



COMMUNITY INCLUSIVE TRUST BOARD MEETING
MINUTES OF THE MEETING 30TH JANUARY 2024 AT 1:00PM – WARWICK HOUSE, LONG BENNINGTON

Attendees	Stephen Hopkins – Chairman Helen Drew-Bradley – Trustee Jo Slesser – Trustee Leah Miller – Trustee Pam Powell – Trustee (via Teams) Keith Stanton – Trustee Nathan Jeremiah – Trustee (via Teams) Bryan Steele – Trustee (via Teams) Peter Bell – CEO/AO Daran Bland- Director of Governance and Operations Ana Hendrickson – Company Secretary/ Clerk to the Trust Board (Minutes)
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1. WELCOME AND CHECK IN

The TB Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Kate Goodman – Trustee – Emergency at work
Kim-Adele Platts – Trustee – Work commitments
Julia Lindley-Baker – Trustee – IT issues, unable to join the meeting

Absent

Harpaul Dhindsa – Trustee (via Teams)

Apologies accepted.

Quorum met.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None for this meeting.

4. CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The TB Chair advised that this meeting is part two of the TB meeting held in December 2023.

He welcomed the new Trustee; advised that she would be part of the ES&SG Committee and requested for the new Trustee to introduce herself.

For the benefit of all present, introductions took place.

5. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING- FOR APPROVAL

The DRAFT Minutes of the 12th December 2023 full Trust Board meeting were made available on the Onboard portal, for information, prior to this meeting.

The draft minutes from the 12th December 2023 full Trust Board meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record.

Resolution: The Minutes of the 12th December 2023 full Trust Board meeting were approved as a true and accurate record.

6. ACTION TRACKER - FOR INFORMATION

The 2023-2024 Action Log document was made available on the OnBoard portal for information prior to this meeting.

The TB Chair noted that four actions points remain rag rated AMBER on this tracker.

12.12.23 Meeting

Action point 3-BCPs have now included within the Internal Scrutiny plan. Action point now complete, rag rating to be changed to GREEN.

Action Point 4 – This point remains ongoing and will be included within the next TB meeting agenda.

Action point 5 – This matter is part of item 9 of this agenda, rag rating to be changed to GREEN.

19.09.23 Meeting

Action point 7 - A meeting with the DDOG and CS/ Clerk to TB took place earlier today; progress has been made and a plan is in place. Further update to be provided at the next TB meeting in April 2024.

ACTION 1: For action point 4 of the 12.12.23 meeting to be an agenda item at the next TB meeting.

ACTION 2: For a further update regarding Action Point 7 of the 19.09.23 TB meeting to be provided at the next TB meeting in April 2024.

7. SAFEGUARDING UPDATE – FOR INFORMATION

Agenda item deferred to the next TB meeting in April 2024.

8. TRUSTEES VISITS TO SCHOOLS / OTHER MEETINGS – FOR INFORMATION

The CIT Strategic conversation letter 18_December_2023_20240112 document was made available on the OnBoard portal for information prior to this meeting.

The TB Chair advised regarding the invite and consequent visit to the DfE Regional Director's group. The letter of the proceedings of the annual conversation is attached to this agenda item for Trustee information.

Full details of the meeting with the Regional Director and conversations held in relation to Richmond Primary School were provided.

Processes around the planned SRMA's visits to CIT were explained by the CEO.

At this point in the meeting Trustees provide an update around their latest visits to their special interest schools as follows:

Caythorpe Primary School

The link Trustee met with a more settled and confident school HT and a new but strong LSB Chair.

Real clarity and full assurances were received in relation to Safeguarding matters.

A tour of the school took place. The school was very clean and tidy, lessons were well run and calm, the atmosphere was bright, comfortable, and warming.

The link Trustee was able to witness their celebrating of several awards to include sports.

A very good visit overall.

Woodlands Academy

The full Board of Trustees were invited to join the school's Coffee Morning.

The visiting Trustee noted the school's transformation, the significant improvement and superb atmosphere.

Isaac Newton

The link Trustee met with the school HT and the LSB Chair.

Progress has been made at this school.

The importance of good communications between the Trust and the Board of Trustees and high-level context in terms of issues or incidents at CIT schools were highlighted.

Poplar Farm

Visit yet to take place.

