



COMMUNITY INCLUSIVE TRUST BOARD MEETING
Minutes of the virtual meeting 16th December 2020 at 4:30pm – via TEAMS

Attendees	Stephen Hopkins – Chairman Paul Boucher – Member Lucy McClements – Trustee (Chair of FA &E Committee) Sue Maycock- Trustee Kate Rouse - Trustee Rachael Sharpe – Trustee (Chair E.S Committee) Jayne Storey – Trustee Helen Drew-Bradley – Trustee Bryan Steele - Trustee Peter Bell – CEO Daran Bland- Director of Governance and Operations (Observer) Janet Corcoran – SSSF LSB Chair (Guest) Ana Hendrickson – Clerk to the Trust Board
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1. WELCOME AND CHECK IN

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting including those attendees who remained present from the Annual General Meeting held prior to this Full Trust Board meeting. The Chair congratulated a Member for the re-appointment as a Chair of the Members group.

The Chair also provided brief background information regarding the Chair of the SSSF Local School Board.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Kate Goodman – Trustee - Work commitments
Kathleen Weekes – Trustee – Emergency at home
Kim Adele-Platts – Trustee (Chair of HR&SG Committee)
Michelle Allbones- CFO – Work commitments

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Two Trustees declared a possible interest in item 14 of this agenda (Garth School Project) - due to the nature of employment at Lincolnshire County Council and seniority of roles held. These Trustees will not participate should any discussions take place around LCC funding.

4. CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair mentioned that sufficient time will be spent discussing item 13 of this agenda.

As mentioned during the AGM, the Chair will thank all CIT Headteachers and support staff, on behalf of Members and Trustees, for their continuous hard work and for taking the daily impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

5. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Document rigorously scrutinised for factual accuracy. The Minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

As previously agreed, the Minutes of all full Trust Board meetings will be published on the Academy's website as from December 2020.

6. ACTION TRACKER

Document available on the Onboard portal for information prior to this meeting.

This document has been updated by the Chair and the Clerk.

Two points remain outstanding (rag rated Amber), one from 11th May 2020 – Equality Policy – document which is now being dealt with by the Director of Safeguarding and the link Trustee. Further outstanding point from 2nd July 2020 – information regarding out of County pupils – which will be dealt with by the newly formed Quality of Education Scrutiny Committee. The Chair drew attention to points 7.7 and 11 of the Sep 9th meeting – 7.7 Accessibility Statement – and confirmed this document is available for Trustee discussion during item 15 of this agenda , point 11 - School Development Fund Policy – Item to be rag rated green as this matter has now moved for the oversight of the FA&E Committee.

7. REPORT FROM FA&E COMMITTEE

Full details will be available on the Minutes of this committee after their approval.

Verbal report, from the October meeting, was provided by the Chair of the FA&E Committee.

- FA&E Committee was expanded in its remit, it now includes Estates and Health & Safety. Assurances were received around Building conditions, H&S matters (to include the formation of an H&S Committee), 3 Year Plan, Audit Reports, Internal Audit Actions (for which a clearer assurance was requested from the CFO).
- The Financial Handbook was updated, the Budget for Linchfield Primary was approved, this committee resolved to move away from Condition Improvement Funding (CIF) and move to School Condition Allocation (SCA) funding for April 21/22.
- Latest Forecast shows a significant deficit (£500,000), the CFO has a very prudent approach to Budgets. Risks and Opportunities are continuously monitored. If all opportunities come to fruition it is expected to break even with the possibility of a surplus figure.
- SRMA Report was received with suggestions for future savings, responses from Management have been considered and actioned. Annual Savings report currently in progress.
- Procurement Policy has been recommended for Trust Board approval.
- Financial Monitoring Report 2020-2021 received today from the CFO for Trustee information. To be discussed at the February committee meeting.
- Draft Annual Accounts were uploaded to OnBoard prior to the AGM this evening. Not yet finalised due to an issue around Reserves (page 62) which were split per school although it is preferred to be reflected as a pooled budget. External Auditors checking this matter with the ESFA.
Trustees expressed their preference and resolved to approve for the Reserves position to be presented in the final Annual Accounts as a pooled position, and were not in favour to present Reserves by individual schools position.
Trustees resolved to formally approve CIT's 2019-20 Annual Report and Accounts.

