

Minutes of South Molton Community College Full Governing Body Meeting
held on Wednesday, 24 February 2016 at 6pm.

Chaired by: Andy Comerford		Clerked by: Sue Squire
Present:		Agenda: -
Andy Comerford	AC	Sanctioned Apologies
Diane Dimond	DD to Minute No. 3.2	Declarations of Interest
Andrew Finney (Principal)	AF	To make a decision regarding a Multi Academy Trust
Philip Govier	PG	
Georgia Newman	GN	
Gail Puffitt	GP	
Wendy Rickard	WR	
Julie Snell	JS	
Arthur Symons	AS	
Tony Strickland	TS	
Sheila Wyer	SW	
Simon Walker, Business & Premises Manager		
Dave Lewis, Vice Principal		
Paul Mulligan, Head Teacher and Penny Wignall, Chair of Trustees, TEAM (Together Each Achieves More)		
Pené Prior, Deputy Principal, Petroc		
		<u>Action:</u>
1.	Sanctioned Apologies: Marc Cornelius, Richard Edgell, Andrew Redpath. Ellen Vernon.	
2.	Declarations of Interest. Diane Dimond, Principal of Petroc. Sarah Robinson, former Chair of Governors at Brayford Primary School.	
3.	To make a decision regarding a Multi Academy Trust. Presentations were given as follows: 3.1 Diane Dimond, Principal of Petroc. Diane began by saying this was an opportunity to advise as to where Petroc may sit in terms of a Multi Academy Trust. Petroc is a Further Education (FE) College with incorporated exempt status and is most akin to Academies. The current structure of the College has been run since 1992. Further Education establishments can sponsor schools that are Academies, wish to become converter schools or wish to become MATs (Multi Academy Trusts). She introduced Pené Prior, Deputy Principal who leads on Curriculum. Diane spoke about a MAT and the potential shared aims. She had no blueprint to bring. She felt that for students aged 11 – 19 it was a shared journey from SMCC as the students already visit Petroc and the staff have worked with SMCC staff. SMCC students take part in taster days so there is collaboration there. Petroc has a strong partnership with Plymouth University and strong employer links. The aspiration routes into Higher Education and employment that could be brought to the school.	

It was known that there is a certain shortage of industry skills at Petroc and SMCC.

Diane suggested that Petroc and SMCC could share CPD (Continual Professional Development) for staff and work together on English and Maths, in particular working with students who didn't get their GCSE qualification in English and Maths at SMCC.

At Petroc HR procurement had been dealing with issues since 1992. Petroc is a local provision that meets local need.

Why explore the idea of a MAT with Petroc? It is a successful FE College with a £28 million income. Among the student numbers there are apprentices.

It has STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) assured status, was inspected by Ofsted in November 2015 and graded good with outstanding features.

The Regional Schools Commissioner for the South West has been advised of the expression of interest to collaborate with other schools and have received confirmation to proceed.

Pené Prior, Deputy Principal showed via the overhead projector, exam results. The College was in the top 10% of FE Colleges for A levels and in the top 5% of FE for the percentage of students achieving grades A* A or B or higher in facilitating subjects. The attainment and success rates are very high with BTEC National and Diplomas in the top 9% and is in the top 9% of FE Colleges for value added. Over 200 apprenticeships are successfully completed each year.

The College has ideas for further exploration and is maximising the transition between Years 11 and 12 and involves being a student up to age 19. This could have an impact on Years 6 and 7 transition for students to see well into the future. The College has links with employers and Higher Education. Back office services could be shared.

What might we do to take this further? The College may be visiting other MATs, attending Conferences, taking advice from the DoE and the Local Authority. A Sub Committee to progress a potential link was suggested with the next step covering a period of 12 – 24 months to ensure that all were happy with the arrangements.

Diane advised that we could work together and co-design what the values could be. Existing MATs would need to slot in with this.

A MAT could be separate from the College and be a founder member which would be the lead and set the tone for the future.

Question: What is the difference between a sponsor or set up our own MAT?

Answer: If Petroc was a sponsor SMCC would have more control who would be on the Trust Board and responsible for the lead of financial health and quality of the Trust.

Question: If we wanted to take Primary Schools would this have to be approved?

Answer: There would be representation from the Chief Executive or Leadership Team.

