



MINUTES of the BOARD MEETING

31 January 2023, 2.00 p.m. at Treloweth School

Part A Public

Item	Subject	Action	
	<p>Trustees present: Tom Briant-Evans (TBE) Karen Brokenshire (KB) Robin Cowen (RC) Karen Harris (KH) Mike Hosking (MH) – Chair Nick Lake (NL) Peter Sheppard (PS) Keith Tipler (KT)</p> <p><i>Also present:</i> Jem Alder (JA) – Trust Secretary Mike England (ME) – Finance Director <i>item 4.3 onwards</i> Simon Hague (SE) – CEO Jess Hutchings (JH) – Governance Professional Tamsin Lamb (TL) – Director of Education Sean Pinhay (SP) – Chief Finance and Operations Officer Vanessa Schreiber (VS) – Executive PA</p>	<p>Apologies: John Whetter (JW)</p>	
1	Welcome and Apologies		
1.1	MH welcomed both VS and JH to the meeting. VS is observing as part of her new role and JH as part of her national clerk’s training programme.		
2	Minutes of the meetings of 6 December 2022		
2.1	Minutes of the meeting were accepted as accurate subject to one addition as item 13.2: “Trustees congratulated JA on his recent appointment as a DfE National Leader of Governance”.		
3	Matters arising		
3.1	Confidential 10.1 MH reported he had attended the LGC’s meeting and the governors had understood and accepted the Board’s decision.		
4	Strategic update		
4.1	SH highlighted various items from his written report together with some verbal updates:		

