



**COMMUNITY INCLUSIVE TRUST BOARD MEETING**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING 30<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024 AT 1:00PM – WARWICK HOUSE, LONG BENNINGTON**

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Attendees	Stephen Hopkins – Chairman Helen Drew-Bradley – Trustee Jo Slesser – Trustee Pam Powell – Trustee Leah Miller – Trustee (via Teams) Kate Goodman – Trustee (via Teams) Kim-Adele Platts – Trustee (via Teams) Julia Lindley-Baker – Trustee (via Teams) Nathan Jeremiah – Trustee Harpaul Dhindsa – 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**

None.

**3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None for this meeting.

**4. CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting; praised the success of Woodlands Academy at their recent Ofsted inspection and advised regarding the letter sent to the Headteacher and her staff on behalf of the Board. Trustees were advised that a full detailed report (to include detailed context and learnings) in relation to Woodlands Academy, will be presented by the CEO at the July TB meeting.

The Chair reminded all present regarding the CIT Values, those being Honesty and Integrity, Aspiration, Professionalism, and Inclusivity; and encouraged all to speak up should the meeting not abide to these at any point.

**5. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING- FOR APPROVAL**

The DRAFT Minutes of the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024 full Trust Board meeting were made available on the Onboard portal, for information, prior to this meeting.

The DRAFT Minutes of the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024 full Trust Board meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record.

**Resolution: The Minutes of the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2024 full Trust Board meeting were approved as a true and accurate record.**

**6. ACTION TRACKER - FOR INFORMATION**

The 2023-2024 Action Log Updated 15.04.24 document was made available on the OnBoard portal for information prior to this meeting.

The TB Chair noted that few action points remain rag rated AMBER on this tracker.

**30.01.24 Meeting**

Action point 2 – The Chair confirmed that there is nothing lawfully or unlawfully binding.

The DDOG advised regarding the procedure to be followed should the removal of an LSB Chair be considered necessary (should breaches to the Articles of Association or Code of Conduct occur). A Resolutions Cover Sheet must be presented at a full TB meeting and a further hearing to take place fourteen days after this meeting. It is the Trust Board's decision to appoint/remove an LSB Chair as reflected in the Trust's Scheme of Delegation.

It was agreed for this action point to be rag rated GREEN.

Action point 4 – Ongoing. Rag rating to remain.

Action point 5- Ongoing. Rag rating to remain. This action point will be actioned at the end of this academic year.

Action point 6- The DDOG will present a cost analysis at the next Finance & Estates Committee meeting. Action point to be rag rated GREEN.

Action point 7- The CEO advised regarding a typographical error therefore this action point was deemed complete. Rag rating to be changed to GREEN.

Action point 9- Agenda item for discussion at this meeting. Rag rating to be changed to GREEN.

Action point 10- As above.

Action point 12- Agenda item for discussion at this meeting. Rag rating to be changed to GREEN.

Action point 14- As above.

### **12.12.23 Meeting**

Action Point 4 – This point has been addressed. A Risk Appetite statement has been included within the Risk Management Policy which will be discussed and approved during agenda item 8 of this meeting.

**ACTION 1: For the cost analysis in relation to the provision of school meals across the Trust to be an agenda item at the next Finance & Estates Committee meeting.**

## **7. REPORTS FROM BOARD COMMITTEES – FOR INFORMATION**

### **Finance & Estates Committee**

The Committee Chair advised regarding the scrutiny, approval and signing of the Management Accounts for P3, P4 and P5. He highlighted the committee's concerns around the projected deficit which is significantly higher than originally forecasted at the start of the year.

The Operations and Health & Safety aspects are very positive. All H&S audit points have been addressed; the solar panel installation project ran successfully; the trade-in tariff is yet to be agreed.

Trustees were made aware of the difficulty around informed decision making, in terms of investment and expenditure, when the budget deficit increases midyear. Committee members consider prudent for more accurate budget predictions and in-year adjustments.

The Trust is currently at risk of breaching the agreed 3% level of revenue reserves should forecasted opportunities not come into fruition.

Discussions have taken place around financial deficit management and financial reporting. It was agreed for all financial reporting to be carried out by the Accounting Officer (AO) and for all risks and opportunities to be built into the Trust's budget.