Link Trustee yet to meet the new LSB Chair. A visit will possibly be scheduled for the Summer Term.

Bowman Academy

The link Trustee advised that the new build is looking good, completion is expected in May 2024 as stated by the project Manager.

Foxfields Academy

The link Trustee met with the school HT and the LSB Chair.

A tour of the school took place. The good pupil behaviour and the excellent extension building were praised.

Tulip Academy

The CEO and link Trustee attended the LSB meeting on 20.11.23.

Questions from LSB members were answered,

This LSB suggested for a Spalding Cluster to be created and for Tulip and STP's LSBs to join up.

The TB Chair advised that he has now visited all CIT schools, the Trustee linked to GANF has visited the school and attended the LSB meeting. A full update will be provided at the next TB meeting.

The DDOG added that the Trustee linked to GANF attended the 16.01.24 LSB Chair's Networking meeting, in her Safeguarding Trustee capacity.

LSB Chairs are very keen for members of the Trust Board to attend their networking meetings.

Going forward, more detailed agendas will be produced. Trustees will be selected based on specific agendas.

Trustees indicated their agreement with the above.

The CEO requested for an update in relation to the Strategic Plan to be presented to LSB Chairs at their next networking meeting and requested for this matter to be an agenda item.

ACTION 3: For a CEO Strategic Plan update to be an agenda item at the next LSB Chairs' Networking meeting.

9. GOVERNANCE CODE OF CONDUCT – FOR INFORMATION

The CIT and the Governance Code 2023 document was made available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting.

Agenda item deferred from the last Trust Board meeting.

The TB Vice Chair provided relevant context.

Trustees were advised that the DDOG and the TB Vice Chair had concluded to split this document into areas pertinent to each Board Committee for discussion and further input in relation to principles, key outcomes, and EDI, at their next committee meetings; the DDOG will have full oversight.

Committee input to be sent directly to the TB Vice Chair, relevant amendments will be made, and a revised document will be presented back to the Board of Trustees.

A Trustee noted that Governance Development Days and TB Chair's 1 to 1 meetings with Trustees should be added to the Board Effectiveness section.

A discussion took place regarding a Nominations Committee for the identifying of key people to address current skills gaps within the Board.

It was agreed for the TB Chair and Company Secretary to consider establishing a Nominations Committee.

Trustees thanked the TB Vice Chair for all her work in relation to the CIT and the Governance Code 2023 document.

ACTION 4: For the CIT Charity Governance Code to be an agenda item at each Board Committee meeting.

For Governance Development Days and TB Chair's 1 to 1 meetings with Trustees to be added to the Board Effectiveness section of the CIT Charity Governance Code.

For Board Committee input to be provided directly to the TB Vice Chair and for an updated CIT Charity Governance Code to be presented by the Vice Chair to the Board of Trustees.

ACTION 5: For the TB Chair and Company Secretary to consider establishing a Nominations Committee.

10. LSB REPORTS AUTUMN TERM 1 2023-24– FOR ASSURANCE

The LSB Consolidated Report Autumn Term 1 2023-24 was shared electronically prior to this meeting.

The LSB Consolidated Report Autumn Term 1 2023-24- Areas for Trust Consideration, LSB Consolidated Report Autumn – Term 1 2023-24- Summary, LSB Consolidated Report Autumn –Term 1 2023-24- Assurance Report, LSB Consolidated Report Autumn –Term 1 2023-24- 5Cs and the LSB Feedback to Trust Board-ELT Responses Autumn 2023-24 documents were made available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting.

Documents noted as read.

The TB Chair did a brief overview regarding the documents presented at this meeting and the addition of 'purple' as a new rag rating colour.

Trustees queried all white rag ratings, the red rag ratings in terms of meal provision and governance assurances, and the commentary within the 'areas for Trust consideration' section of the LSB Consolidated Report Autumn Term 1 2023-24 document.

Suggestions were made for white rag ratings to be changed to 'black' to reflect that a particular assurance is not applicable to the school (N/A) and for the default commentary within the 'areas for Trust consideration' section of the LSB Consolidated Report to be taken out completely.

The DDOG explained the reasons behind the reg rag ratings in relation to school meals provision, particularly for Ambergate College and Isaac Newton Primary. Significant background work is currently taking place. Capacity is a challenge, other projects within the Trust have taken priority.