Question: Has anyone else been invited to join?

Answer: Petroc is in discussion with another school in the community area in a similar position as SMCC and is interested in weighing up the option.

Question: Can Petroc sponsor more than one school?

Answer: In that situation Petroc would sponsor a MAT and there would be a number under the umbrella Trust Board.

Diane reiterated there were options for collaboration and suggested that SMCC

takes the decision to convert and look at Petroc further. Petroc is very focused on meeting the needs of the community and is conscious that big changes to schools takes time with the management. The key is working with them with the desire to partner schools in the wider Northern and Mid Devon areas.

AC felt these thoughts were a new extension of what SMCC has been considering and had raised issues that would take it to a natural conclusion.

Diane and Pené left the Meeting.

3.2 Paul Mulligan from TEAM.

Paul is the Executive head teacher of Pilton Bluecoat Academy that is involved in a MAT with Brayford and Umberleigh Primary Schools.

The small Academy Trust was formed 2 – 3 years ago as a single Academy. Pilton Bluecoat School was approached by the small Federation comprising Umberleigh and Brayford for support and as a result, a management partnership was formed with the group which was working well with Brayford and Umberleigh Schools now good schools.

Funding from the government of over £100,000 had been secured to bring into the Academy to make a MAT. Pilton Bluecoat is a Church school with Brayford and Umberleigh being local community schools.

Paul said that the important things about the Trust is the value each school has on local distinctiveness. Clear non negotiables had been set out throughout the Trust in safeguarding and how the children learn. All the schools benefit from this good practice. The MAT also treasure and nurture local distinctiveness with urban children benefitting from the children who live in a rural area in Brayford and Umberleigh, and vice versa. The MAT is able to offer a range of activities for children who would not normally be able to access due to distance, and they learn from this.

Umberleigh has a Forest School, Umberleigh and Brayford pupils have just returned from a visit to London.

The benefits also applies to the staff where their professional development is enhanced to improve the lives of children.

Paul stressed it was not three institutes standing alone but three institutions achieving more.

The future. They will probably need to expand for the children and staff and maintain good standards. In moving away from the catchment areas this is more about professional development and children's development. There needs to be some sensible geographical framework so schools can be close, interact and develop from each others distinctiveness and they are looking at a range of options. One of those would be to align in a thriving South Molton academic area, possibly involving SMCC and other schools.

Options the other way are limited. Eight key schools have already established a Co-operative Trust which looks likely to develop into a more substantial group. Paul wanted to link up with people who are like minded.

The other option was that the Academy had been approached by the DoE, receiving a letter celebrating its capacity. It has the capacity to work with other schools and can sponsor other schools. The Academy had been asked to put in a bid for the new Free School being built at Roundswell, Barnstaple, a 420 place school which was being supported by the Diocese of Exeter and was moving forward rapidly.

Newport Community School was also looking to put in a bid and it all depended on whether it is right and proper to have a Church School on the other side of the river. It will be resolved in the next month.

The School video was played to give Governors a flavor of what the school is doing.

Question: If they sponsor a new school in Barnstaple, would it limit the capacity to develop a MAT and take up more time and limit the ability on building a larger MAT?

Answer: It depended on who it was being built with. TEAM want to link the school with a similar profile school, SMCC has had a 'Good' Ofsted and would make an equal partnership. There are schools who TEAM have been asked to work with who are struggling and they cannot work with them.

Paul talked about the new Free School. The role of Executive Head would be more of a directional role. When the school opens it will be small, with the Diocese opening a nursery section first then phasing children in gradually. The school is specifically for children from new homes and this would ensure that as the school grew, it would grow in quality.

Question: What is the experience of partnership school as Church schools?

Answer: A Church school is about values and the ethos of a school of Christian values. There are certain things that Pilton has to do that non Church schools Brayford and Umberleigh do not have to such as assemblies that focus around a Church theme.

Regarding the governance of the Trust, there has to be a particular frame which fits in the national version framework.

Paul went through the structure of the Board. There would be the expectation that some current Governors would have to stand down if a MAT was formed as Trustees on a MAT are not there to represent the school.

Trustees have to be highly qualified people with something to offer and demonstrate they have an empathy for part of the MAT.

Question: If it is all Primary Schools in a MAT, why should a secondary school join?