The Chair of this committee thanked the CFO and the Finance Team for their hard work preparing all documents and reports, and highlighted the importance of recognising their efforts.

RESOLUTION: To present Reserves position in the final Annual Accounts as a pooled position and not by individual schools, including the Teaching School.

RESOLUTION: To approve the Trust's 2019-20 Annual Report and Accounts.

8. REPORT FROM QUALITY OF EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Verbal report provided by the Chair of this committee.

- Newly formed Committee. First meeting took place in October 2020. Focus was given to the TOR where it was established that membership should reflect that of a Local School Board as long as they are not members of school staff. Work Plan of the committee
- Schools' case studies were carried out for Mainstream and Special schools. High level overview of all schools took place to ensure consistency and quality of education.
- In-depth discussions took place around Covid-19 to ensure all pupils are accounted for and to avoid pupils missing education, plans for the Spring Term agenda (in-depth investigation of Datadashboard).
- Schools Deep Dives have been planned.

9. REPORT FROM HR & SG COMMITTEE

In the absence of the Chair of this committee the Chair of the Trust Board provided a verbal report.

- TOR for this committee were revised as it now includes Safeguarding. New HR Director has joined the Trust. Previous HR Director has taken over the role of Safeguarding Director. Points for future reporting as well as assurances required regarding matters HR & Safeguarding were established at the last committee meeting.
- Staff Wellbeing Group is currently being set up. This group will report to TB.
- The HR&SG committee exercised the responsibility given through the SOD which gives authority to make determinations regarding pay for ELT. This committee is a decision making group. Decisions were made around Cost of Living allowance and Pay Progression for ELT (this includes the CEO and the Performance Management process).

- It is the ambition of this committee to have a member of the Local School Board as a member. Members recruited for this committee as well as for the Education Scrutiny Committee. Currently recruiting for the FA&E Committee.

10. RISK REGISTER

Document uploaded to the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting.

The Chair explained that this is an ongoing dynamic document which requires TB approval as a starting point, and thanked all present for their invaluable input in the draft version. There has been a slight format change, Risk Management is the responsibility of ELT, and Risk Assurance is the responsibility of the Trust Board. This document will be used in all Committee and Trust Board on an ongoing basis.

Trustees suggested for further conversations to be had regarding 'risk appetite' levels and additional controls. For each risk there should be an appetite rating, and different appetite for different areas of risk – for ELT to implement controls and produce and manage a detailed risk assessment with 'exception' reporting. It was also mentioned that controls can incur costs therefore these need to be included in the budget.

The CEO will liaise with the Chair regarding ELT suggestions. Trustees commended this document and requested for future significant amendments or additions to be highlighted.

RESOLUTION: To adopt the Risk Register as a starting dynamic document.

11. STRATEGIC PLAN – PRIORITIES

Document available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting, discussion took place during the AGM at 4:30pm today.

The Chair drew Trustees' attention to the CEO's views for each area of the plan (strategic pillars) and priority objectives.

Trustees were informed that priority scores have been given, prioritising priorities/strategic objectives (taking the budget into account), which are reflected on the plan.

Rationale behind this was provided by the CEO. All committees have met, TB's areas of interest have been determined, actions and milestones included. Grading discussed with all committees. Plan is currently in a 'delivery' stage.

Query was raised around the people and Performance section where, after heavy investment, a score of 5 with a target of 6 has been given. The CEO stated that plans to invest in a *Recruitment* system (which will allow for all recruitment to be monitored centrally) have been shared by the newly appointed HR Director. This area is progressing at a steady pace and it is HR compliant.

The CEO will feed back re: progress at the next TB meeting in January.

The Chair welcomed comments. Trustees expressed they were content, no further comments were made.

12. COVID UPDATE

The CEO informed those present of the immense pressure all Headteachers are currently under due to the continuous Government direction, pupil and staffing changes during the Covid-19 pandemic. The CEO requested, on behalf of the Directors of Education and to ease this pressure on Headteachers, for specific tasks that could be 'parked', until March, when it is anticipated that the current Covid-19 crisis will have settled to some degree. The Directors of Education will liaise with Headteachers to ascertain if any tasks could be 'parked'. Responses will be fed back to the CEO who in turn will feed back to the Board. Trustees were in agreement and offered their assistance and expertise should it be required.

