



MINUTES of the BOARD MEETING

16 May 2023, 1.00 p.m. at Pennoweth School

Part A Public

Item	Subject	Action
	<p><i>Trustees present:</i> Tom Briant-Evans (TBE) <i>item 4 onwards</i> Karen Brokenshire (KB) Robin Cowen (RC) Karen Harris (KH) Mike Hosking (MH) – Chair Nick Lake (NL) Peter Sheppard (PS)</p> <p><i>Also present:</i> Jem Alder (JA) – Trust Secretary Mike England (ME) – Finance Director Simon Hague (SE) – CEO Tamsin Lamb (TL) – Director of Education Sean Pinhay (SP) – Chief Finance and Operations Officer Vanessa Schreiber (VS) – Executive PA</p>	
1	Confidential item	
2	Welcome and Apologies	
2.1	Apologies: John Whetter (JW), Keith Tipler (KT)	
3	Minutes of the meeting of 21 March 2023 were accepted as an accurate record.	
4	Matters arising / Action Tracker	
4.1	Action Tracker: 01 Safeguarding training. Was noted as overdue and options discussed. JA to action commencing with internal options.	JA
4.2	04 Online meeting calendar – adopting Governor Hub system will provide this facility.	
4.3	28 Ongoing CEO PM. MH explained the bulk of the next Board meeting will be spent on a Strategy review – and SH’s performance targets will be reviewed again after this.	
4.4	29 Letter sent to former Trustee.	

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5	Strategic update	
5.1	<p>New schools onboarding review.</p> <p>Premises.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various projects scheduled for summer – roofing, cladding, decorating – some being integrated with school opening hours. • Exploring free loan option with DfE for major work at Godolphin – but need a solution for Garras lease first. <p>Staffing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two heads are leaving – one in the summer and one in December • Porthleven’s size and location potentially make it a more attractive proposition for an external candidate • More changes due to internal movement and secondments <p>ICT.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latest timetable will see all schools transferred to trust systems by September • Process informed by experience with transferring Garras IMS system. • Slight delay to implementation timetable to reduce pressure on school admin staff as they also need to adjust to new finance system and changes to Parent Pay <p>Staff survey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awaiting results but anecdotally the trust is getting positive feedback 	
5.2	<p>Small schools update.</p> <p>SH provided an update to the briefing note issued with the papers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially radical change for trust, staff and governance • All 5 LGC Chairs were overwhelmingly positive to the proposal and proactively suggested a new governance model should be considered • Linda May has accepted the offer to become Exec Head for the 5 schools • 4/5 of existing senior teachers confirmed interest in a more senior role – 5th is deciding • Parents and staff have been informed of the changes – not aware of any adverse feedback 	
5.3	<p>Trustees noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar issue for small rural schools in Devon • Trust is already making significant improvements to 4 of these schools for September • Coming together of LGCs seems a natural development <p><i>Q: Might the schools see themselves as ‘segregated’ from the rest of the trust?</i></p> <p>Possibly – but we will expect the Exec Head to look at this.</p> <p>Reducing duplication (and therefore workload) is a key aim of this proposal – and currently about half of collaborative /school improvement work is outside of current hub model anyway (eg teacher meets, CPD).</p>	

