



PART I MINUTES

**TRUST BOARD MEETING
OF
THE LEARNING ALLIANCE (TLA) BOARD OF TRUSTEES:
HELD ON MONDAY 5th October 2022 at 9am.**

Present:

Mr D. Wootton (Chair)
Mr A. Pear (Vice Chair) (AP)
Mrs C. Thomson (CT)
Mrs S. Dempsey (SD)
Mr R. Armstrong (RA)
Mr M. Ashcroft (MA)
Mr R. McCluney (RM)

In Attendance:

Mr M. Cladingbowl, CEO (MC)
Mr D. Twambley – COO (DT)

Clerk: Dr A. Howells – Director of Quality

Apologies:

None

Part 1

Administration	Action
<p>1. The Chair <u>welcomed</u> everybody to the meeting. <u>Apologies</u> were received and accepted as recorded above and the meeting was <u>quorate</u>.</p> <p>2. There were no Declarations of interest for the matters on the Part 1 Agenda.</p> <p>3. Paper 3.0 The <u>Minutes</u> of the Board meeting held on 11th July 2022, uploaded to Governor Hub (GH) prior to the meeting, were approved and will be signed by the Chair on GH. <u>Matters Arising</u> –The Chair noted that the agenda included confidential items. The minutes would be recorded separately for part1 and part2 (confidential items). Paper 3A Action Log Annotated was updated and the following were noted as completed (Actions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17).</p> <p>3.1 The COO reported that the Director of Quality was taking forward work on disaster recovery. A policy had been drafted and consultation with Trust and School leaders was about to commence. The IT Disaster recovery procedures would be developed working with the Trust’s IT commercial partner and then considered by the Digital Strategy Working Group.</p> <p>3.2 The COO reported that carbon reduction was now linked to the Estate Strategy. All estates have been surveyed. Work was now ongoing to review priorities to determine which could be enacted earlier in order to deliver both energy efficiency and decarbonisation gains. The COO also confirmed that reporting arrangements would be reviewed to ensure that governance oversight was maintained through an appropriate Committee of the Trust Board.</p> <p>3.3 The COO reported that the Director Learning and Development was working with designated safeguarding leads in all schools to develop and align best practice across all schools. This work would soon be extended to involve LGB Link Safeguarding Governors. Trustees challenged whether pupil behaviour had improved at the UTC. The CEO confirmed this was the case, although further improvements were still being sought.</p> <p>3.4 All other matters arising had now been closed or delegated to a Trust Committee for action and oversight. It was agreed that future reporting of actions would be via an updated action log and by exception reporting. The use of timescales on the log would be reviewed to replace “ASAP” with a specific date.</p>	

4. Governance Matters

- 4.1 Appointment of Chair: [DW exited the room for this item]. Trustees confirmed their unanimous support for the appointment of DW as Chair of the Trust Board for 2022-23.
- 4.2 Appointment of Vice Chair [AP exited the room for this item]. Trustees confirmed their unanimous support for the appointment of AP as Vice Chair of the Trust Board for 2022-23.
- 4.3 Membership and Chairs of Committees. **Agreed** as presented in **Paper 4.3 Board Chairs and Membership**.
- 4.4 Terms of Reference of Committees. **Papers 4.4 Board TOR Review, Board TOR Review Annex A Terms of Reference – Trustees Sept. 22, were noted and agreed**. SC highlighted the latest DfE guidance regarding Members.
- 4.5 Trustees' Recruitment [See Part 2 Confidential Minutes]
- 4.6 Annual Declarations: The Clerk reported that all Trustee had completed their annual declarations and confirmations for 22-23. An exercise was ongoing to secure similar LGB governor compliance with progress reported to Governance Committee.

5. Strategic Matters

- 5.1 Policy and Political Changes: **The Chair noted that** the impact on education policy and the current Education White Paper arising from recent political changes was uncertain. A shift in emphasis, rather than a change of direction, was more likely. However, the financial climate was likely to remain challenging. The Trust would need to continue to exercise appropriate financial controls and oversight. There was agreement that the Trust should remain strategically bold whilst operating tactically cautious during this period. This approach would permit the current strategy to be followed, and through growth, secure greater independence and resilience.
- 5.1.1 Trustees were asked to share any intelligence secured through networks with the CEO. Trustees acknowledged that the cost-of-living pressures experienced by many families could have knock-on effects to pupil wellbeing and progress. The Trust leadership would continue to monitor signs of impact, and where appropriate would bring forward support measures to assist pupils and families. It was remarked that the impact of cost pressures would not necessarily be limited to disadvantaged, Pupil Premium or FSM families. The Chair and CEO would continue to work with external bodies (including community, other support services and programmes) to explore how wider support for pupils could be provided, particularly in the Crewe Schools, where there was a greater diversity of student need.
- 5.2 Trust Strategic Priorities: **Papers 5.2 Trust Strategic Priorities 202224 Cover Note 5 October 2022, 5.2.1 Annex 1 Shaping Our Future summary evaluation, 5.2.2 Annex 2 Trust Strategic Priorities 202224 5 October 2022 and 5.2.3 Annex 3 TLA Trust Strategic Priorities – Executive Summary – 5 October 2022, were received. The CEO and COO noted that** the work had almost been completed on the “swim-lanes measures” that would provide an appropriate set of outcome metrics that could be used to monitor strategic progress and performance. Trustees reviewed the detail within Annex 3. The Board had an in-depth debate where the **challenge and discussion** concluded in:
- i. the need to strengthen Trustee skills in the area strategic estates management and development;
 - ii. the need to consider that school education performance in the context of a basket of measures, and not rely exclusively on a single improvement measure such as Ofsted ratings;
 - iii. recognising that some measures of performance, such as safeguarding, SEND and health and safety, need to be secure at high thresholds;
 - iv. the importance of considering performance through various external lenses and not over-reacting when an adverse external indicator presented;
 - v. a desire to ensure that the vision remains focussed, underpinned by limited number of strategic priorities that are manageable, so that attention can be maintained on effective delivery;
 - vi. that outcomes would have a wide range of timeframes associated with them, and the importance of not seeking to measure success purely against 6 or 12 month cycles;
 - vii. the importance of appreciating necessary distinction between schools and the MAT as discrete entities, so as to enable each to deliver against the delegated responsibilities they hold.