The new F&E Committee Chair is currently liaising with the AO in order for an appropriate reporting format to be produced. This document will be presented at the full TB meeting in July 2024.

### **ES&SG Committee**

The Committee Chair advised regarding the presentation by the Trust's IT Lead in relation to Cyber Security, Filtering, and Monitoring.

Significant meeting time was given to Trust growth and Trust capacity. Committee members were content with the Trust's trajectory and the due diligence processes in relation to prospective schools wishing to join the Trust.

Safeguarding processes across the Trust are in place. Trustees were content that the required assurances from the Education and Safeguarding prospective were gained.

CIT LSBs continue to monitor their respective schools and continue to provide accurate assurances.

The TB Chair added that the ES&SG Committee minutes had recently been scrutinised by Ofsted during their PRIL 2024 inspection at Woodlands Academy. Ofsted inspectors praised the Trustee rigor of scrutiny and governance.

### **People Committee**

In the absence of the Committee Chair, the TB Chair chaired the last committee meeting.

The TB Chair advised that the CEO and the DoHR were commissioned to look into the remuneration of TA overtime in SEMH schools (TOIL or other options) as well as the number of Mental Health First Aiders available across the Trust.

The CEO was requested to highlight where there are any gaps to ensure that CIT schools (staff) have access to a Mental Health First Aider should it be required.

The DoHR was requested to liaise with the Wellbeing Group regarding the creation of a CIT Mental Health and Wellbeing network.

Processes around Staff Absence and Performance Management were scrutinised in detail.

Committee members provided relevant input for the new Staff Engagement and Wellbeing Survey due to go out to staff in the immediate future.

The Gender Pay Gap report was scrutinised and approved. Imagery across all CIT Schools' website was highlighted to ensure male members of staff are sufficiently represented.

This committee agreed to take the lead around Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) across the Trust as reflected in the EDI section of the CIT and the Governance Code 2023 from which an EDI Strategy will be produced. The DoHR and the CEO were requested to establish, and present in due course, the full definition of EDI for the Trust.

The TB Chair noted the importance for the committee to ensure that the Trust's Pay Policy fully articulates the Trust Board's intention to comply and align with the Burgundy (Teachers national pay and conditions) and Green Books (Support Staff national pay and conditions).

Additionally, this committee requested for the DoHR to explore how the Trust can support CIT Headteachers in challenging situations.

#### **A&R Committee**

The Committee Chair advised regarding the presentation provided by Schools Choice (Independent Internal Scrutiny Provider). Committee members were assured that the Independent Internal Scrutiny provider fully understands Trustees' requirements.

The three-year programme of Internal Scrutiny was re-assessed.

A Cyber Security internal scrutiny report is available on Onboard (low risk rating). One action point in relation to Governor Cyber Security training was highlighted. This has now been addressed.

The Committee Chair praised the DDOG and his team for their hard work and for addressing this action point promptly and efficiently.

Committee members agreed for internal scrutiny around *Risk Management* to be carried out in Summer Term 2024, *Central Recruitment Process* (as requested by the People Committee) to be carried out in Autumn Term 2024 and for *Procurement* to be carried out in Winter 2024.

Internal scrutiny around SEND in Mainstream schools (as requested by the ES&SG Committee) will be commissioned externally to LEARN. It was the committee's suggestion for a one-page yearly summary of scrutiny to be produced from internal and external Health Checks, in relation to one CIT Mainstream school and one CIT SEND school, for comparison purposes.

Risk appetite was discussed. The Risk Register has become a lengthy document due to the addition of further risks therefore a summary page that highlights risks by priority was suggested.

Committee members agreed that no additional risks are to be added to the Risk Register at this moment in time.

The TB Chair praised the work and the good governance of all Board committees.

## **8. POLICIES FOR APPROVAL – RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY – FOR DISCUSSION AND APPROVAL**

The DRAFT Risk management Policy May 24 v2 document was made available on the OnBoard portal for information prior to this meeting.

Document noted as read.

The TB Chair noted that the Risk Management Policy had been revised; a statement of risk appetite and risk categorisation have been added.

This document has been scrutinised by the A&R Committee; a systematic approach has been established.

