



COMMUNITY INCLUSIVE TRUST BOARD MEETING
MINUTES OF THE MEETING 11th OCTOBER 2021 At 4:30pm – POPLAR FARM PRIMARY, GRANTHAM

Attendees

Stephen Hopkins – Chairman
Lucy McClements – Vice Chair
Kathleen Weekes – Trustee (via Teams)
Rachael Sharpe – Trustee (via Teams)
Kate Goodman – Trustee
Sue Maycock- Trustee
Kate Rouse – Trustee
Julia Lindley-Baker - Trustee
Bryan Steele - Trustee
Peter Bell – CEO (via Teams)
Daran Bland - DoGO
Michelle Allbones - CFO
Ana Hendrickson – Clerk to the Trust Board (Minutes)

1. WELCOME AND CHECK IN

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Kim Adele-Platts – Trustee – No apologies sent.

Helen Drew-Bradley – Trustee - Illness

Apologies accepted. Quorum met.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

One Trustee declared a possible conflict of interest due to the nature of employment at Lincolnshire County Council and seniority of role held.

This Trustee did not participate in the discussion regarding any matters relating to Local Authority funding.

4. CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair detailed the set up for this year's meetings, including the meetings of the three committees in addition to the AGM.

The Chair stated that a lot of Governance work was carried out last academic year in spite of the Covid-19 pandemic and the difficulties experienced as a result of it. Evidence of this work is reflected in two main documents- 'Impact Statement' and 'Self-Evaluation Light Touch review'.

The Chair thanked all present for their hard work during a very difficult year.

5. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.

6. ACTION TRACKER

2021-2022 Action Log Trust Board was made available on the OnBoard portal for information prior to this meeting.

Document noted as read.

The Chair mentioned the slight change in format, a numerical 'Section' column has been added to the left side of this document for ease of use.

Trustees indicated they were content with the progress of all action points rag rated Amber.

Agenda item 16 – Covid matters was discussed at this point in the meeting due to the CEO having to leave the meeting at 5:30pm.

7. LSBs REPORT & LSB MATTERS FROM SUMMER TERM 20/21

LSB Annual report for 2020-21 Term 3 was made available on the OnBoard portal, for information, prior to this meeting. Trustees noted that the report does not provide any information for Foxfields and challenged the actions of the Trust around all points rag rated Red in this report.

The DoGo confirmed that Foxfields LSB was formed in Spring / Summer 2021, reporting will commence this Term (Autumn). All Amber and Red rag ratings are revised by the LSBs, follow up comments/actions are entered within the relevant column prior to any termly rag rating update. LSBs and Clerks are encouraged to add a commentary for Amber and Red rag ratings with clear and quality information.

Trustees indicated the need for a clear line of communication between the LSB and the TB, for commentary/narrative to support all rag ratings and for assurance that systems are in place so the TB can hold the ELT to account.

Concerns were raised around the timing of the LSB report, the information reported is a term old. A suggestion was made for Trustee involvement with the LSB Chairs, a discussion/standing agenda item (re: Amber/Red assurance rag ratings or updates) at the LSB Chairs Network meetings and further feedback to and from the Board (around what has happened, what is happening and what is the plan of action).

For the benefit of the new Trustee the DoGO proceeded to explain the LSB termly report and termly assurances.

Trustees requested for the 2020 rag ratings for this reporting period to be brought forward, Term 1 2020 – Term 1 2021, for comparison purposes.

The DoGO confirmed that this request would be actioned by the Trust's data analyst.

ACTION: For the data analyst to provide an LSB assurance rag rating comparison report (i.e Term 1 2020 against Term 1 2021).

8. GOVERNANCE IMPACT REPORT

Governance Impact Statement 20_21 was made available on the OnBoard portal, for information, prior to this meeting.

Document noted as read.

The Chair to TB stated that the purpose of this document is to describe the work of the Board and the impact it has had. He then requested for any gaps or inaccuracies to be reported to the Clerk to TB. This document will be shared with the LSBs and on the Trust's website.

The CEO stated that some of the information from this document can be included within a specific section of the 2020-21 Report to Trustees and suggested for the Clerk to liaise with Chair to TB regarding the content to be added.

