

MINUTES of the BOARD MEETING

9 July 2024, 1p.m. at Tolvaddon

Part A Public

Item	Subject	Action
	<p>Trustees present: V = virtual Tom Briant-Evans (TBE) V Matt Brierley (MB) Karen Brokenshire (KB) Robin Cowen (RC) Rob Gasson (RG) Karen Harris (KH) V Mike Hosking (MH) – Chair Nick Lake (NL) Deborah Richards (DR)</p> <p><i>Also present:</i> Jem Alder (JA) – Trust Secretary Simon Hague (SE) – CEO Tamsin Lamb (TL) – Director of Education Sean Pinhay (SP) – Chief Finance and Operations Officer [CFOO] Vanessa Schreiber (VS) – Executive PA</p>	
1	Appoint Chair and Vice Chair	
1.1	MH was re-appointed as Chair of the Board for the next 12 months.	
1.2	NL was re-appointed as Vice Chair for the next 12 months. NL confirmed this would be his final year as Vice Chair. MH shared his desire to identify a successor as Chair - potentially from 2026.	
2	Welcome and Apologies	
2.1	MB was confirmed as a Trustee at the Members meeting.	
2.2	Apologies: Peter Sheppard (PS)	
3	Conflicts of Interest: no additional interests were declared.	
4	Minutes of the meeting of 20 May 2024 were accepted as an accurate record.	
5	Action Tracker / Matters arising	
5.1	Tracker n.140 - Member recruitment. Two potential new Members have been suggested. RC reported he would be available to become a Member after he steps down as a Trustee at the end of the year.	
6	STRATEGIC / OPERATIONS	
6.1	CEO's update	
6.1.1	New government. SH gave a brief summary of what is currently known: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dramatic change of tone – emailed the workforce already • Advertised for regional strategy advisers 	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appear to want to be collaborative and listen to the profession • New policy on childcare / nurseries / Early Years • Expect consultation on review of the curriculum • Teachers pay – believe previous government received recommendation to give an above inflation pay award but no further news yet. • Acknowledged wider pressures on schools – SEND, health, social care 	
6.1.2	Confidential item	
6.1.3	SH and JT delivered a joint lecture on “Implementing a values based culture” to the SENDCO cohort at The University of Gloucestershire. They have been invited back in October to deliver a further lecture on the same theme to the “MA Inclusive Education and MA Education, Ethics & Leadership” Masters cohort.	
6.2	Safeguarding update	
6.2.1	<p>External Safeguarding Audit.</p> <p>Final report from Cornwall Council delayed due to general election. Verbal feedback was positive.</p> <p>DR had attended yesterday’s network meeting – staff clearly very grateful to Trust’s Safeguarding Lead for the support she provides.</p>	
6.2.2	<p>Trustee training.</p> <p>JA to send reminder to those yet to complete this.</p> <p>New policy is that from September all governance roles need to complete the training before October. This can be done online or by attending a school-based face to face session. JA will share dates and times of available sessions but all will be around 2-4 September.</p>	<p>JA</p> <p>JA</p>
6.3	<p>Risk Management update.</p> <p>Reviewed various systems earlier in the year and chose RSM – well recommended from other parts of the sector.</p> <p>Thankyou to all trustees who completed a return to help us populate the system. We have now completed inputting our data (SH/SP/KH) to the AI-generated data within the system. SH anticipated the trust can begin using the system next term.</p> <p>Impact and opportunities provided by use of AI was acknowledged as a possible topic for a future board meeting.</p> <p>SH confirmed the Trust is working on an AI policy but at this stage it will focus on advice to staff on the potential risks.</p>	
7	SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT	
7.1	Confidential item.	
7.2	<p>DoE’s update.</p> <p>Data was released by the DfE just this morning – report will be shared when available.</p>	
7.3	SIG Committee I July	
7.3.1	<p>Draft School Improvement Strategy.</p> <p>RC explained that this is designed to strike a balance between challenge and support for frontline staff. First draft is based on feedback from staff to School Improvement team – next version is being shared with Headteachers tomorrow.</p>	