Trustees praised the above-mentioned document and noted the requirement for definitions and terminology within Appendix 1 (Tolerant, Neutral, Minimalist and Adverse) to align to those within Appendix 2 (Adverse, Cautious, Modern, and Seeking). The wording 'Adverse' was queried and a suggestion made for this to be amended to state 'Averse'.

Trustees resolved to approve the Risk Management Policy subject to the above-mentioned amendments with the caveat that this document will be reviewed again in September 2024.

Trustees were in agreement for the Risk Appetite Statement (categories) to be reviewed at each of the subsequent A&R Committee meetings and for this area of responsibility to be added to the committee's Terms of Reference (TOR).

**ACTION 2: For all definitions and terminology within Appendix 1 of the Risk Management Policy to align to those within Appendix 2.**

**For the wording 'Adverse' to be amended to state 'Averse'.**

**ACTION 3: For the area of responsibility in terms of the review of the Risk Management Policy, Risk Appetite Statement and categories to be added to the A&R Committee's Terms of Reference (TOR).**

**9. TRUSTEES VISITS TO SCHOOLS– FOR INFORMATION**

The CIT Schools Trustee Visits Log 2023-24 document was made available on the OnBoard portal for information prior to this meeting.

Trustees provided an update around their latest visits to their special interest schools as follows:

**Foxfields**

This school was visited by the new Trustee as part of her Trustee induction.

She noted the wonderful experience had at a beautiful school. The school was calm, pupils were respectful, and behaviour was good.

Pupil voice was evidently heard as reflected by the opening of a new and successful Tuck Shop which is fully operated by pupils.

**Bingham Primary School**

The link Trustee visited this school in March 2024. She met with the LSB Vice Chair and the school's Headteacher, who is doing a great job.

The school was very calm and good lessons were witnessed. Issues with a violent pupil are still causing stress to all staff. Adequate break out space to accommodate this pupil is proving challenging. The Estates Manager is currently liaising with the school in order to address this.

The LSB is formed by a very confident and experienced team of educators.

Bingham Belief and Bingham Behaviour support the CIT Values.

Trustees were made aware regarding the building of a new housing estate adjacent to the A1 which will not include the building of a new school. Concerns were expressed as this will have an impact on Bingham Primary and it's capacity.

**Woodlands Academy**

The visit planned for April 18<sup>th</sup> was postponed due to the recent Ofsted inspection. A further visit will be arranged for the Summer Term.

**Poplar Farm Primary**

The link Trustee is yet to visit this school.

**Greenfields Academy**

A visit took place in February 2024, a further visit is planned for June 2024.

The link Trustee highlighted the outstanding action in relation to the Tide model used by this school to assess pupils.

She praised the Kite model and mentioned her previous suggestion for this to be used across all schools in the Trust.

The CEO agreed to investigate whether the Tide model is suitable for all CIT schools or just for SEHM schools.

The TB Chair suggested for this matter to be followed up by the ES&SG Committee.

**Chapel St. Leonards Primary**

A visit has been planned for June 2024.

The CEO advised that he would liaise directly with the Link Trustee prior to his visit to this school.

**ACTION 4: For a further Link Trustee visit to Woodlands Academy to be arranged for the Summer Term 2024.**

**ACTION 5: For the CEO to explore the roll out of the Kite model and investigate whether it is suitable for all CIT schools or just for SEHM schools.**

**For this matter to be followed up by the ES&SG Committee.**

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

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

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

Documents noted as read.

Trustees queried the reason behind the nil return in relation to the SOAP reports for STPs and POP's and requested for all assurances and rag ratings around AMB and SAN to be consolidated under one heading 'GANF'.

The DDOG explained that the ILB at STP's was unable to meet due to capacity issues. He agreed to liaise with the POP LSB Chair regarding their outstanding SOAP report.

Trustees were advised regarding the interim headship at AMB since December 2023, the newly appointed Headteacher who will join the school in September 2024 and the newly appointed LSB Chair.

A lengthy discussion took place around the following:

- Requirement for further assurances in relation to the safeguarding of staff and pupils at Bingham Primary school due to the violence displayed by a pupil.
- Requirement for further assurances in relation to Staff development/ programme for the professional development of school staff (including development for Middle Leaders).
- LSB knowledge and understanding around the above-mentioned assurance (HTs reporting which include staff CPD).
- Low morale at GANF as a result of recent leadership changes.
- Provision of assurances around EDI as the EDI strategy is yet to be produced.