ACTION: For the Chair to TB to liaise with the Clerk regarding content from the Governance Impact Report which is to be included in the 2020-21 Report to Trustees.

ACTION 1: For the Clerk to TB to ensure the Governance Impact Report is published on the Trust's website.

9. GOVERNANCE 21/22

A Governance folder was distributed to all attendees at this meeting. The electronic version of the documents stated below and the SOD Policy changes July 2021 were made available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting.

The Chair to TB stated that the contents of these folders are key documents for Trustee information. The CIT Team Approach to Governance document is not currently included within this folder. It has been sent as part of the Chair's Monthly update. This is a dynamic document, changes will take place as and when new Trustees join the Board.

For the benefit of the new Trustee the Chair to TB explained the contents of this document and confirmed that a special interest school will be allocated to her in the near future. Trustee RS will continue as the link Trustee for Woodlands Academy.

An overview of the following documents took place.

- Strategic Plan
- Assurances Schedule
- Scheme of Delegation
- Risk Register
- Governance Work Plan
- Governance Meeting dates for 2021-2022
- Governance Assurance Schedule
- Terms of reference overview
- Team Approach to Governance (including list of trustees and Members)-1ST SEPT
- Governance Evaluation
- Code of Conduct
- Declaration of Interests

The DoGO suggested for the *LSB Key Questions and Assurances* document to be included within this folder. This document will be sent to the Clerk to TB for distribution to the Board.

The DoGO provided context around the nine changes made to the SOD. Trustees indicated they were content and resolved to approve this document.

ACTION: For the DoGO to provide the Clerk to TB with the LSB key questions and prompts for inclusion within Trustee folders. For the Clerk to TB to disseminate to all Trustees.

RESOLUTION: To approve the SOD for 2021-2022.

10. **ACADEMIES HANDBOOK 21/22**

Academy Trust Handbook 2021 and Changes to ATH 2021 from AFH 2020 were made available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting.

Document noted as read.

The Chair to TB explained that the Academy Financial Handbook is now called Academy Trust Handbook. This year the ESFA are focusing in all matters, not just financial. All document changes (new requirements) are detailed in the above document. All finance related matters will be discussed at the FA&E Committee meeting.

The CEO added that in terms of Trust Growth approvals, evidence of external review of Governance is now required. The CEO is currently liaising with the Chair to TB regarding an internal review; with a view for an external review to take place next year.

Trustees indicated they were content with this.

11. **POLICY REVIEW SCHEDULE**

Virtual Governance Policy Draft for 2021-22 and 'CIT Policies that require Trust Board input and sign off July 2021' were made available on the OnBoard, for information and approval, portal prior to this meeting.

The Chair stated that all policies for review by the Board and Committees are detailed on the above document.

The Clerk was requested to ensure that the latest version of this document is disseminated to all Trustees.

The DoGO provided context around the Virtual Governance policy and added that a slight amend had taken place this year to reflect that the Trust Board and LSBs can operate a mix of virtual and face-to-face meetings. This allows flexibility to meeting approach.

A Trustee suggested for non-negotiable points to be added to this document; activities that are to be carried out face to face such as Governor monitoring activities. Document to be brought back for approval at the next TB meeting.

The DoGO confirmed that the review of the LSB Assurance Schedule and the above suggestion would be agenda items at the next LSB Chairs' Networking meeting.

ACTION: For the Clerk to TB to provide Trustees with the latest version of the 'CIT Policies that require Trust Board input and sign off' document.

ACTION 1: For the DoGO to consult with LSB Chairs and determine non-negotiable face to face and virtual Governor monitoring activities.

For the DoGO to amend the Virtual Governance Policy to reflect the above. Document to be brought back to the next TB meeting for approval.

ACTION 2: For the review of the LSB Assurance Schedule and for comments from LSB Chairs regarding which aspects of the Governor monitoring activities are non-negotiable (face to face / virtual) to be an agenda item at the next LSB Chairs' Networking meeting. Also, for the agenda to include an opportunity for LSB Chairs to bring any matters of concern, after their last reporting period, to the attention of the board.

12. **FINANCIAL KPIS FOR 21/22**

Finance KPis 20-21 V2, Budget Projections, Finance KPis Cover Sheet and KPis Word doc were made available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting.