Questionnaires will be issued to all stakeholders.

Trustees noted that the actual spend on school meals provision is lower than originally budgeted, food spend is no longer a KPI and requested for the CEO to consider and feedback to the Board whether a deadline should be set in relation to a plan of action to address and progress matters around the provision of school meals across the Trust. Feedback to be provided at the next TB meeting in April 2024.

Trustees urged to scrutinise further all reporting and to note any patterns regarding changes over time.

A suggestion was made for a narrative to be fed back to LSBs as means of acknowledgement of issues reported and confirmation that these are being addressed.

ASSURANCE: Trustees were assured that the Trust is responding appropriately to matters raised by the LSBs.

ACTION 6: For the CEO to consider and feedback to the Board whether a deadline should be set in relation to a plan of action to address and progress matters around the provision of school meals across the Trust.

Feedback to be provided at the next TB meeting in April 2024.

11. BUDGET UPDATE – FOR ASSURANCE

The CEO's Budget Update document was made available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting.

Document noted as read.

The CEO advised regarding the significant current deficit figure, due mainly to the Teachers pay rise, compared to this time last year. Budget monitoring processes are robust.

There are currently more opportunities forecasted than risks. The budget is moving in the right direction. Progress has been made in relation to the sale of Stornoway. Further budgetary updates will be provided through the F&E Committee.

The F&E Committee Chair noted that the current budget deficit figure falls below the 3% Reserves threshold. This will be reviewed at the March 2024 committee meeting.

ASSURANCE: Trustees were assured that budget monitoring processes are robust.

12. STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS REPORT – FOR ASSURANCE

The CEO Strat Plan Report to Trust Board Jan 24 document was made available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting.

Document noted as read.

For the benefit of the new Trustee, the TB Chair explained the Strat Plan report.

The CEO provided a high-level overview as follows:

Safeguarding – The grading regarding Priority 2 has moved down slightly. A DSL has been appointed across both sites at Tulip Academy, training is currently in progress.

Education – Underlying data showed that Pupil Premium results placed Chapel St Leonards in the top 20% in the county. This is a significant success for a school in one of the most deprived areas of the county. Predicted grades are significantly better for this school.

LEARN – CPD offer has gone from strength to strength. It has been well received both internally and externally. A significant project for the provision of SEND CPD and SEND Reviews is currently in the pipeline. LEARN is forecasting a £10K profit. Trustees noted the downward move within the priority 4 grading of this section (from 10 to 7).

The CEO agreed to investigate and feedback at the next TB meeting.

People – all priorities are moving forward. The CIT Values Award has been welcomed by all.

Trustees queried the grading given to this section. Due to the number of complaints and grievances as well as induction processes that take up significant time of the HR Team it was considered that the grading should be higher.

The TB Chair agreed for this to be an agenda item at the People Committee meeting for a deeper exploration, discussion, and review.

Finance – Another clear and positive audit has taken place. The CEO praised the Finance team.

Operations – The CEO praised the Estates team and their work. Many successful projects have been delivered; installation of Solar Panels across CIT schools (completion by Easter 2024), a new built in Shepshed and a complete rebuild of Tulip Academy to name a few.

Growth – Item 13 of this agenda.

Comms – CEO’s blog now in place. Positive feedback has been received.

Trustees praised the clear and informative report.

A lengthy discussion took place regarding the pace of change, main area of focus and priority should finance and resources be available, Trust growth and potential growth projects as per item 13 of this agenda.

ASSURANCE: Trustees were assured that priorities within the CEO’s Strat Plan continue to progress and move forward.

ACTION 7: For the CEO to investigate and clarify the grading movement within section 8 (LEARN Teaching Centre) , point 4, of the Strategic Plan. Feedback to be provided at the next TB meeting.

Action 8: For the grading within section 9 (PEOPLE), point 1 of the Strategic Plan, to be an agenda item at the next People Committee meeting for a deeper exploration, discussion, and review.

