Partnership Governors	25
Foundation Governors	17

There was currently a 20% overall Governor vacancy rate across Kent. The figure for LA governor vacancies could possibly be lower due to the Local Authority Governors that were pending being appointed onto their GB following the Governor Approval Process (GAP).

There was some work to do as the Governor Services Team visited schools. It was good CPD for teaching staff to be a member of a governing board. The majority of vacancies were starting to decrease.

The Chair thanked Suzanne Mayes for her overview on the governor vacancy situation in Kent to governors.

➤ **Michael Roy – Inspiring Governance**

Michael Roy introduced himself to the meeting. A presentation was shown on screen.

● **Background to inspiring Governance**

- 30-40K governor vacancies across the UK
- It was about creating an online platform for people to locate governors
- We are in to our second year of the project
- Inspiring Governance started in November 2016

● **What is Inspiring Governance?**

A new free service that:

- Revolutionises the way in which schools can find skilled volunteers for their governing boards using an on line electronic matching platform
- Provides new governors and trustees with induction, support and guidance
- Funded by the DfE and delivered by Employers and Education
- Benefits from having 4 Regional Managers across the country
- In partnership with ASCL, NAHT etc.



- Sign up
 - 4 options
 - Volunteers register on the site
 - Employers register on the site
 - To find governors for your school
 - Manage opportunities
 - Finding volunteers
 - Can put in a radius of the school about current volunteers that were on the system at the current time.
 - You can communicate with possible candidates through the website
- **Benefits:**
 - Ability to search for volunteers by skills, experience and location
 - Over 2,000 volunteers have already signed up across the country
 - Covers primary, secondary schools and colleges
 - Bespoke recruitment service for finding chairs
 - Support and advice for new governors from the NGA
 - MATs, Las, Diocesan appointments possible
 - Boards and clerks will be able to use the service for multiple schools

Michael Roy explained that:

- Inspiring Governance was currently working with 5 London boroughs
- Heathrow Airport had a volunteer scheme in place
- Hands on support was available where it was not possible to make a match online
- Guidance on appointing and recruiting governors was also available.

- **Why is it important for you to utilise the platform?**

- Collaborative working practice
- Consortia style approach to engagement and wider participation
- Targeted sector skills information and approach
- The engagement of your LEP
- Multiple employer networks
- Succession planning
- Scenario planning
- Fitting the needs of your schools now and in the future

Questions:

- **How long did it take to register?** About 10 minutes
- **Did it take people through the commitment?** Yes, that was part of the process.
- **Had anyone ever been rejected who had applied to be a governor?** No. That was not part of the process that was offered. That was for the governing board to make that decision.
- **Were Authority governor vacancies on the website?** Yes.

SGOSS were still in existence and had the contract originally. A pilot had been carried out for 12 months and, due to the scale of the project, it was decided that SGOSS was not the right choice. SGOSS was not now DfE funded.

The Governor Services Manager said that there was more work to be done with Inspiring Governance and there was the possibility that training courses could be organised.

The fact that Inspiring Governance was able to engage with employers was important and what it would bring to the business in getting companies to give volunteering time to its personnel. It was not just about where governors lived as they may want to be governors in the area in which they worked.

www.inspiringgovernance.org

Michael Roy, Regional Manager, East and South East
Mobile No: 07715 201844

The Chair thanked Michael Roy for his presentation to governors.

Open Forum

Did all governors attend the District Briefings? Yes, they were useful but could be overwhelming on occasions.

The Chair explained that responses to the Chairs' Forum Questionnaire would be vital for the way forward and whether there was sufficient interest across each district.

A Governor commented that on CPD online there was a facility to download presentation documents for courses that governors had attended however some were not available for download. **Would it be possible for materials from the courses to be uploaded to CPD so that they were available to governors who had attended?** Suzanne Mayes would contact CPD to see if that would be a viable option.

Suzanne Mayes asked if everyone attending these meetings would book through CPD online as it did put pressure on the booking arrangements with the venues if advance bookings had not been made.

Suzanne also confirmed that there are a minimum number of places on courses required to ensure that the training courses were viable.

The next KGA Assembly meeting was scheduled for Monday 18 June 2018 at 19.00 hrs at Oakwood House, Maidstone.

The meeting closed at 20.38 hours.