



MINUTES of the BOARD MEETING

12 May 2020, 1.15 p.m. – virtual meeting held using Zoom

Part A Public

Item	Subject	Action
	<p>Trustees present: Tom Briant-Evans (TBE) Mike Hosking (MH) – Chair Nick Lake (NL) Keith Tipler (KT) John Whetter (JW)</p> <p><i>Also present:</i> Jem Alder (JA) – Trust Secretary Mike England (ME) – Finance Director Simon Hague (SE) – CEO Tamsin Lamb (TL) – School Improvement Officer</p>	
1	Apologies: Brett Elliott (BE)	
2	Conflicts of Interest: no additional interests declared.	
3	Previous minutes of the 4 February 2020 were accepted as an accurate record.	
4	Action Tracker / Matters arising	
	<i>Tracker</i>	
4.1	Trustees noted most items were on hold in current circumstances. 19.11 HR review. SH confirmed he is waiting for copy of the report. 19.12 Strategy meeting. Autumn term will be earliest opportunity to hold this but recent events are “providing plenty of topics” to take into consideration.	
	<i>Matters arising</i>	
4.2	6.3 New Head at Pennoweth. TL confirmed their previous experience has helped them cope well with current circumstances.	
4.3	12.1 Dan Sobel event. Positive feedback received from staff who had attended.	
5	Actions since last Board meeting	
5.1	Delegated Decision making email resolution. Trustees confirmed the delegated decision making arrangements should continue until further notice.	

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5.2	Trust Leadership weekly meeting bulletins. MH confirmed JA now attending to minutes these, and a summary version is sent to LGB Chairs.	
6	CEO's update	
6.1	<p>SH highlighted the following from his report on the Trust's Covid-19 response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biggest challenge was implementing the childcare guidance – we were ahead of the curve before this was issued • Initial challenge for Heads was the loss of control they were used to – this influenced our decision to develop a hubs approach • Work we carried out early on will all help with our new plan for re-opening – this is summarised in the “Building block’s” document • What we can achieve will always need to be based on capacity – number of staff, number of pupils attending, physical limitations of each building. • Possibly too quick off the mark with FSM response – has since become clear that the voucher scheme is more attractive and hence the switch. • Staff have adapted to working remotely and expect to incorporate some of this for future meetings <p>Trustees commented very favourably on the work staff have done to support remote learning, and the quality of newsletters issued to parents.</p> <p><i>Q: Has parental feedback been positive?</i></p> <p>Yes and overall staff feel lockdown has led to an improved relationship with many parents as their perception about the role of teachers and schools has changed.</p>	
6.2	<p>Finance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some changes to reporting requirements (see ESFA letter) • Team working remotely • Asked Heads to avoid any unnecessary spending • End of year forecast based on March figures • Heads accept we need to be prudent due to future uncertainties • Budget setting focused on staffing structure – but need to wait for final appointments before can complete this stage 	
6.3	<p>Premises.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readiness to re-open is a weekly meeting theme and Premises Manager has plans in place • Solar panel surveys completed – checking to see if the work could be completed during August • Lanner roof leaking – but second postponement of CIF bid results means timescale for repair currently unknown 	
6.4	<p>Recruitment.</p> <p>SH explained previous discussions for developing a shared Trust-wide approach had received mixed feedback. However Heads are now fully acceptive that this is the only sensible approach in the current circumstances.</p> <p>SH confirmed he expects this to become the default approach in future as it is a far more effective use of resources.</p>	

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	<p>TL added that requesting more information in advance from candidates may also be adopted in the future.</p>	
6.5	<p>Re-opening of schools – Q&A.</p> <p>SH confirmed that much of the government’s advice is in line with our current thinking – eg isolated groups (“bubbles”) who will not mix with other children at all or even access the building the same way.</p> <p>He stressed the importance of following advice and guidance and the need for a consistent approach if / when we go beyond this. We don’t want our schools to be scary places so some solutions are not appropriate eg. teaching in full masks.</p> <p>We cannot please everyone but we will follow guidelines, take a safe approach, and be very transparent with parents to allow them to make an informed choice.</p> <p><i>Q: Who makes final decision as to if / when a school re-opens?</i></p> <p>SH and TL will make bring recommendations to the Board but confirmed that Heads will be involved as they are the nominated H&S lead for their building. Potentially not all schools will re-open at the same time or in the same way.</p> <p>MH added that latest NGA guidance points out that we are not required to meet any government guideline but should invite children back when risks have been assessed and it is safe to do so.</p> <p><i>Q: Who will be conducting the risk assessments and might we need to make physical adjustments – eg include screens at some school reception areas?</i></p> <p>SH confirmed that he and TL will see all of these and Premises Manager is heavily involved too. Rather than make permanent physical adaptations we will consider changing ways of working wherever possible – eg. front doors may be locked and casual visits disallowed.</p> <p><i>Q: What numbers might we expect to attend?</i></p> <p>TL reported that the recent parental survey results are fairly evenly spread between Yes / Unsure / No will not send my children back to school. Most concerns are around social distancing, infection control, potentially unwelcoming environment, children being made to do things.</p> <p><i>Q: Will the guidance for having EYFS/Y1/Y6 back first cause problems for families with siblings in other year groups?</i></p> <p>It may. We need to assess our capacity at each school and match this to a priority order of children of key workers first, then EYFS etc. Currently we are not sure we will even have the space for Y6s.</p> <p><i>Q: What about the need for additional cleaning?</i></p> <p>Protocols in place for the hubs and we will base our practice on these but it will be one of the challenges for Heads.</p> <p><i>Q: Are we expecting a requirement for summer opening?</i></p> <p>TL offered the opinion that any provision would be pastoral rather than educational – and not necessarily delivered by our staff.</p>	