13. TRUST GROWTH REPORT INCLUDING DECISIONS RE: PROGRESSING OPTIONS – FOR INFORMATION AND RESOLUTION

The Resolutions Sheet – Ash Lea, Billingborough, Notts Free School, CIT Growth Approval Grid- Ash Lea, CIT Growth Approval Grid- Orchard, CIT Growth Approval Grid- Osbournby, CIT Trust Growth Report and the Impact on Finances from Proposed growth documents were made available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting.

Documents noted as read.

The TB Chair advised regarding the requirement for an agreement to be reached by the Board of Trustees to enable the CEO to proceed with four growth projects and to cease to pursue another.

He requested for all bullet points within page three of the Trust Growth report to be discussed at the July Trust Board meeting; an opportunity for the CEO to expand further on each of those points and provide relevant evidence of growth.

The CEO proceeded to provide an overview of the Trust Growth report.

A comfortable surplus figure is expected after the opening of Bowman Academy.

Forecasted pupil numbers across the Trust are being monitored. Full details will be provided through the F&E Committee.

Examples of the positive financial impact in terms of the opening of new schools and the increase in pupil numbers across the Trust were provided.

A Trustee suggested for the financial aspects of the Growth Strategy to be looked at should the Trust have an SRMA visit so certain assurances may be provided around growth. Should this not be possible during their visit, to use the SRMA as a free resource.

SCA funding is linked to pupil numbers (£147 per pupil- Mainstream and £500 per pupil- SEND).

Context was provided in relation to the buildings of the four growth projects.

The conversion to CIT of prospective schools is not a quick process. Schools coming onboard will be phased in.

Funding of individual youngsters joining CIT schools has been challenged through the heavy investment in Educational Psychology support.

Trustees praised the balanced and comprehensive CEO’s Growth Report; however, concerns were expressed in terms of ELT capacity and relevant workload.

The TB Chair stated that priority and focus must be given to CIT schools currently Ofsted graded ‘R.I’ and to their journey to achieve a ‘Good’ Ofsted grading.

Assurances regarding the above are to be sought thorough deeper scrutiny from the ES&SG Committee. Feedback to be provided to the Board.

A lengthy discussion took place regarding CAY and STP’s as well as capacity within the ELT and Central Team.

The CEO advised that CAY and STPs are moving in the right direction and confirmed the increase in ELT capacity through the recent appointments of a Deputy DoE SEND and Deputy TDSL.

The TB Chair added that Growth Flowcharts will be presented at the April 2024 Trust Board meeting, by the CEO, to reflect clear stages and decision points in relation to all active growth projects.

Context provided in relation to the following growth proposals:

Ash Lea Special School

Located in Nottinghamshire, around the Bingham area.

Conversations have been ongoing for the past 14 months.

Ash Lea's Governing Body still to pass resolution to join CIT but want to be able to proceed with Pre-Due Diligence as soon as possible if agreed by CIT's Trust Board.

Trustees indicated their agreement for the ELT to proceed with the work, to the next stage, for Ash Lea Special School.

Newark Orchard Special School

Located in Nottinghamshire, around the Newark area. Brand new build, 170 pupils on roll.

Visits to a couple of CIT schools have taken place.

Orchard school's LSB Chair met with CIT's CEO earlier today and requested for him to start the consultation process, talk to the LSB on 27.02.24, school staff on 28.02.24 and school parents a week later.

The CEO requested TB permission to proceed with due diligence.

A Trustee expressed concerns in relation to timelines for the provision of information to the Board.

The CEO proceeded to explain the consultation, full due diligence process and clarified the clear decision point stages. Any possible risks will be mitigated.

Trustees noted that the management of risk is a key element therefore full information is required; risks, relevant mitigations and clear decision check points are to be established.

Trustees requested for plans and progress in relation to all active growth projects to be presented at the Trust Board meeting in July 2024.

Trustees indicated their agreement for the ELT to proceed with the work, to the next stage, for Orchard Special School.

Osbournby Primary School

This school has contacted CIT with regard to a possible voluntary conversion to CIT. Further conversations are yet to take place.

The CEO requested Board agreement to proceed with the work, to the next stage, for Osbournby Primary School.

Trustees highlighted that it would be beneficial to access publicly available accounts and present the finances of any particular acquisition for Finance and Estates Committee review.

Trustees indicated their agreement for the ELT to proceed with the work, to the next stage, for Osbournby Primary School.

