



## MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE TRUST BOARD

Held on Thursday 25 May 2023, 1pm, via video conferencing

- Present:** Jackie Cutchey (items 28-41, 44-54)  
Peter Dabrowa  
Vic Daniels (Chair)  
Fran Hargrove  
Lynsey Holzer (CEO and Accounting Officer)  
Ben Stickley
- In attendance:** Stewart Harper (Governance Consultant)  
Karl Jackson (Deputy CEO)  
Chris Everard (Director of Operations)

### Welcome, Introduction and Apologies for Absence

1. Welcome was extended to all present, and in particular to Fran Hargrove who had recently joined the Board.

Apologies for absence were received from Miles Cole and Jeremy Beswick.

### Declaration of Interest

2. There were none.

### Minutes of the last meeting

3. The minutes of the meeting held on 30 March 2023 were approved without amendment

### Matters Arising

4. There were no matters arising which did not appear elsewhere on the agenda.

### CEO Report

5. The Board received a report from the CEO on progress within the Trust.

6. [REDACTED]

7. [REDACTED]

8. It was noted that there were ten schools which sat within the Ofsted window, [REDACTED] [REDACTED] The CEO noted that all possible support was being provided to these schools. Another (Red Oak) had been inspected the previous week.

9. [REDACTED]

**ACTION: Circulate the Attendance Report considered by the Standards Committee**

10. A trustee noted a detailed discussion on Safeguarding at the last meeting of the Standards Committee, and the robust nature of the external reviews undertaken. The Safeguarding Lead had made significant progress in this area in a short period.

11. The CEO noted the approach to follow-up on actions raised in Safeguarding audits. Where actions could be completed quickly – for example the adoption of new policies – they were undertaken before the report was published, but in other areas the CEO was leading on ensuring all actions were completed effectively.

12. It was noted that the Single Central Record (SCR) was now held by the Trust, as well as the School, introducing a further level of assurance and compliance.

13. The CEO noted work being undertaken in schools to improve the culture (as opposed to just the day to day practices) around safeguarding, and it was noted that at both the Neal-Wade Academy and the Littleport and East Cambridgeshire Academy further resource was being provided to support this.

14. A trustee suggested that the production of a paper showing all the monitoring and support on Safeguarding, undertaken at a central level, would be helpful.

**ACTION: CEO to draft report**

15. The Chair asked whether local governing bodies were yet an effective mechanism for monitoring safeguarding. The CEO felt that this was not the case, consistently, and that additional monitoring was in place until they were.

16. The CEO noted progress on the recovery plan more widely.

17. A trustee asked what actions were being taken to ensure the retention of appropriate staff. The CEO noted efforts to retain appropriate staff, in new roles where necessary.

18. It was noted that the Trust was investing surplus funds at a central level, by utilising low risk (but higher interest) bank accounts. Trustees were content that this did not represent a strong risk.

19. [REDACTED]

20. [REDACTED]
21. It was noted that new Financial Regulations would be prepared for the new financial year which would set out the responsibilities on Academy Leaders and others. Once prepared (with the support of external resource) they would be presented to the Board for approval.

**ACTION: Agenda, July 2023**

22. It was noted that financial recovery plans would be prepared for those schools with deficit positions, and that these would be presented as part of the approval of the annual budget in July 2023.

**ACTION: Agenda, July 2023**

23. It was agreed that a review of the format of management accounts was necessary, with the intention that Trustees would receive these on a monthly basis and that these would be in a more useable format than at present. It was hoped that a new template could be available for the May 2023 accounts.

**Action: Director of Operations to work with the Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee**

24. It was noted that an external consultant was supporting the Trust on these matters, supporting four schools of concern (Neale Wade, Chantry, Hillside and Chesterton) and the central team as a whole. This would include support for the matters above.
25. The CEO noted that the ESFA would be providing further oversight / input through the provision of an SRMA.
26. The Director of Operations would also be undertaking a review of IT infrastructure, with a view to some cost savings. This would also ensure a consistent platform for implementation, with efficiency savings which arise as a result of this. A trustee with professional expertise in this area offered strategic support.
27. The CEO noted that performance management processes were currently ineffective and that new processes would be introduced for 2023/24.

### **Finance**

28. The Trust Board received papers which had been deferred from the Finance & Resources Committee.
29. [REDACTED]
30. It was noted that a revised three-year budget would be presented to the Board in July 2023, by which point robust budgeting mechanisms would be in place.

31. [REDACTED]

**ACTION: Agenda**

32. The CEO presented the Board with detail of the mechanisms being put in place within the central team ,and individual schools, to avoid a repetition.
33. The Chair asked about the Trust’s current cash position, which would be provided separately.

**ACTION: CEO to provide to the Board**

34. The CEO noted that expenditure against the School Condition Allocation (SCA) fund had been paused in February 2023, and a revised set of priorities for this was now presented. It was noted that this would need to be approved soon if it were to be actioned for the summer break.
35. A trustee asked whether procurement mechanisms had been sufficient, and it was noted that this had been managed appropriately. It was thought, therefore, that assurance could be taken in this area, from the external firm managing this on behalf of the Trust.
36. Discussion took place on individual elements within the proposal. Some further details would be sought on these individual elements though they were recognised to be minor in nature.

**RESOLVED: that the Chair be given authority to approve a final version of the Plan**

37.   


### **Scheme of Delegation**

38. The Trust Board received a revised Scheme of Delegation. It was noted that all authority sat with the Board unless it was delegated to the CEO/Executive Team, or elsewhere.
39. The CEO noted that the new Scheme represented a significant change to the working practices within the Trust but that she felt this to be appropriate.
40. It was noted that revision to the Financial Regulations would follow later in the academic year and that this might necessitate further amendments to the Scheme at that point.
41. **RESOLVED: to approve the Scheme of Delegation for adoption with immediate effect**

### **Code of Conduct**

42. The Committee received a draft Code of Conduct, utilising the template available from the NGA.
43. **RESOLVED: To adopt the Code of Conduct with immediate effect**

### **Committees**

44. The Board received draft Terms of Reference for the Standards Committee. They noted that these had been considered by that Committee at its recent meeting.
45. **RESOLVED: to approve the Terms of Reference for the Standards Committee**
46. The Board received draft Terms of Reference for the Finance & Resources Committee. They noted that these had not been considered by that Committee as its recent meeting had been cancelled.

47. **RESOLVED: to approve the Terms of Reference for the Finance & Resources Committee**
48. It was noted that the Terms of Reference for the Audit & Risk Committee would follow.
49. The Committee received the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 16 May 2023.
50. Noting that the Finance & Resources Committee had not met, it was suggested that the HR and Operations Reports drafted for those meetings should be circulated to the Board for information.

**ACTION: Circulated remaining papers from Finance & Resources Committee**

**Governance**

51. The Board noted that one prospective Trustee would be proposed to Members shortly, with others to follow following further discussion with Nurole who were assisting the Trust in recruitment.
52. It was noted that Trustees would be asked to complete safeguarding training in order to baseline understanding. Further details would follow.

**ACTION: CEO to ask Safeguarding Lead to provide further detail**

**Any other business**

53. There was none

**Date of next meeting**

54. The next meeting would be held on 12 June 2023, at 4pm.