Answer: The trend is to build through schools, being an advantage for staff and children to have an all-through experience. Paul felt that teachers could have their levels of knowledge and understanding enhanced from secondary teachers.

Secondary school curriculum is changing to be more holistic and child centered in its approach. From each others strengths, support could be given. There were many opportunities for older and younger children to interact.

In terms of leadership, secondary schools could offer a lot in leadership of a growing MAT.

Question: What is the optimum size?

Answer: To maintain a range of schools he would look for other schools to see the model. Two schools in South Molton would be excellent candidates giving four or five schools in total that could weld together and all be like minded people.

The vision is about what can be done for the schools in the locality and make a dynamic learning opportunity for the area. Both groups need to decide what level of advantage it would be for their school.

3.3 Darryl Chapman, Principal at Okehampton College (Ofsted Outstanding, Teaching School) had invited South Molton Community College to consider being part of the MAT being considered by the College.

AF had been approached by many people about working with SMCC and developing a MAT. Okehampton was one of the schools. SMCC link with Okehampton and it is a Co-operative School, having worked with them for a number of years.

There was the possibility that teachers could be shared along with other work and joint Co-operative Trust Inspections.

Darryl is the Executive Head of Okehampton College which is a Local Authority School, a Teaching School and Ofsted Outstanding who currently work formally with Primary Schools in the Okehampton area. They are looking to create a MAT and may have to lose the Co-operative School badge in order to progress this. SMCC has been asked if we are interested in working with Okehampton who currently works with five or six other schools.

If a MAT was progressed we would be looking at September 2017 for it to be finalised and it would involve four secondary schools: Okehampton, Cullompton, Bude and SMCC with a range of Primary Schools. It would be a large MAT spread over a distance.

By joining such a MAT it would give protection to schools needing help and support. Darryl wants to work with SMCC and Okehampton College has the values and ethos SMCC share. All schools involved have the Co-operative status but it would not be a Co-operative MAT.

AF had circulated Governors with his thoughts through an email sent late in the afternoon. He did not want to send it earlier as one of the presenters was a member of the Governing Body and this might have created accusations of unfair practice.

Question: What can't we have a Co-operative MAT?

Answer: Because not all Primary Schools are co-operative schools.

Question: If we join a MAT can we stay a Co-operative School in a bigger MAT?

Answer: AF did not think so. AC said we would have to lose Co-operative status. AF did not think a Co-operative badge had altered values and ethos of SMCC. If a MAT was joined there would have to be non-negotiables. New staff would have to be replaced by teachers of the same values.

It was not known definitely that it cannot be a Co-operative Trust.

Question: What would happen to the assets?

Answer: The assets would go back to DCC who would have to re-issue these to the MAT. SW advised there would be a cost of approximately £6,000 to do this.

AS was concerned of the difficulties to assess the ethos of the TEAM MAT, given that one is a Voluntary Aided school and the other two are community schools. There is a big difference between the two.

AC advised a lot of emphasis is put on the local community.

Question: How do you sustain the quality and values of the individual school within the system?

Answer: Their role is to maintain the village school in the community.

AC advised of a long conversation with Paul and did not have an uncomfortable feeling about the community. After the conversation, the two local community schools and the blueprint could be sold to other local schools. It would mean we would have to join and expand with them.

SR commented that we would have to stop thinking in terms of 'my school'.

SW said we were in a strong position and it would be a shame to give up SMCC's autonomy and join with Primary Schools and not running as we wanted to. He felt we would be losing a lot to go with somebody else and should be looking at starting our own MAT and others come in with us. He stressed that we must look to the future.

AC advised that the TEAM MAT do seem to be a MAT that works.

SW questioned how they could help with poor Maths results. What would Paul have done to help with the poor English results?

SR commented that some results stretch back to poor Primary School results and long term help to raise standards at Primary Schools would impound on us in the future. She went on to say that there is North Molton Primary School, the Federation of Bishops Nympton and East Anstey, Chittlehampton and Filleigh are with two other schools further away and she did not think that many were likely to come in with us imminently.

Question: Had there been any response from the South Molton schools?

Answer: One is a Church school and South Molton infants are in no immediate rush to do anything.

