



RICHARD HUISH TRUST STRATEGY DAY

Friday 8th May 2026 1pm-4pm

The Taunton and Pickeridge Golf Club

Directors Present:

Jade Renville (Chair)
Catherine Christie (Vice Chair)
Tim Duffen
Pat Flaherty
Tina Wilkes
Andrea Marshall
Bill Dunham
James Coulston
Dave Tomaney

In attendance:

John Abbott (CEO)
Paul Lonsdale (CFO)
Steve Chattell (CPO)
Full register available detailing Central Team members and representatives from LGBs

Clerk:

Helen Wells (Governance Specialist)

MINUTES

RHT		Action
25/182	1. MEETING FORMALITIES 1.1 Welcome and apologies for absence The chair welcomed attendees to the meeting, introduced the presenters and introduced new directors and members of the central team in attendance. There were apologies for absence from Stuart Hill.	
RHT 25/183	2. STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENTS 2.1 Strategic reminders and session introduction The CEO gave a presentation setting out the context for the day's strategic focus and the reasons leading to proposing exploring forming deeper working relationships with the MATs represented at the meeting.	
RHT 25/184	2.2 MAT development, shared learning, opportunities and challenges The CEO from Northern Arch Learning Partnership (NALP) gave a presentation about the history, culture, context and strategic vision and direction of the trust.	
RHT 25/185	The CEO from the Heart of Mercia Trust (HoM) then gave a presentation introducing the trust, outlining the journey they have been on as a trust and what they have learned from it.	
RHT 25/186	Both presentations outlined the reasons why working with the Richard Huish Trust (RHT) presented a potentially great opportunity for them.	
RHT 25/187	<i>The presenters then left the meeting. Andrea Marshall also left the meeting to avoid any potential or perceived conflicts by remaining to participate in the following discussion due to her being a member of staff of HoM.</i>	

Signed:.....Jade Renville..... Date:.....14th July 2026.....

- RHT 25/188** **2.3 Open discussion with strategic planning**
 Directors discussed the proposals to align RHT more closely with the two trusts. They considered the following points:
- RHT 25/189**
- Opportunities for RHT by developing closer ties with trusts of a similar composition and culture; impact that may have on addressing national priorities and conversations.
 - The level of commitment that would be expected/needed/helpful.
 - Wider strategic political landscape – high level of uncertainty.
 - Uncertainties around the funding outlook.
- RHT 25/190**
- Preferable to move forward in the face of uncertainty around future growth.
 - Practical considerations and what the nature of the working relationship might look like.
 - Consideration of the geography and local needs – clarity about strategy for locality but mindful of what being part of a greater entity may bring.
- RHT 25/191**
- Potential risks or unintended impacts, specifically impact on time and focus for the executive team and directors.
 - Being clear about the problem that is trying to be solved by taking this step.
 - Being clear about what could be gain in terms of improving teaching and learning and ultimately the positive impact on the children and young people educated through RHT.
- RHT 25/192**
- Opportunities for the college were explored; could include closer peer networking opportunities but there were concerns about research being restricted to a shared framework in the future.
- RHT 25/193**
- Seen as a way to navigate potential questions over merger that could present themselves in the future.
 - Noted as being a nod to the history of Huish to avoid being an isolated institution as it had been in the past.
 - Opportunities for greater involvement of local governors, for example through joint working groups.

RESOLVED: Directors agreed they were supportive of forming closer working relationships with the Northern Arch Learning Partnership and the Heart of Mercia Trust.

- RHT 25/194** **2.4 SEND development plan**
 The chair introduced Dr Tim Cockerill from Somerset Council and noted the context of the presentation in relation to the development of the SEND unit at Lyngford Park Primary School. Directors noted their support of the Trust's proposal to collaborate with the Local Authority on establishing a council-funded SEND unit at Lyngford Park Primary School. They observed that it aligned with the trust's commitment to inclusion and to strengthen local SEND provision.
- RHT 25/195**
 Dr Cockerill led a presentation drawing attention to the national reforms coming in and how that would impact on the local strategy. He addressed the local SEND context in Somerset and why and how SEND units were being developed.
- RHT 25/196** **2.5 Plenary**
 The chair closed the meeting, noting highlights from the presentations and discussions and thanking directors and other attendees for their involvement.

There being no further business the meeting ended at 4.30pm

Signed:.....*Jade Renville*..... Date:.....14th July 2026.....