Trustees suggested for LSB Chairs to advise the Board how assurances around staff development and performance management are obtained and how the LSB is informed about this; and for the People Committee to focus on GANF's staff morale.

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

**ACTION 6: For all assurances and rag ratings within the LSB Consolidated report around AMB and SAN to be consolidated under one heading 'GANF'.**

**ACTION 7: For LSB Chairs to advise the Board how assurances around staff development and performance management are obtained and how the LSB is informed about these.**

**For the DDOG to update LSB Chairs, at their next networking meeting, regarding the work of the Board and the ELT around the creation of an EDI Strategy.**

**ACTION 8: For the People Committee to focus on GANF and their staff morale (currently low due to recent changes).**

#### 11. **MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS SIGN OFF (P2 -P6) – FOR ASSURANCE AND TRUSTEE SCRUTINY**

The TB Chair confirmed that the Management Accounts for P3, P4, P5 and P6 had been scrutinised, approved, and signed by the Chair of the F&E Committee. These are available on Onboard for Trustee information and scrutiny.

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

#### 12. **CEO/ACCOUNTING OFFICER'S FINANCIAL UPDATE – INCLUDING FINANCIAL KPIS REPORT**

The Proposed Budget Sign off Timetable, People Plans linked to Finance- Staff Development Strategy, Recovery Plan Final and the Trust Board Finance Report April 2024 documents were made available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting. Document noted as read.

The TB Chair noted the papers provided by the CEO are related to financial matters.

**Proposed Budget Sign off Timetable** – Document for information purposes.

**Recovery Plan Final** – This document reflects the deficit in this financial year and how it will be recovered, showing a slight surplus at the end of the end of the year.

The CEO added that the recovery plan is based on the recall of all unspent funding, a further recall will take place at the end of the financial year (date to be determined). The ELT are working closely to HTs and their respective SOMs.

Trustees emphasised the importance of the budget setting cycle in order to avoid having to resort to a recovery plan.

A change in figures is expected within future Management Account reports.

The Board could consider for the agreed Strategic Spend to be put on hold or delayed should the Trust be at risk of breaching the agreed 3% level of revenue reserves. This matter may be reviewed, and a decision made should it be considered necessary.

**People Plans linked to Finance** – The TB Chair advised that this document is not for approval, it reflects the work of the ELT and the direction of travel. This document will be presented again at the July and September TB meetings when the Board will be required to discuss strategic positions represented by proposals 1 & 2.

The F&E Committee is to alert the Board should there be a requirement to move forward quicker.

**Trust Board Finance Report April 2024** – This document reflects a high-level financial position statement to the Board.

Trustees noted the request made in September 2023 regarding the addition of a column to reflect the percentage of total expenditure as this was considered a valuable metric.

The CEO advised that he is currently liaising with the F&E Chair regarding a reporting format for financial matters.

**ACTION 9: For the People Plans linked to Finance document to be presented to the Trust Board at their July and September 2024 meetings.**

**ACTION 9: For the F&E Committee is to alert the Board should there be a requirement to move forward quicker (in relation to action point 8).**

### 13. STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS REPORT – FOR ASSURANCE

The CEO Strat Plan Report to Trust Board Apr 24 document was made available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting. Document noted as read.

The TB Chair reminded all presented regarding the colour grading in relation to this document, Blue to indicate the previous rating and Green to indicate the actual rating.

Points were noted in relation to the following sections:

**Safeguarding** - Trustees challenged this section as there isn't a clear differentiation between successes and challenges.

It was suggested for further context to be added to this section, for further successes to be included in relation to the progress of the Trust, as well as a list of bullet points clearly stating challenges and successes, and to ensure that all targets reflect not just the role of the Trust Board but also the role of the Trust as an organisation.

**Education** – Trustees suggested for the ES&SG Committee to give focus to challenge 1 within this section (where a number of pupils at specific schools remain on the borderline between WTS and EXS in Year 6) and assure the Board that this matter is being addressed and monitored.

**People** – The TB Chair praised the good scrutiny, progress, and sound assurances in relation to the Staff Absence Management Policy and the Gender Pay Report.

