

MINUTES of the BOARD MEETING

15 October 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) Karen Harris (KH) Mike Hosking (MH) – Chair Nick Lake (NL) <i>items 1-7.1 only</i> Deborah Richards (DR) Peter Sheppard (PS)</p> <p><i>Also present:</i> Jem Alder (JA) – Trust Governance Lead Amy Claridge (AC) – potential Trustee Simon Hague (SE) – CEO <i>items 1-11 only</i> Jess Hutchings (JH) – Governance Professional Tamsin Lamb (TL) – Director of Education <i>items 1-10 only</i> Lee Moscato (LM) – Diocesan Director of Education <i>items 1-2.2 only</i> Sean Pinhay (SP) – Chief Finance and Operations Officer [CFOO] <i>items 1-10 only</i> Ross Schreiber (RS) – potential Trustee Vanessa Schreiber (VS) – Executive PA <i>items 1-10 only</i></p>	
1	Welcome and Apologies	
1.1	RS and AC were welcomed to the meeting as potential new Trustees.	
1.2	Apologies: Rob Gasson (RG)	
2	Presentation from Diocesan Director of Education	
2.1	<p>Trustees welcomed Lee Moscato – Diocesan Director of Education - to the meeting and he gave them a detailed presentation which covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the Diocese of Truro? • Why LM asks to present to Trust boards • Role of the Diocesan Board of Education • Introduction to the legislative framework (DBE Measure) they work within • Their academisation strategy • Their strategic commitments and where they can provide support <p>He highlighted several points including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 43 church schools – wide mix of MATs, SATs and maintained schools • Focus on sharing the Church of England’s vision for education • Partnership working • Flourishing Schools Programme • Ideally would like to provide chaplain support to every school 	

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2.2	Trustees and officers made the following comments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helpful to see the breadth of work going on ... • ... and how you are organised and your plans for the future • Crofty has previously discussed taking faith schools into the trust is an option to consider • Confirmed the trust is willing to work in partnership 	
2.3	KB reported that she learnt at the Governor Conference that one of our governors is training to be a chaplain and they offered their services to the wider trust.	
3	Conflicts of Interest: no additional interests were declared.	
4	Minutes of the meeting of 9 July 2024 were accepted as an accurate record.	
5	Action Tracker / Matters arising	
5.1	158. Policy approval schedule. No further progress made – priority action to be implemented.	JA
6	FINANCE	
6.1	Budget Monitoring.	
6.1.1	SP explained the final year end budget is not yet available but he does not expect much to change. Narrative report explains all the variations but he highlighted that the increase in expenditure on resources at year end was not expected but may reflect how tightly budgets for the new year have been set. Will monitor this closely and may need in-year review. Underlying theme is small schools are expensive and there may be future work to do here on classroom structures and different operating models.	
6.1.2	KPIs. Latest Census has just completed and shows a further reduction from the May projections for pupil numbers. He reminded Trustees that this data determines core funding for 2025.26. Halwin and Porthleven stand out as most significant reductions so staffing levels at both will need to be reviewed. Trustees noted that this is a factor the Trust needs to give careful consideration to when recruiting new schools.	
6.2	Catering Tender.	
6.2.1	Currently the highest value contract the Trust has. SP summarised the process followed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used an experienced third party provider to assist with the process • 4 tenders received (higher than expected) – all gave a presentation • Shortlisted initially to 3 then to 2 as one provider offers a more limited model assessed as riskier and more work intensive for the Trust Chose current supplier as offer better service, slightly better value, and are aligning with our idea of hub kitchens.	
6.2.2	NL confirmed he had been involved throughout the process and that FAR Committee had already reviewed the tender and recommend the proposal.	

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	<p>Explained that total value of contract is large but contains 3 elements - parental contributions, FSM grant, free school meals.</p> <p><i>Q: There is a strong human element to this contract - did we learn anything from the procurement?</i></p> <p>We had a very diverse panel to assess the tenders including a Headteacher, estates, H&S, 3rd party legal advice and had no dissenting voices. Provider showed they need to improve on previous offer and are enthusiastic to support us.</p> <p>Trustees noted that this was evident from the Net Zero presentation at the governor conference and how they had engaged with our children.</p>	
6.2.3	Trustees agreed to award the contract to Chartwells – initially for three years but with option for both a 4 th and 5 th year extension.	
6.3	FAR Committee 24 September.	
6.3.1	Confidential item	
6.3.2	Trustees were reminded that the internal audit programme should cover any aspect of our operations – and this was re-iterated in the most recent DfE best practice guidance. However our experience to date suggests that no single provider has expertise in all areas and we may need to explore other options.	
6.3.3	<p>DfE Dear Accounting Officer letter July 2024.</p> <p>SP and JA provided a brief summary of changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trusts can now take out finance leasing if they wish • Salary sacrifice schemes for electric vehicles withdrawn – excludes the one member of staff who took up our offer • Greater emphasis on effective estates management and governance – Trustees will receive a report on how the trust compares to best practice guidance 	JA/SP
6.4	Extending utility contracts.	
6.4.1	<p>SP reported that the trust’s utilities broker had raised a concern that the current Middle East conflict has the potential to create a fuel crisis and increased prices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historically we have had spikes in costs and contracts have ranged between 1 and 3 years • Trust could consider entering into a longer contract – potentially for upto 5 years • Initial enquiries suggest only 2 suppliers offer this – but with a slight reduction in cost compared to current contract • Also investigating the DfE Framework • Value over 5 years around £1.3m 	
6.4.2	<p>Trustees suggested we should see if any of the options would link up with our NetZero ambitions.</p> <p>Trustees agreed to delegate the decision to a sub-group of three Trustees – NL/KH/MH.</p>	
7	STRATEGIC / OPERATIONS	
7.1	Pay award / policy approvals.	
7.1.1	<p>Price of Living rise.</p> <p>Proposal is to follow national pay awards for both teachers (5.5%) and support staff (flat rate £1290 p.a.).</p>	