The Chair to TB provided background context and stated that as a Trust Board there is a requirement for high level feel/touch on matters finance through the use of key performance indicators in all reporting.

The CFO provided an overview of the key indicators for continuous reporting (detailed and highlighted in yellow/orange on the left-hand column of the Finance KPis 20-21 V2 document). These KPis, which include Teaching Staff / Educational Support Staff / Maintenance of Premises and other Occupational Costs / Educational Supplies & Services / ICT Costs, are in line with the strategic plan. Indicated within this document are the percentages of the budget spent in those particular areas.

The Chair of the TB welcomed questions or comments.

Trustees indicated that the addition of 'Reserves' as a KPI is key in order to monitor the Trust's financial sustainability and to compare it's performance against other Trusts. It was suggested for six to eight KPis, in addition to that of 'Reserves', to be reported on (measurable KPis that the Trust can control). And for the report to be split into two sections (one for the current year and one for projections), to have a pictorial representation, percentage ranges and rag ratings with a narrative.

The Chair to TB suggested for Trustee LMc to liaise with the CFO in order for this report to be presented at the December TB meeting.

ACTION: For the CFO to introduce percentage ranges with relevant rag ratings to Finance KPI reporting. For this report to include 2 sections – KPIs for current year and KPIs for projections. LMc and CFO to liaise and present a populated report at the next TB meeting in December 2021.

13. CRITERIA TO INFORM BOARD APPROVAL FOR CEO TO PROGRESS WITH A POTENTIAL NEW SCHOOL OPPORTUNITY

'Criteria or the Trust Board to use to decide whether or not to give the CEO the go ahead to pursue' document was made available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting.

The Chair to TB has compiled a set of criteria to steer the CEO towards the next stage should there be a potential opportunity for the Trust to acquire an additional school. This document is available as a tool.

The Chair of TB welcomed for comments and suggestions to be made via the Clerk.

A conversation took place regarding the different stages of progression for TB approval. A Trustee offered to tailor this document into appropriate stages and suggested to revisit this criterion on an annual basis.

The Clerk to TB was requested to upload this document onto the OnBoard portal for Trustee comments.

ACTION: For LMc to tailor the 'Criteria for the Trust Board to use to decide whether or not to give the CEO the go ahead to pursue, to the next stage, a potential opportunity for the Trust to acquire an additional school' document into appropriate stages.

ACTION 1: For the Clerk to TB to upload onto OnBoard the 'Criteria for the Trust Board to use to decide whether or not to give the CEO the go ahead to pursue, to the next stage, a potential opportunity for the Trust to acquire an additional school' document for Trustee comment.

14. TRAINING FOR TRUSTEES AND TRUSTEE VISITS TO SCHOOLS

Trustee CPD Plan was made available on the OnBoard portal, for information, prior to this meeting.

The Chair to TB stated that the Trustee visits to schools are not for monitoring purposes but to maintain connectivity between the school and the Board. Trustees were encouraged to also meet the respective LSB Chair, despite the difficulty in logistics. In terms of training for Trustees, there is an aspiration for online videos to be available soon. Safeguarding training has been high on the agenda. The Chair to TB and the DoGO will liaise and will map out and finalise the Finance and other training for Trustees and LSB members.

The Trustee CPD Plan reflects the requirement for training around the areas of Education and Finance. Relevant training would be provided by the DoE or members of the Board depending on their expertise. This point is work in progress.

ACTION: For the Chair and DoGO to finalise the Finance and other training for Trustees and LSB members.

15. EVALUATION OF GOVERNANCE

CIT Evaluation of Governance Activity Schedule / CST Improvement Capacity Framework for Trust Governance / trustee 2021 Light Touch Review Outcomes documents were made available on the OnBoard portal, for information, prior to this meeting. The Chair to TB stated that the Schedule of Governance Evaluation document is yet to be finalised. Comments, in red text, have been added to the Light Touch Review summary document for planning purposes. This is a very strong document that reflects the hard work and achievements of the Board. It will be presented at each committee meeting, this term, in order for relevant points to be dealt with. The CST capacity Framework document provides useful information and guidance for strong collective Governance work. This document will also be shared with the ELT.

The Chair of the TB welcomed contributions or comments. None made.