**Finance** – Trustees agreed that this section fully reflects conversations had earlier in this meeting.

**Operations** – Trustees indicated they were content with the information and assurances within this section.

**Growth** – The CEO advised that the application for an Academy order from a primary school near Sleaford will be presented to the DfE on May 15<sup>th</sup>.

The Trust continues being approached by other primary schools as an outcome from the work of LEARN and the reputation of the Trust.

**Comms** – Trustees noted that section 2 within this strand has not moved forward and queried the reason behind this.

The CEO advised that the reasoning behind this will be established on receipt of the results from the latest Staff Wellbeing Survey.

**Governance** – Trustees considered that the gradings given to section 1 of this strand were too low considering all the successes achieved to date. Further work is required around section 2, in terms of the developing of stakeholder engagement (there is room for improvement), this is not currently reflected.

Trustees requested for the DDOG to review the evidence base and to moderate accordingly.

The DDOG advised that the actions and objectives within the plan derived from the External Review of Governance and agreed to moderate this section as requested.

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

**ACTION 11: For the DDOG to review the evidence base in relation to section 2 of the Governance strand within the Strategic Plan, in terms of the developing of stakeholder engagement.**

**For the DDOG to moderate accordingly.**

### 14. CURRENT GROWTH PROJECTS – PROGRESS UPDATE

The Academisation Timeline document was made available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting.

The TB Chair reminded all present regarding the request for the CEO to provide a timeline in terms of the current Trust Growth projects.

Trustees praised the clarity and transparency around the stages and decision points in relation to all active growth projects reflected in the above-mentioned document and enquired regarding the onboarding and transition processes in terms of knowledge and understanding of the Trust's culture, control framework and SEND need of prospective leaders joining CIT.

The ELT advised regarding the use of an onboarding plan, Headteachers from schools likely to join CIT have joined the Trust's monthly Headteachers' meetings as a means of networking and smooth transition.

## 15. FUTURE GROWTH

The Resolutions Cover Sheet – Case for continued Trust Growth v2 and the Trust Growth-background information (002) documents were made available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting.  
Documents noted as read.

The TB Chair advised that the Resolution Cover Sheet – case for continued Trust Growth document will be presented, for resolution, at the July TB meeting.

The Governance Development Day on May 17<sup>th</sup> will provide an opportunity for LSB members to express their views and make comments. Recommendations as detailed within the document will be approved by the TB in July 2024.

Trustees praised the clear and articulate documents and requested further context in relation to the *risks of not growing* - (DfE) section.

The CEO provided context and comparison information in relation to DfE's responses as well as Osted inspections across different size Trusts.

**ACTION 12: For the Resolution Cover Sheet – case for continued Trust Growth document to be presented, for resolution, at the July TB meeting.**

## 16. GOVERNANCE MATTERS / MEETING DATES FOR 2024-25- FOR INFORMATION AND APPROVAL

The Proposed Governance 2024-25 Meeting Dates and the FINAL Agenda - Governance Development Day - May 17<sup>th</sup> 2024 documents were made available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting.

The TB Chair stated that the Governance meeting dates for 2024-25 will be formally approved at the July 2024 TB meeting. He provided an overview in relation to the final agenda for the Governance Development Day (planned activities and presentations).

## 17. CLERKING MATTERS

The CS/ Clerk to TB reminded all present that this year's Governance Development Day will take place on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at Warwick House, Long Bennington. Trustees yet to RSVP were encouraged to do so as soon as possible.

The DDOG reminded all present regarding the activation e-mail sent in relation to the National College (NC) training platform.

Trustees were encouraged to check their e-mails and activate their NC accounts.

## 18. CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

The TB Chair highlighted that today's meeting was Trustee Bryan Steele's (BS) last formal Trust Board meeting as his term of office is due to end in June 2024.

He thanked BS for his contributions, views, perspectives, his hard work in relation to his designated CIT schools and for chairing the F&E Committee. The Board has been able to rely on BS's perceptions and acuity.

The TB Chair mentioned the devastating news regarding the loss of a valuable Trustee and proceeded to pay tribute to the work of Trustee Keith Stanton. A condolences card is available for the Board of Trustees to sign.

The Trust will be represented by the TB Chair and the CEO at KS's funeral.

The TB Chair thank everyone for their attendance and contributions to this meeting.

Meeting closed at 3:10pm.