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	<p>Costs are £600K and £330K to fund – latter was fully budgeted for but we only budgeted 4% for teachers – so shortfall of £166K.</p> <p>However for the first time ever the government has fully funded the teachers' pay rise so trust is c£400K better off than expected.</p> <p>Support staff lump sum equates to an increase of between 5.8% down to 2.5% for highest paid staff. Majority of staff will see 4% or better increase.</p> <p>Two of three unions yet to agree the award for support staff but possibility of industrial action is very slim compared to a year ago.</p>	
7.1.2	<p>NL confirmed the proposals are recommended by FAR Committee. He highlighted that the majority of support staff who will receive lower % increase are within Shared Services team so Board may wish to review this next year.</p> <p>Minimum Wage rise had less impact this time however the new government is planning to reintroduce a body to negotiate all support staff pay.</p> <p>The additional funding will allow us to balance the budget / reinstate reserves but the Trust should consider re-investing some of this back into the estates capital programme.</p>	
7.1.3	Trustees agreed to both Price of Living rises.	
7.1.4	<p>Teachers / Support Staff Pay policies.</p> <p>Both have received minor updates and reflect the new Price of Living awards.</p> <p>Trustees had no questions.</p>	
7.1.5	Both pay policies were approved.	
7.2	CEO's update	
7.2.1	<p>Strategic plan.</p> <p>Evolution of plan from two years ago – discussed in detail at July's joint Strategy session.</p> <p>Three main aims remain unchanged – focus on outcomes, growth and pursuit of Net Zero.</p> <p>Pupil number target probably becoming less significant - potentially will replace with 'sustainable' in the future.</p> <p>2024.25 'Big shifts' cover the following 4 areas.</p>	
7.2.2	<p>1. School Improvement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is our core business • Writing took a dip so now a priority – all schools involved and focus of first thematic visit for the year • Our disadvantaged pupils do better than national average for disadvantaged but we do want to do even better <p><i>Q: New government is putting greater emphasis on oracy – will we take that on board?</i></p> <p>Yes – and we have just attended a conference on this. Want to focus on using creativity in the curriculum to help close the gap for disadvantaged pupils.</p>	
7.2.3	<p>2. People Strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged with our stakeholders • Will take some time to develop this – we want it to be coordinated across all the schools <p><i>Q: Would this include governance as well?</i></p>	

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	Yes – all of ‘our people’. Trustees noted that elsewhere it is uncommon for governance to be included in an organisation’s strategic plan.	
7.2.4	<p>3. Communications.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to improve this as part of growth – both internally and externally • Culture of innovation – already takes place but we need to get better at sharing this across the trust <p><i>Q: Do we need to create some budget to help stimulate this?</i> We did discuss this but agreed to start with what we have already.</p> <p>4. Estates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop our training centre • Manage the growth and expansion at Portreath <p>Meeting noted that this highlights that the trend of falling rolls is not uniform – for some communities / schools it is static or even rising.</p>	
7.2.5	<p>Five Key Operational systems.</p> <p>Trustees noted the timeframes for the implementation of new systems and continued development and exploitation of existing systems. For example new HR lead beginning to exploit full potential of Edupay and Estates team continue to make greater use of Parago.</p> <p><i>Q: Will new Arbor system communicate with CPOMS?</i> Yes they will ‘talk’ to each other.</p>	
7.2.6	<p>Growth.</p> <p>Marazion on track to have joined the Trust by Easter.</p> <p>Penpol’s governors conscious that a few staff are nervous of joining a larger organisation.</p>	
7.3	Safeguarding update.	
7.3.1	<p>Lead Trustee DR gave a brief update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed the new policies • Met with Trust Safeguarding lead – report to follow • Attended CST Training course – some areas to explore in the future • Aware some staff want more training on new CPOMS system 	DR
7.3.2	<p>TL provided following update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training delivered across the trust – included some governors and trustees • Staff networks up and running • Safeguarding Action Plan in place 	
7.3.3	<p><i>Q: Where there have been some staff reductions – has this had any impact on safeguarding?</i> On safeguarding no, although there has been a negative impact – especially with fewer support staff. We are monitoring this closely through what is visible on visits, listening to our headteachers and any LGC feedback. Feel this is a priority to look to reinstate when we can – especially those schools in disadvantaged areas.</p> <p><i>Q: What is the next step?</i> Currently not expecting any additional revenue funding so Trust would need to initially consider using some reserves. Headteachers are being creative and looking at alternatives</p>	