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6.6	<p>Re-opening of schools – communications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heads all meeting next week with the aim to agree key principles • Recruitment timetable impacts on availability to progress this • Have already informed parents we are looking at plans for re-opening • Parents will want to know what we plan before we can expect them to update their thinking about sending children to school ... • ... but this information will influence our capacity and therefore our plans ... • Avoid knee jerk reaction - there is no rush to get a detailed plan in place immediately and no advantage in 'going early' • Role for LGBs here as well • Disclaimers are a waste of time as provide no cover against serious liability... • ... our legal protection comes from following government guidelines and completing risk assessments 	
6.7	<p>Re-opening of schools – next steps.</p> <p>Trustees agreed the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Add role of LGBs into communications strategy section of building blocks approach 2. Additional Board meeting 9.30 22nd May so: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SH can share recommendations following meeting with Heads • Trustees can approve plans • Meeting agree communication to be issued later that day to parents and other stakeholders 	
7	Covid Disadvantaged review	
7.1	Trustees noted the reports issued for the meeting.	
8	Finance	
8.1	<p>Budget monitoring / cash flow management.</p> <p>ME reported that lockdown and closure of sites has meant a reduction in volume of orders and invoices.</p> <p>Still receiving additional income and we retain same strong reserves.</p> <p>ME confirmed the Trust does not meet government criteria for Covid-19 additional funding but suggested maintaining records of additional expense made sense.</p> <p>Trustees commented favourably on the graphical presentation of summary data.</p> <p>ME confirmed he would like to introduce more of this at both trust and school level and SH suggested more non-financial data could be included to provide additional context.</p>	
8.2	<p>PSF issues.</p> <p>ME meeting with staff tomorrow to progress a solution. It is evident not all other users have similar issues so will review potential benefit of having our system re-configured.</p> <p>New auditors have provided contact details for trusts using other systems which ME will investigate.</p>	
8.3	<p>End of year forecast.</p> <p>In good shape and the cautious projection of £180K saving may improve further depending on if/when more sites re-open.</p> <p>Expect the procurement projects currently on hold will definitely yield strong savings from next year.</p>	

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	<p>Important to try and look beyond current scenario and we should continue to find efficiencies as we should not expect all future pay increases will be met by additional funding from government.</p> <p>Encouraging school projects designed to make savings but using reserves will be one way of achieving this.</p>	
8.4	<p>Investment banking.</p> <p>ME to check progress with implementing proposals.</p>	ME
9	Confidential item	
10	Support staff pay award	
10.1	<p>SH reminded Trustees of previous decisions to adopt national pay awards and introduce the national minimum wage.</p> <p>He expects the national pay award for next year will be 2.75% but not yet confirmed. However introducing the national minimum wage now would require formal consultation which would be extremely difficult to conduct in current circumstances.</p>	
10.2	<p>Trustees agreed with the proposal to adopt national pay award for 2020.21 and re-confirmed the intention to move towards adopting national minimum wage once formal consultation became practical.</p>	
11	Contracts update	
11.1	<p>ME confirmed that the various procurement plans shared in March have been paused except for external audit which was completed.</p>	
12	RSC letter	
12.1	<p>Trustees noted the letter and that suggested follow-up actions were currently on hold.</p>	
13	Guidance to LGBs	
13.1	<p>Trustees agreed with the scope of the summary proposals and the suggestions for the focus of Headteacher's reports.</p> <p>Guidance to be issued asap.</p>	JA/MH
14	Future meetings	
14.1	<p>Trustees noted the recent letter from the ESFA and the summary of data collection changes.</p>	
14.2	<p>Trustees agreed that at present the additional meeting on 22 May and the scheduled meeting in July were sufficient when combined with the weekly leadership meetings and delegated decision making powers.</p>	
15	AOB	
15.1	<p>Ofsted inspections post Covid-19.</p> <p><i>Trustees asked if there is any clarity over what we need to expect?</i></p> <p>No - other than have announced there will be no more inspections this academic year. TL confirmed that the lack of data for this year suggests they will need to change their approach for making a judgment.</p>	

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15.2	CST briefings. Check confirmed that TBE / JA / JW / KT are not receiving a copy of these – SH to organise with Suzanne.	SH
15.3	Members AGM. JA summarised available guidance and TBE provided further advice on rescheduling before 15 month deadline is reached. JA to arrange a new date.	JA
15.4	Trustees asked that the minutes reflect their thanks to all staff for their tremendous efforts since March.	
15.5	Weekly Trust leadership meetings. Agreed next will be Thursday 21 st May at 11.00.	
16	Items for next agenda	
16.1	July – approve 2020.21 budget. Other items will be identified / agreed via ongoing weekly meetings.	
17	Agree Confidential items	
17.1	9. Pension topup proposal.	
	Meeting finished at 3.20	

Signed	Date
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