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	<p>Strategic Plan update.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New expanded School Improvement model – now with 4 hubs each with a carefully chosen combination of schools • Appointment made to new Trust SEND Lead post - will start September 2023 • Headteacher face to face meetings working well 	
4.2	<p>Finance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tender deadline of 10 February for procurement of a new system • Looking at break clause from SIMS / Capita contract – a legal challenge elsewhere allows us to pursue this option 	
4.3	<p>National picture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools bill dropped – not clear what the government’s plans are for the next 12-18 months • Strike action scheduled for tomorrow and 3 days in March • Anticipate a mix of actions required – from no impact through closing some classes to closing whole school • Provided guidance to Heads to ensure good working relationships between all staff are maintained before / during / and after the action – we want to avoid any longstanding fallout 	
4.4	<p>Operations / staffing.</p> <p>Admissions - SH explained he had launched formal consultation on admission arrangements for the 7 new schools – to bring them into alignment with the rest of the trust by September 2024 (<i>see item 8 below for outcome</i>).</p> <p>Complaints – Trust’s Complaints Policy has been updated in light of responding to the inherited complaint at Garras.</p> <p>Staffing – Exec PA post filled, finance team strengthened, unexpected ICT vacancy being covered internally.</p>	
4.5	<p>Delayed start applications.</p> <p>Explained that with the increase in the number of requests the Trust is reviewing existing process to ensure we comply with the most recent guidance and minimise the need to convene panels.</p>	
4.6	<p>Estates.</p> <p>Office accommodation – looking to move to double-size unit on same site at Tolvaddon. This increase would allow for future expansion, reinstate dedicated board room and meeting spaces, and offer potential to develop a substantial training centre.</p> <p>Garras lease – understand the owners are looking to extend lease or sell the site so we are talking with the RDD.</p>	
4.7	<p>Expansion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal notification from DfE – and we had to chase them for the expected GAG funding. 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RDD support – member of the RDD’s advisory board will make a two day visit in March. SH explained this will be an excellent opportunity to make a strong impression about our School Improvement model. <p>Trustees shared their thanks to the payroll team – staff at all 16 schools were paid on time!</p>	
4.8	<p>EBM report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustees noted the handover report and final meeting notes from the project board Roundup meeting was very helpful and report provides an excellent summary for us Learnt we cannot deliver this size project / timescale without a group of people with a mix of skills and capacity – especially to deal with the large volume of information involved We are much better placed for bringing more schools into the trust in the future Choosing to have an independent legal advisor was the right decision for Crofty - will raise this with RDD 	
5	Budget monitoring	
5.1	<p>Budget monitoring January 2023.</p> <p>SP introduced his first monitoring report to the Board and confirmed the detailed budget reports had been reviewed by the Finance group on 26 January.</p> <p>He explained his team have commenced a review of all existing coding and once this is completed he expects some budget lines to change – but reassured Trustees he was confident that the bottom line in the report is accurate.</p> <p>Headlines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projected overspend increased significantly – from £364K to £785K. Current reserves of £2.6m – revised projection for year end is £1.79m <p>SP pointed out that this level of reserves allows the trust to address the in year overspend over the next 12 to 24 months.</p> <p>Budget setting process for 2023.24 starts soon and this will be the next step to address some of the overspend.</p>	
5.2	<p>Summary of variations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projected net staffing overspend of £641K in current is roughly a 50:50 split between staff pay rises and increased use of additional hours. Transfer of the 7 schools into the Trust has brought a net profit with them. 59K revenue contribution to capital programme Some overspending at individual schools <p>SP confirmed these projections are prudent – and he would expect most school budgets to return to on target.</p>	
5.3	<p>KPIs.</p> <p>SP confirmed these are the current set – but they may change in the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support staff above average Teaching staff fine 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income per pupil - highlighted massive differential between original and new school groups – due primarily to the impact of deprivation indicators on funding formula Community funding model will address some of this from September and anticipate most schools should become net contributors 	
5.4	<p><i>Q: What do we know about the promised extra funding from central government?</i> Very little – nothing announced yet so news on this could improve the longer term forecasts.</p> <p><i>Q: What is our 'stress test' for the budget?</i> With a 10% pay rise we can still set a budget – anything above this and we go into deficit. So we can cope with the current 5% but will still need to look at staffing next year.</p> <p>SP offered the view that any big swing in pay will be funded by the government, and confirmed that series of projections for this had been shared with the Finance group.</p>	
5.5	<p>Estates Capital expenditure plans.</p> <p>SP thanked Steve Eva and Rachel Jewell for producing the attached proposals. He confirmed these had been presented and discussed at the recent Finance group who had approved them.</p> <p>Decision by DfE to release Schools Condition Allocation (SCA) a year earlier than originally eligible has enabled this programme of works to be arranged for the current financial year.</p> <p>Major projects at Pennoweth and (in due course) Portreath are both funded externally. Decision to defer any spend on Godolphin School is a combination of not having sufficient time to prepare a project of this size and complexity – and insufficient funds. Trust will pursue additional funding options as projected cost of £650K would use much of the SCA for the next two years.</p> <p><i>Q: Any risk these could go over budget?</i> Current partner usually been prudent in their estimates but the Trust will be getting multiple quotes for the programme.</p> <p>Trustees confirmed their approval of the approach being taken and Finance Group's decision.</p>	
6	Employee benefits / childcare proposal	
6.1	<p>TL briefly summarised the 4 proposals – all designed to have a more consistent approach across the expanded trust.</p> <p>She confirmed the following:</p> <p>1st proposal (Eden Red voucher scheme) - only involves 6 members of staff</p> <p>2nd (breakfast clubs) – only applies to the trust's provision</p> <p>3rd (after school places support) - small number of staff involved and again only applies to trust's own provision</p>	
6.2	Trustees approved these proposals.	