The Chair stated that future Covid reports will include additional quantifiable data which will be provided by the Directors of Education.

Discussion took place around tokens of appreciation for Headteachers from the Board of Trustees in recognition of their hard work throughout this pandemic. The Chair will express their gratitude via electronic communications. Other options were suggested. Although no financial incentives or rewards with financial implications can be awarded, Trustees would like to show their appreciation in a different way. HR&SG Committee / Staff Wellbeing Group to explore a flexible token of appreciation for school staff in recognition of their efforts through such a difficult year.

ACTION: For the HR&SG Committee / Staff Wellbeing Group to explore a flexible token of appreciation for school staff in recognition of their efforts through a difficult year.

ACTION: For the HR Director to prepare a proposal (re: token of appreciation) stating the flexibilities the Trust legally has, as an employer, as well as all possible options. Proposal to be discussed at the next HR&SH Committee meeting in March 2021.

13. GROWTH DECISION

CIT Strategic Planner, Resolutions Cover Sheet, Stripped down Strategic Planner and CIT Strategic Planner V2.2.2020.11.25 available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting.

This point was also discussed at the earlier AGM meeting. The Chair explained that the context around this agenda item is that the Trust is currently operating within the growth boundary of 18 schools or £30,000,000 turnover. The CEO's and ELT's proposal is to be permissioned to go beyond that current boundary in exploratory terms.

The CEO clarified that permission is being requested in order for the ELT to explore, investigate and for a proposal to be put in place, for Trust Board approval, should the right opportunity arise.

Observations were made by Trustees around previous decision made regarding the above mentioned ceiling of growth and current capacity to further that boundary. The CEO explained that there's currently no capacity for growth, key staff support for schools has been put in place, bids for two free schools (primary) and a Teaching Hub have been placed and after the planned conversions are finalised the Trust will have a period of consolidation.

Trustees expressed no objection for the CEO to investigate opportunities but have reservations on expansion at this moment in time as it is very difficult to make decisions under the current climate. Trustees expressed caution to avoid the risk of being 'overstretched'; a sensitivity analysis, strategic planning, a comfortable budget position and consolidation must take place first before any decisions are made. Trustees were in agreement to allow the CEO and ELT scope to explore options beyond the growth boundary of 18 schools or £30,000,000 turnover.

RESOLUTION: To allow the CEO/ELT scope to explore options beyond the growth of the previously agreed boundary of 18 schools/£30,000,000.

14. FINANCIAL ISSUE RE: OVERSPEND ON BUILDINGS

Resolutions Cover Sheet – Garth Overspend revised post CIF and LCC Outcomes document available on OnBoard prior to this meeting.

The Director of Governance and Operations informed Trustees that the current overspend for the Garth School project is around £129,700 of which the Local Authority have agreed to underwrite £105,000. Therefore financial permission is being requested for £25,000 to be funded from the Trust's reserves in order for the project to be completed. An agreed Purchase Order for the full overspend amount of £129,700 is required (as the work is being carried out by a contractor), by the Finance Department in order to remain compliant with the Academies Financial handbook. Guarantees have been received from the Local Authority, via e-mail, regarding their contribution towards the overspend figure. Trustees indicated their agreement and resolved to approve a Purchase Order of the value of £129,700 with the understanding that £105K of which will be reimbursed by LCC and £25,000 will be funded from the Trust's Reserves.

RESOLUTION: To approve a Purchase Order of the value of £129,700 with the understanding that £105K of which will be reimbursed by LCC and £25,000 will be funded from the Trust's Reserves.

15. ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT RE: TB

Statement available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting.
Document noted as read by all present.

16. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES FOR TRUST BOARD APPROVAL

The Chair mentioned that the Procurement Policy, Pay Policy, Financial Management Policy and the Financial Operational Procedures Handbook require TB approval, insufficient e-votes were received via the OnBoard portal. These policies have been reviewed and recommended for approval by relevant Committees. Trustees resolved to adopt the Procurement Policy, Pay Policy, Financial Management Policy and the Financial Operational Procedures Handbook.

RESOLUTION: To adopt the Procurement Policy, Pay Policy, Financial Management Policy and the Financial Operational Procedures Handbook.

17. CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chair thanked the Board for their attendance, their continuous input and efforts and expressed his best wishes for the Christmas festivities.

Meeting closed at 7:22pm.