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6	Director of Education's report	
6.1	<p>TSI Review report.</p> <p>TL summarised the process followed to test the impact of our school improvement model.</p> <p>Very positive outcome for the trust and work has commenced on the two recommendations.</p> <p><i>Q: Will this lead to an updated SI model?</i></p> <p>It will inform the MAT Development Plan for next year and feed into the upcoming strategy session.</p> <p>Trustees noted this was a definite 'well done' for SH and TL and their colleagues given the experience of the reviewers – and the planned reciprocal visit should be very helpful too.</p>	
6.2/3	Confidential items	
6.4	<p>Schools update.</p> <p>TL explained the new risk indicator framework which has been introduced. Trust wanted something more analytical and pre-emptive to use alongside existing system which evaluates schools against the Ofsted framework.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-constructed with Head teachers • Some moderation with SIPs – but still feel some inconsistencies • Does not duplicate self-evaluation – a different perspective • Will feed into next SI cycle and plan • Amber rating evaluates that current mitigation is sufficient – red rating should trigger some form of intervention • Introducing weighting factors has been discussed but deemed too much work for potentially little gain <p>Trustees commented this approach was really helpful.</p> <p><i>Q: Who is the main audience for this framework?</i></p> <p>School leaders and school improvement team.</p> <p>Meeting discussed whether there was sufficient emphasis on the relationship between staffing factors and a possible risk to pupil outcomes?</p> <p>TL confirmed the Leadership block looks at a range of staff-related factors and includes variations across the trust eg staff absence rate.</p> <p>SH reiterated the trust will always look at the whole of the school when assessing risk.</p>	
6.5	<p>Data.</p> <p>TL explained technical issues due to our system supplier's own actions resulted in no access to latest data for 4 weeks – or opportunity for schools to update. Access back to previous version was finally provided but very frustrating as we may lose confidence of some schools.</p>	
7	Finance	
7.1	<p>Budget monitoring.</p> <p>SP explained that these latest accounts had not yet been reviewed by the finance group – new committee meets on 6 June.</p> <p>Following changes since last report were highlighted:</p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New pupil growth funding from the LA – 66K • Schools with nursery provision – some extra funds • Completed work checking staff costs assigned to correct budgets • Spend on supply seems higher than expected – checking if some should show under teaching budget • Confident about projected catering underspend <p><i>Q: Which other budgets might end up underspent?</i> Premises and curriculum.</p> <p><i>Q: Should rising interest rates mean greater income from our investments?</i> Potentially yes - constantly reviewed by finance group.</p>	
7.2	<p>Supply.</p> <p><i>Q: Are we expecting significant insurance payback to offset overspend?</i> No – just £50-60K. Significant proportion is not due to sickness but backfilling for vacancies, releasing staff for training etc.</p> <p>We are required to declare known issues several months in advance eg long term sickness – but very difficult to identify other potential issues.</p> <p><i>Q: Is the increase linked to new schools at all?</i> No - historically Southerly Point use of supply was low.</p>	
7.3	<p>Reserves.</p> <p><i>Q: Trustees noted the projection that reserves will fall to c£1.7m and asked how low can we let them get to?</i> SP explained the main reason to maintain a healthy balance is to mitigate against staffing overspends and ensure a minimum of one month salary in case of cash flow concerns.</p> <p>Future pay rises difficult to predict – local consensus is to budget at 3.5% and assume if higher will be funded by the DfE.</p> <p>MH reminded trustees that the level of reserves assists with our ability to fund growth and will be part of the strategy day discussion.</p> <p>TBE also pointed out this can be a big topic when trusts are looking to merge.</p>	
7.4	<p>Office accommodation.</p> <p>NL summarised the 3 options being considered:</p> <p>A. No change – but this would mean no dedicated space for larger meetings.</p> <p>B. Expand into adjacent office – offers some income potential and gives us all the space we require. Lease would double from £38K to £76K pa.</p> <p>C. Explore recent news that Cornwall Council is seeking to rent / lease multiple locations which it owns.</p> <p>Discussion noted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outright purchase would be best value for money in the long term but difficult to justify / fund at present – so leasing for another 3 years probably necessary • Agents for Tolvaddon now seem amenable to leasing of additional space rather than purchase - so may be open to negotiation on cost 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibly we could get a better deal from Cornwall Council than a commercial provider? • Total agreement on the need for larger accommodation – especially for governance meetings • Additional benefits for internal training venue and income potential from hiring to community and other education organisations were agreed too 	
8	Rebranding update	
8.1	<p>SH provided a summary of recent work / decisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will retain current logo – the colour palette range provides lots of opportunity for further marketing activity • Considering name change to 'Crofty Education Trust' – keen to lose the word 'MAT' as few people understand it • New strapline will be 'Learning without limits' • Aim for first use to be for new school improvement documentation and marketing 	
9	Governance	
9.1	<p>External Review of Governance.</p> <p>JA confirmed the draft report had been submitted for Q&A – final report should be received shortly.</p> <p>Draft action plan had been produced as a collaboration between reviewer and JA as agreed at last meeting.</p> <p>Version shared with papers had some additional thoughts from MH who welcomed any other suggestions from trustees. Final report / action plan will feed into strategy day discussions.</p> <p>Suggestion was made that the Trust might wish to consider adopting latest DfE model articles as part of the action plan.</p>	
10	Audit Committee Minutes 23 March 2023	
10.1	Noted – no questions.	
11	AOB	
11.1	<p>Chair Election timetable.</p> <p>JA confirmed process for annual election of a Chair for the Board would commence shortly and complete at the next meeting.</p>	JA
11.2	<p>Strategy Day.</p> <p>Discussed who else should be invited and it was agreed an external venue would be preferred.</p>	SH
11.3	<p>IT security.</p> <p><i>Q: Trustees asked if pupil's data was at risk if the Trust's systems were hacked and/or 'held to ransom'?</i></p> <p>SH explained that compared to a secondary school very little data or content produced by children was kept online.</p>	

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	Meeting finished at 3.18	
	<p>Dates of next meetings:</p> <p>23/5 LGC Chairs</p> <p>6/6 FAR Committee</p> <p>12/6 SIG Committee</p> <p>16/6 Members</p> <p>27/6 Strategy Review Board 11.00 start > lunch > Strategy session..</p> <p>3/7 SIG Committee</p> <p>4/7 FAR Committee / LGC Chairs</p> <p>18/7 Board</p>	