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7	Director of Education's report	
7.1	To complement the December 2022 Data Analysis shared in advance TL distributed a detailed School Support overview which was used as the basis for the agenda item. School Improvement group (KB/PS in attendance) had reviewed the data report in detail on 24 January – notes from this meeting to be circulated.	JA
7.2/3	Confidential items	
7.4	Trustee feedback. KB reported the SI meeting had been a lengthy one but it was good to begin to get to know the new schools. Trustees welcomed the detailed report on school support and requested two additions: 1. Helpful to add when next Ofsted is expected. 2. Provide an overview of common issues – rather than just school by school. TL confirmed she already has this overview format and it is used to identify trust priorities / plans eg have now appointed a trust lead for RE. Trustees noted that even those schools assessed as Good still have substantial lists of action points which is reassuring. <i>Q: Are there any plans for the Curriculum to become more streamlined in the future?</i> Currently we work to a set of principles – mainly as a response to mixed messages from Ofsted (we should link curriculum to each community) and the RDD (looking for consistency / alignment across the whole trust).	
8	Admission Arrangements 2024.25	
8.1	Trustees noted the draft arrangements and that these now included all 16 schools. SH explained that as SPt schools had used different oversubscription criteria the desire to bring all 16 schools into alignment had triggered the need for the formal consultation process. Main difference between the two trusts had been Crofty ranked living in the designated area higher than having a sibling in the school. SH reminded Trustees that this only becomes relevant if a school is oversubscribed – currently only Garras falls into this category. Proposed arrangements now include a new oversubscription criteria (no.5) – preference to children of staff – as this had always been included in SPt's arrangements.	
8.2	Consultation results. SH reported that 3 parents had responded with a request that siblings be given greater priority. SH offered the view that with only one oversubscribed school and projections that the NOR at some schools will fall he did not believe this will be an issue in reality.	
8.3	Trustees agreed to approve the draft admission arrangements for 2024.25. Trustees also noted the current PAN for the 16 schools breaks down neatly into 3 'bands' which could form the basis of future analysis.	

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9	Governance	
9.1	<p>Codes of Conduct.</p> <p>SH explained both the Trustee and Governor Codes of Conduct were being updated to clarify that governance roles should not be making unannounced visits to schools or the Trust office.</p> <p>JA will arrange both codes are distributed and re-signed a part of annual update process for governance roles.</p>	JA
9.2	<p>Expenses policy.</p> <p>SH explained this had recently been reviewed and updated. Aimed primarily at employees it does make reference to governance roles and this area has been strengthened.</p> <p>Key points for Trustees to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to get approval prior to incurring expense • Clarifies which expenses are acceptable • Acknowledges expanded training programme and the greater travel distances involved with a larger trust 	
9.3	<p>Equality training.</p> <p>SH gave Trustees a gentle reminder that some 'throw away' comments can upset staff and should be avoided.</p> <p>Link to a brief training video and associated guidance will be issued after the meeting.</p>	ALL
9.4	<p>Board restructuring.</p> <p>MH thanked Trustees for participating in meetings with the Chair and Vice Chair. These had provided some reassuring feedback and helped shape the proposed new structure.</p> <p>Aim is to have two formal committees to help reduce length of some board meetings – one will cover finance / audit / risk and the other will focus on school improvement and local governance.</p> <p>Lead Trustee roles will remain at least until end of academic year, with new committees to commence after Easter.</p> <p>Next steps and timetable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JA/MH/NL meet to draft Terms of Reference and consider delegated powers • Draft proposals shared by 24 February for feedback • MH shares proposals with the Members 3 March • Final proposal with draft Terms of Reference issued by 10 March • News structure agreed at Board meeting 21 March 	
9.5	<p>Planned external review of governance.</p> <p>MH reported that the Trust has accepted the RDD's offer of an external review of governance to be carried out by a National Leader of Governance.</p> <p>Timescale for this to be agreed.</p>	
9.6	Confidential item	
9.7	Trustees noted the briefing on the governor training programme and progress with onboarding the new LGCs.	

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9.8	Conflicts of Interests policy. Trustees approved the revised policy subject to the following amendment: Appendix B item 2 – cap the time that a chair who becomes an employee can remain in that role to a maximum of one term.	JA
	Dates of next meetings: 3/3 Members 7/3 Audit 21/3 Board 21/3 LGC Chairs 16/5 Board	
	Meeting finished at 4.05	