AF felt that to give everything away is a big ask. He wanted along with the governors to take SMCC to Ofsted Outstanding and improve outcomes, include a child centre and keep autonomy. If we joined with someone we would want to keep the character of the school which was noticed by all who visited.

SW also felt there were many strong points which should not easily be given away. He posed the question that maybe some schools are waiting for us to make a decision.

SMCC could be a stand alone MAT.

Simon Walker spoke about the structure to grow and model the MAT that can offer support when schools are in difficulty and made reference to the conversation with Sir David Carter.

AF pointed out that as a vacant MAT it could not have the protection of other schools.

There was a reference about North Molton Primary School who had approached SMCC. At a South Molton Local Learning Community Meeting, no one seemed keen to progress.

Question: Is a MAT something that can be joined and then never leave?

Answer: This could depend on the Executive Board.

AF felt that when the White Paper was out in the Summer we would need to be ready.

SW added that financially we need to be very clear with a 5 year plan.

AF said that each of the presentations had some merits and failing and we need to decide how we want the school to look in 5 years time.

SW thought there were three options:

1. A stand alone MAT
2. A possible link with Okehampton which had a lot of benefits
3. Or possibly with the TEAM MAT

But before we can make a selection, we need to decide on the vision and who it links with one of the options.

PG felt the vision was to incorporate local feeder schools. He noted that the other Pilton schools did not want to work with the TEAM MAT.

AF asked for it to be minuted that local Primary Schools work incredibly hard.

AF asked does anyone feel our vision doesn't meet the vision of other schools?

AS responded by asking how can we ensure the continuing heritage of the school. It is important to have the right leadership and he wondered if going to a MAT and handing over the local-ness, what about appointments and vision of leadership within the schools' which are trying to build leadership within the school. We must make sure we sustain the ethos.

SW felt feeder school children in relation to SMCC's heritage is the ultimate destination. He went on to say that he felt the school was unique. It was a special school and would not like to think the autonomy would be lost.

In the Okehampton MAT all schools pool their money together. The secondary schools have a separate budget to the Primary Schools' separate budget. TEAM keep theirs separate.

AF invited Governors to write the Governing Body's vision on paper. Andrew Redpath's email was mentioned about the issues raised.

WR was of the opinion that it was about power control and people looking after what is theirs.

Sponsorship was discussed as was the merits of a single MAT or joining with an existing MAT.

AC asked if we should become a MAT of any form? There is funding to progress it with possibly extra help to have a person dedicated to this only.

Sheila Wyer proposed that at this point we decide to become a MAT undefined. Seconded by SR. Vote: 9 in favour. None against.

Governors did not feel ready to progress with Petroc or Okehampton College. The other two options is a stand alone MAT or progress with TEAM MAT.

SR advised that Brayford and Umberleigh had kept their identify. SW felt three options should be kept on the table to include Okehampton.

Question: If we joined with Okehampton, would it lessen the amount AF could put into the school and his vision?

Answer: It would be an Executive Head in charge of the MAT.

SR spoke about succession planning for a Principal.

AC reminded Governors that Paul had mentioned the various opportunities for professional development.

DL said the underlying issue is what is right for the pupils of the school.

S Walker informed that £25,000 would be available to further an investigation.

AC proposed that S Walker applies for funding. Seconded by GP and unanimously agreed.

Question: GN asked if we are on our own as at present does this leave us vulnerable to the white paper?

Answer: AF advised yes.

There was the flexibility of using teachers within a MAT.

AC felt AF's vision should be progressed of a single MAT, the same as the Governors vision and the next step is to we get to this. Representatives of the staff to be involved in future Meetings.

AF felt that as a Governing Body, there is some strength in the Okehampton model.

	<p>Two secondary schools and local primary schools would be the ideal model.</p> <p>Governors were happy to look at that utopia situation and also the Okehampton MAT. Future Meetings to involve the whole Full Governing Body.</p> <p>Question: How does a satellite MAT work?</p> <p>Answer: There would be a lead teacher for SMCC, lead teachers for Primary Schools and Okehampton being the main hub.</p>	
5.	The Meeting ended at 8.59pm.	
<p>Summary of Decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ SMCC becomes an undefined MAT 		
<p>These Minutes are agreed by those present as being a true record.</p>		
<p>Signed: Chair of South Molton Community College Full Governing Body:</p>	<p>Date:</p>	