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7.3.2	<p>Committee received an excellent presentation from the Trust's Attendance Lead (<i>slideset issued with papers</i>).</p> <p>RC reported this queried whether the Board should identify a Lead Trustee for Attendance. His recommendation that instead Attendance becomes a standing item for SIG committee was agreed.</p>	JA
7.3.3	<p>Committee noted that pupil numbers are dropping. This in turn can affect staffing levels and the organisation of classes which can have a negative impact on curriculum delivery. There is also a financial implication – upto £0.5m reduction in revenue with smaller drops predicted for following years.</p> <p><i>Q: Will the new government's proposal to create more nurseries help us?</i></p> <p>Possibly but most of our schools already have provision. There is also the potential issue of any new provision we create just 'poaching' children from other Trust schools.</p>	
7.3.4	<p>Trustees suggested an improved glossary / list of abbreviations would help with reading and understanding documentation such as the new strategy. JA and VS to collaborate on updating what is already available.</p>	JA
8	FINANCE	
8.1	Budget Monitoring	
8.1.1	<p>SP confirmed the report covers the first 9 months actuals plus projections for final 3 months. Projection has worsened slightly – but he expects to be able to identify unspent budgets fairly accurately from next round of monitoring to potentially offset this.</p> <p>SP reported that due to changes implemented over the last 18 months (budget setting, coding etc) he expects to be able to provide more accurate projections from the start of 2025.</p>	
8.1.2	<p>Projected overspend on original 2023.24 budget has increased to £863K. However as final balance for 2023.24 was £500K better than expected – the overall position is improved and SP anticipates final overspend being closer to £500K.</p> <p>Reserves at year end currently projected as £1.7m.</p> <p>SP highlighted the best performing schools, those which are overspent and the reasons for this. He confirmed plans are in place to address all of these for 2024.25.</p>	
8.2	Approve 2024.25 Budget	
8.2.1	<p>SP highlighted the following aspects of the process followed in preparing the draft budget for 2024.25:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIPS and other senior leaders all involved in initial draft which resulted in a £1.6m overspend • Trust introduced detailed staffing principles to fairly manage the process of achieving the necessary reductions in staffing costs • Headteachers involved in the second draft which has required a significant reduction in TA (Teaching Assistant) hours plus a small reduction in teaching staff • Weighting for deprivation also reduced compared to historical figures – and would be a priority consideration to re-instate if/ when additional funding is available • No redundancies have been necessary • FAR Committee reviewed and recommend this budget 	

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	<p>Applying the staffing principles has identified several schools who will need to make further reductions to achieve their target for staffing hours by September 2025.</p> <p>Headteachers understand the thinking behind these and their trust-wide application – and will make changes in-year when the opportunity arises.</p>	
8.2.2	<p>Projected over spend for this budget is £483K - equates to 2.31%. Reserves projected to reduce to £1.3m.</p> <p>Budget has included a 4% cost of living rise for teachers – so any lower settlement by the government would improve this deficit.</p> <p>It was agreed to match the national NJC pay award for non-teaching staff for at least one more year – a £1295 flat rate increase. Applying the same 4% rise as for teachers would have only saved the Trust c£50K.</p>	
8.2.3	<p>Board approved the 2024.25 revenue budget.</p> <p>SP reminded Trustees they had previously agreed an 18 month programme and budget for capital expenditure upto end of August 2025.</p>	
8.2.4	<p>Future budgets.</p> <p>SP explained the Trust is required to submit budget forecasts to the DfE for the following two years as well.</p> <p>Proposal is to seek to achieve a balanced budget at this point with reserves reducing to £1m which is low but within our current policy limits.</p> <p>He confirmed that these projections needed to assume a 3.5% increase in income.</p>	
8.3	MIS Tender approval	
8.3.1	<p>SP highlighted the key points from the paper issued in advance on the recent procurement of a new Management Information System for the Trust:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want to move away from SIMs as too expensive • Received 4 tenders, shortlist of 2 • Evaluation panel drawn from both school and shared services staff awarded contract to Arbor • Savings of £200K could be achieved over the five year contract 	
8.3.2	<p>Trustees approved this contract.</p>	
8.4	CFOO update	
8.4.1	<p>Office move completed. Staff had limited internet access for first two weeks but alternative arrangements were made to manage this.</p>	
8.4.2	<p>SP acknowledged that further improvements can and will be made to how officers report on Health and Safety issues to both FAR Committee and the full Board. In particular accident reporting with trend data will allow governance to identify any patterns and request updates on how the trust is responding. He stressed current Compliance checks (already being reported regularly to FAR) follow a robust process which means any actions / recommendations are completed before being marked as fully compliant.</p> <p>External H&S review looked at two areas and the Trust is already acting on the recommendations.</p>	