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	to more staff eg. – better training and CPD, specialisation, more staff working between schools.	
7.4	Safeguarding / HR policy approvals.	
7.4.1	Child Protection and Safeguarding. Reviewed by SIG committee – approved.	
7.4.2	Child on Child. Reviewed by SIG committee – approved.	
7.4.3	Online Safety. Reviewed by SIG committee and various amendments suggested and made – approved.	
7.4.4	Safer Recruitment. Discussed at FAR committee including a query over DBS checks for volunteers. TL clarified this policy just applies to staff appointments – approved.	
8	SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT	
8.1	Director of Education’s update.	
8.1.1	<p>Crofty Data Summary. TL highlighted the following from her written report: Attendance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved slightly and above national • Persistent Absence (PA) improving against both • PP / SEN – need to improve this <p>Phonics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Down slightly due to results at Treloweth and Parc Eglos • Latter only just started using ReadWriteInc (RWI) scheme so monitoring their progress closely <p>Y4 Multiplication Table Checks (MTC).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved overall following a big push last year • National data not due till next month but expect we will still be below national <p>KS2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Writing Maths (RWM) combined lower than last year and now slightly below national • Writing had a significant dip and main factor in lower RWM outcome • Reading above national and Maths equal to national 	
8.1.2	<p><i>Q: How do we compare to rest of Cornwall?</i> Data not available to us.</p> <p><i>Q: Are there some gaps in PP data set?</i> Small cohorts can have no PP pupils to report on.</p> <p><i>Q: When we have a whole trust push on a specific area – is it inevitably followed by a dip when we switch to another area?</i> Not necessarily – for example improvements in Reading have been sustained. Sharing of best practice and developing staff through their CPPD are other ways we work to mitigate against this.</p>	

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8.1.3	<p>School Improvement Plan.</p> <p>Priorities for the year are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Writing. 2. Disadvantaged. 3. PE and MFL - less secure areas of our curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified two specialist leaders from within the trust for PE/MFL • Added some KPIs • Reporting progress to SIG • Science has obtained some external funding for resources / training / CPD • New Arbor system should improve our assessment processes 	
8.1.4	<p>New School Improvement Strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk framework welcomed by HTs and opportunity for 121 discussions • Completed first Thematic Review on Writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ visited 12 schools in 2 days ○ 'took the temperature' and gathered a lot of information ○ led by our external SI partner. <p><i>Q: Did you have sufficient time or will you need to make more visits?</i></p> <p>We had 2 teams of 2 per school working separately. Spent c.1.5 hrs per school - but perhaps not enough time in the larger schools.</p> <p>Yes we may re-visit some but overall were pleased with our new approach. Feedback from schools was their visit felt light and unobtrusive.</p>	
8.2	<p>SIG Committee 23 September.</p> <p>RC highlighted two items from the meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discussed approach being taken by task group set up to review our current approach to local governance with the aim of developing a simpler and more sustainable model 2. Fantastic presentation from Clare Roberts (Speech and Language lead) – who also presented at the Governor Conference. It emphasised how very lucky the Trust is to have this expertise and role. <p>Trustees welcomed the news about local governance and RC confirmed a report will come to a future meeting.</p>	
8.3	<p>Parc Eglos Ofsted report.</p> <p>Verbal update given at previous meeting – final written report reads very positively.</p>	
9	<p>GOVERNANCE</p>	
9.1	<p>Governor Conference feedback.</p> <p>Trustees who had attended agreed it had been 'a great morning' and a lot had been fitted into the session.</p> <p>Initial analysis of the feedback forms showed governors who attended had been very positive too – 'really useful' and 'learnt a lot'.</p> <p>Report to follow.</p>	JA
9.2	<p>Appoint new Trustees.</p>	
9.2.1	<p>Current position:</p> <p>RC will step down at the end of calendar year but is happy to become a Member.</p>	

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	TBE is finding it harder to get to meetings due to work commitments so has decided he needs to step down as well – but would like to explore options to serve in a different role.	
9.2.2	Trustees agreed to co-opt AC and RS onto the Board.	JA
9.2.3	Trustees noted this meant there would no longer be any co-opted local governors on either committee. Decision needed as to how / when to seek to recruit more.	MH/JA
9.2.4	It was agreed Board skills register should be updated to reflect recent changes in membership. JA to issue skills audit forms.	JA
10	AOB	
10.1	KH reported having joined the recent Governor Induction training session it had highlighted a need to understand our schools and local governance better. Agreed the suggestion to attend some LGC meetings would be one option.	JA/KH
11	Confidential items.	
	Meeting finished at 4.01	

Dates of next meetings	
12 Nov	LGC Chairs
15 Nov	Members
25 Nov	SIG
26 Nov	FAR
10 Dec	BOARD
14 Jan	LGC Chairs
20 Jan	SIG
28 Jan	FAR
11 Feb	BOARD