RESOLUTION: To approve the following:

- For the ELT to proceed with the work for Ash Lea School, Newark Orchard School, and Osbournby Primary School to become a member of CIT. If ELT are satisfied, then proceed to Full Due Diligence.
- The Board supports the decision by the ELT to not submit a bid for Notts Free School.

ACTION 9: For all bullet points within page three of the Trust Growth report to be discussed at the July Trust Board meeting; an opportunity for the CEO to expand further on each of those points and provide relevant evidence of growth.

ACTION 10: For the financial aspects of the Growth Strategy to be looked at during the SRMA visit in order to provide assurances around growth. Should this not be possible during their visit, to use the SRMA as free resource.

ACTION 11: For assurances to be sought, through the ES&SG Committee, around focus, prioritisation of CIT schools currently Ofsted graded 'R.I', their journey to achieve a 'Good' Ofsted grading as well as ELT capacity to support this and future Trust growth.

ACTION 12: For the CEO to present at the April 2024 TB meeting, Growth Flowcharts (project plan) to reflect timelines, clear stages, and decision points in relation to all active growth projects.

ACTION 13: For all active growth projects to be an agenda item at the July Trust Board meeting for information and discussion, in relation to their progress.

14. BILLINGBOROUGH PRIMARY- FOR INFORMATION AND RESOLUTION

The CIT Growth Approval Grid – Billingborough Jan 24 and the CIT Due Diligence Pack V2 (3) documents were made available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting.

Documents noted as read.

The TB Chair advised that the pre-due diligence process for the conversion of Billingborough Primary School to CIT had been completed and that the ELT recommend to the Board that CIT support Billingborough Primary School's application to apply for an Academy order to join CIT.

A decision is to be made at this meeting for the Board to support the ELT's recommendation or not.

A lengthy debate and detailed scrutiny took place.

Trustees indicated that where there isn't the potential to have indemnity in terms of buildings of schools joining CIT, the Trust should, if uncertain about the condition of these buildings, be prepared to conduct surveys in order to obtain a degree of assurance. Possible risks and associated costs should the survey reveal issues and the building be considered *high risk* were noted.

The CEO explained that funding will be made available by the DfE to cover building surveys, legal costs etc.

The DDOG advised that although the school is not a new build, it is in working order (no roof leaks, boiler in working order, asbestos register available). Pre-due diligence 'red flag areas' are known therefore condition surveys determine 'D' categories which will be managed in priority order.

Trustees queried the reason behind the decrease in current and forecasted pupil numbers and requested a plan to move these figures upward.

The CEO noted that the fall in pupil numbers at this and other neighbouring schools is due mainly to the many school choices close by. Should this school join the Trust, focus would be given to the EYFS area in the first instance.

At this point in the meeting, Trustees resolved to support Billingborough Primary School's application to be granted an Academy order to join CIT, subject to the usual processes of full Due Diligence, consultations, etc

The TB Chair advised that all active 'Growth Projects' will be an agenda item at subsequent Trust Board meetings (April and July 2024) for information and discussion, in relation to their progress.

RESOLUTION: To support Billingborough Primary School's application to be granted an Academy order to join CIT, subject to the usual processes of full Due Diligence, consultations, etc

ACTION 14: For all active growth projects to be an agenda item at the April and July 2024 Trust Board meetings for information and discussion, in relation to their progress.

15. REVISED ONBOARD APPROVAL PROCESS- FOR INFORMATION

The TB Chair advised regarding the revised process for all Onboard approvals.

This is a longer process that will enable Trustee comments over a set period of time, feedback to the ELT, document amendments or revisions (timeline of a week to reach this stage) followed by a set voting deadline.

This new process will take place with immediate effect with the caveat that urgent approvals would be given priority and would be subject to a shorter process.

16. CLERKING MATTERS

The CS/ Clerk to TB reminded all present that this year's Governance Development Day will take place on Friday 17th May 2024 at Boston Endeavour Academy (BEA).

17. CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

The TB Chair advised that agenda item 7 of this meeting, Safeguarding training for Trustees, will be built into the next Trust Board meeting agenda.

Trustees indicated their agreement with this.

The TB Chair proceeded to thank everyone for their attendance and good governance work.

Trustees thanked the CEO for all the comprehensive reports presented today.

Meeting closed at 3:21pm.