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8.4.3	Treloweth Elliott Huts. SP confirmed the Trust has been successful at the first stage of bidding to Cornwall Council for funding to both re-locate the two six year old Elliott Huts to Godolphin, and to upgrade the kitchen at Rosemellin - as has potential to become a 'hub' kitchen for other local schools in the future. Trust is most confident about the first bid at present.	
8.5	FAR Committee 24 June	
8.5.1	NL reported that in addition to items covered earlier in the meeting the committee discussed the overspend for Alternative Provision (AP) and were reassured that this has been addressed for 2024.25 at school level and a central contingency fund introduced. Budget KPIs continue to be a useful tool for budget monitoring and identifying areas to explore in more detail.. Internal Audit reports have been delayed due to the election and final visit is scheduled for later this month.	
8.5.2	<i>Q: How is the marketing budget used and why has it been reduced?</i> SP explained it is used to buy in design expertise for documents, photos and videos. Following initial work with branding and new logo it has been reduced to a maximum of 20 hours per month which we feel is value for money.	
9	GOVERNANCE	
9.1	Training update.	
9.1.1	Agreed to prioritise developing a training course / pack for LGC Chairs to be available in the autumn term. There will be two new chairs in post plus two vacancies to be filled.	JA/KB
9.1.2	Local Governor training audit – initial results. JA reported that to date he has received 41 returns from 13/16 LGCs. Main aim of the audit is to provide firm evidence for developing the 2024.25 training programme – both content and delivery formats. JA gave a brief summary of initial data: <i>Are you planning to attend the Governor Conference?</i> – 37% Yes, 51% Not sure yet <i>Training preferences:</i> 68% - Teams, 51% - Face to face <i>Monitoring responsibilities where least confident:</i> 1. Curriculum and pupil outcomes (68%) 2. SEND / PP (61%) 3= Attendance / Parental engagement (44%) <i>Confidence level in analysing data (low to high):</i> 1. Whole Trust data 2.SILC report 3.SDP Almost half of responders have never attended any Crofty training.	
9.2	Policy update	
9.2.1	Trustees noted the briefing paper with an update on new approach to managing policies and intention to implement from September 2024. Any feedback on the proposals to JA please by end of August.	ALL
9.2.2	Agreed the following: 1. JA to work with officers to agree initial schedule for approvals and address remaining queries. 2. Add policies to updated committee Terms of Reference. 3. Include policies in Autumn term agenda planning.	JA JA JA

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9.3	Governance meeting calendar for 2024.25 was shared for information.	
10	AOB	
10.1	DR and PS have completed the Confederation School Trusts (CST) online New Trustee course (together with Jess Hutchings). Planning a joint feedback / Q&A session with JA. MH requested a report to the Board on this course and any recommendations.	JA
10.2	Community Awards – request made for more volunteers to present awards on 19 th and 22 nd July.	
	Meeting finished at 14.55	