<p>5.2.1 The CEO agreed to bring forward a discussion paper on the educational performance indicators that would be appropriate for measuring educational performance within the Trust to deliver the Trust’s strategy. This paper could utilise performance of two schools within the Trust to illustrate the need for appropriate indicators [Action CEO Dec 22]</p> <p>Within the discussion Trustees highlighted the importance of deploying RAG rating and reporting carefully. It was important to ensure that the distinction between measuring implementation verses impact was articulated, especially where an on-track green rating still required actions to be undertaken.</p> <p>5.2.2 Trustees CHALLENGED the progress being made on the digital strategy and whether sufficient resources were available to achieve the ambition. The CEO and COO summarised the progress already made, with the Trust being less than 2 years old and managing closure disruption due to the pandemic, and the external partnership now in place to deliver the strategy.</p> <p>5.2.3 Trustees noted the positive feedback from the Conference held in July 2022. The feedback demonstrated strong engagement and value. The Executive was now considering the timing of the next conference, most likely in the late spring of 2024.</p> <p>5.3 Growth Strategic Developments [See Part 2 Confidential Minutes]</p> <p>5.4 Safeguarding Strategic Update: Paper 5.4 Strategic Safeguarding Update was received and noted. It was agreed that the Director of Learning and Development, who is leading the cross-trust work on safeguarding, should attend the next meeting of the Board to provide a further progress update. [Action EH Dec 2022]</p>	<p>CEO</p> <p>EH</p>
<p>6. Committee Reports</p>	
<p>6.1 Audit and Risk: no exceptional reports to highlight.</p> <p>6.2 Finance and Staffing: RA reported that committee had discussed the impact of external cost pressures on the Trust Finances. Energy and staffing constituted the greatest pressures. Whilst energy had received some mitigation, the government’s decision not to fully fund the back-dated staff pay awards had resulted in the need to review and reprofile existing budgets. The COO and Finance Director were working with budget holders to manage the in-year impact and would continue to monitor closely budget expenditure and cash flow projections. The Committee was confident that in-year budget management would maintain appropriate fiscal control and deliver at least a balanced outturn. Reserves remained healthy and the delivery of capital projects would continue. However, additional work was being undertaken by the Finance Team to reprofile the multiyear financial forecasts to continue delivery of a sustainable position. Trustees agreed that the Chair should write to the DfE/ RD to highlight the impact of funding on sustainability within the sector, especially across the medium term. [Action Chair Dec 2022]</p>	<p>Chair</p>
<p>7. Operational Matters</p>	
<p>7.1 School Update: The CEO would provide Trustees with a short written update via circulation. He confirmed no urgent issues at this time. A brief update on the status of key staffing appointments was provided for information. [Action CEO- Nov 22]</p> <p>7.2 School and Trust Performance: Paper 7.2 Data Pack -September 2022 was received. Discussion on the item was deferred until the next meeting (time limitations). [Action Agenda Dec 22]</p> <p>7.3 Risk Register Paper 7.3 TLA Risk Register – August 2022 v2 was received. Trustees agreed that an exception report highlighting detail on the highest risk should be included at the next meeting [Action COO Dec 2022]</p>	<p>CEO</p> <p>CEO</p> <p>COO</p>
<p>8. Policies</p>	
<p>Complaints Policy: Paper 8 Trust Policy Approvals was received. Policy agreed. The delegation of future approvals to Governance Committee was supported, with the next review date scheduled for summer 2025.</p>	
<p>9. Feedback from LGB to Trust Board</p>	
<p>No significant issues to report. However, LGB had been advised that the Trust was mindful of the need to close communication feedback loops.</p>	

10. Feedback from Trust Board to LGBs	
To inform LGBs on the work being undertaken to close the loop on communication. To inform LGBs of actions being taken by the Chair and Executive to lobby DfE and to manage external financial pressures.	
11. AOB – Nothing to report.	
Date and Time of Next Meeting: 14th December 2022 at 9am.	Meeting closed at 12:22pm