16. COVID MATTERS

The CEO provided an overview of the current situation across CIT schools.

All schools' risk assessments have been reviewed by the Directors of Education and updated in line with government guidance (which includes the removal of class *bubbles*). Track and Trace is no longer the responsibility of the school, parents will be informed via the Track and Trace system which is causing some concern amongst parents. Letters have been prepared for SEND and Mainstream schools, in order to inform parents, should a Covid case be identified within a class.

There have been two school closures since September, sanctioned by the CEO and approved by the Chair to TB.

- GARTH – Closed for one day, No permission from the DfE but in agreement with the RSC. All staff were PCR tested on this day as requested by Public Health England.
- WOODLANDS – Closed for three days as three SLT members had Covid related absences, only one member of SLT was in place. All procedures were followed, the DfE and LA were informed.

Odd class closures have taken place across CIT schools due to staff absences. Home tuition was put in place whilst classes were closed. All procedures were followed and also the DfE and LA were informed.

No major issues to report regarding Mainstream Primary schools despite some staff having to isolate due to Covid infections. Most classes are able to function with one member of staff in the classroom (either the Teacher or the Teaching Assistant). Some lessons have been taught virtually. This however, has had an impact on the continued quality assurance (Deep dives unable to take place).

Lincolnshire appears to be behind in the vaccination programme compared to other counties possibly due to higher infection rates.

In terms of the roll out of the CO2 monitors, all new schools have CO2 monitors, no older schools have received them as yet. CO2 monitors in different types of environment (i.e poorly ventilated old buildings) could result in class closures. Headteachers continue to be at the front of it, dealing not only with daily staffing absences and transport issues but other factors such as fuel shortages.

Trustees enquired regarding vaccination in older SEND pupils and requested for the CEO to present at the next ES&SG Committee meeting pupil attendance data for Term 1 across CIT schools compared with that of national levels.

ACTION: For the CEO to provide ES&SG Committee with pupil attendance data for Term 1 across CIT schools and a comparison against national levels.

17. ADMIN CLERKING MATTERS

The Clerk to TB confirmed that all online DOI had been completed and submitted, and thanked Trustees for their prompt response. Trustees were reminded that the approval for Privacy Notice Pupils Policy remains open on the OnBoard portal and were encouraged to cast their vote.

The DoGO stated that he currently awaits a steer regarding Audit as some units are yet to be specified.

The CFO confirmed that the internal auditors are in the third year of their three-year contract. All transactional audit visits have been planned; however, areas for auditing within the central hub are yet to be determined.

After a conversation it was decided for GDPR, Data Privacy and IT Security to be added to the agenda for the next FA&E Committee meeting as potential areas for audit. Risk Register to be used as a starting point.

The Chair to TB stated that each year Trustees are to re-read the Trustee Code of Conduct and sign as confirmation of this. He suggested for the Clerk to TB to upload onto the OnBoard portal, in the Actions section, the Trustee Code of Conduct in order for all Trustees to cast their vote as a means of confirmation of reading and understanding their Role Description and Code of Conduct.

The CFO also requested for the Clerk to TB to upload onto the OnBoard portal, in the Actions section, the Academy Trust Handbook for FA&E Committee Trustees to cast their vote as a means of confirmation of reading and understanding.

ACTION: For GDPR / Data Privacy and IT Security to be an agenda item for discussion at the next FA&E Committee meeting.

ACTION 1: For the Clerk to TB to upload onto OnBoard, in the Actions section, the Trustee Code of Conduct in order for all Trustees to cast their vote as a means of confirmation of reading and understanding their Role Description and Code of Conduct.

ACTION 2: For the Clerk to TB to upload onto OnBoard, in the Actions section, the Academy Trust Handbook for FA&E Committee Trustees to cast their vote as a means of confirmation of reading and understanding.

18. CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chair to TB requested for the January 2022 TB meeting to take place on January 19th as opposed to Jan 12th as previously planned. Trustees indicated their agreement to this.

The Chair to TB provided an opportunity for the CFO to update the Board regarding the 2020-21 pre-audit budget position. The CFO confirmed that the overall revenue deficit had decreased considerably although figures not yet include Linchfield's roof loan.

The Chair thanked all present for their time and contributions to this meeting.

Meeting closed at 18:37pm.