

PART ONE MINUTES

Meeting of the Trust Board of The Learning Partnership

Held on Thursday 27th March 2025 at 9:30 am

Venue – Crewe UTC, [45 Meredith Street, Crewe CW1 2PZ](#)

Trustees present:	In attendance
Mr John Clough (JC)-Chaired the meeting	Mr Dan Thomas (DTh)-CEO
Mrs Helen Ranson (HR)-joined remotely	Mr David Twambley (DTw)-DCEO-Operations
Mr Bob Armstrong OBE (BA)- joined remotely	Ms Kate Baddeley (KB)-DCEO-Education
Dr Martin Ashcroft (MA)	Dr Allan Howells (AH)-Director of Quality
Mr Robin McCluney (RMC)	Mr Will Chitty (WC)-Principal UTC- item 1 only
Mr Simon Kidwell (SK)	Mrs Sue Pomeroy (SP)-Clerk
Dame Kathy August (KA)- joined remotely	
Apologies	
Mr David Wootton CBE DL (DW)-Chair	
Mr Andrew Pear DL (AP)	

Agenda Item	Action
<p>1. Presentation from the Principal at UTC Crewe</p> <p>WC welcomed everyone to the school and shared a presentation with Trustees. He highlighted the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The UTC receives specialist funding for T Levels and the number of students on T Level courses has increased rapidly to 46, with over 60 signed up for next year. The Conference room used for this meeting has recently been refurbished to provide a corporate setting for students and employers and will add to the students' experience. <p>Ofsted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The UTC was inspected in November 2024. Four inspectors were involved which is a significant number for the size of the institution. The UTC was judged to be good overall. The school is aiming to be outstanding. WC shared positive comments from Ofsted. Good comments were made regarding SEND and these were echoed by parents. Just one AFI was received following the inspection around formative assessment practices and teachers understanding how to deliver subjects consistently well. <p>Industry Ready</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is the core purpose of the UTC, and all stakeholders are aware of it. It forms part of the students' daily experience and underpinned the vision and values for the UTC. The UTC uses the professional expectations of conduct and engagement with the students which are taken directly from employer handbooks. 	

- There are now over 60 industry partners, and this number has increased significantly.
- WC shared a video of students on industry placements to illustrate the “Industry Ready” ethos.

Framework for Excellent Teaching

- WC shared the framework which is concerned with ensuring consistency and equitable opportunities for students.
- It is based on a collaborative curriculum and is evidence informed.
- It is used to look at typicality within lessons.
- The UTC has seen two years of improved outcomes for students, due to the approach taken.

Collaborative working

- WC has worked tenaciously to be able to access all the local secondary schools to present the UTC’s offer.
- Pupil recruitment into Key Stage 3 has historically been difficult as schools do not want to lose students to the UTC. However. WC stresses that a technical education at 14 is suited to around 5% of students.
- The UTC is carrying out more work in the community, especially with the partner primary schools in the Trust. A video was shared on work undertaken with Shavington Primary School.
- The UTC appreciates the support and networking opportunities provided by the Trust and works collaboratively with subject leaders, safeguarding leads etc across the schools.

The Chair invited questions from Trustees:

Trustee Question. How do you envisage that the relocation of the Studio School to Crewe will enhance the provision in Crewe for students?

WC. The Studio School is a natural fit for Crewe. There is an increasing number of students who are NEET, and the Studio School could provide a different option to meet the needs of all students in Crewe. It would provide a different dimension and different pathway.

Trustee Question: You mentioned the importance of formative assessment. Are you a member of the Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors?

WC. No, but this is something worth considering.

Trustee Question: The ambition at the UTC is clear. How can Trustees help you to achieve your goals?

WC: There are several ways. Firstly, through suggesting links such as the Chartered Institute and through introducing new industry partners. The UTC is a small institution and already benefits from the resources available through the Trust such as being part of the Reading Strategy, SEND groups, attendance and safeguarding initiatives. Collaborative working with, for example, other Maths teachers can help to improve the quality of teaching.

Trustees thanked WC for his presentation.

WC left the meeting at 10:18 am.

2. Welcome and apologies

<p>JC explained that he had been invited to Chair the meeting in the absence of both the Chair and Vice Chair of the Trust Board. Trustees agreed that JC should chair the meeting. JC confirmed that apologies had been received and accepted from DW and AP and that BA, HR and KA would be joining the meeting remotely. The meeting was being recorded to aid with production of the minutes and the recording would be deleted once the minutes had been approved.</p> <p>3. Declarations and confirmations</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest made concerning the items on the agenda.</p> <p>4. Minutes of the previous meeting</p> <p>a. Trustees reviewed the part 1 minutes from the previous meeting held on 12th December 2024 Resolved: Trustees approved the part 1 minutes as a correct record of the meeting.</p> <p>b. Trustees reviewed the part 2 minutes from the previous meeting held on 12th December 2024. Resolved: Trustees approved the part 2 minutes as a correct record of the meeting.</p> <p>c. Trustees reviewed the part 2 minutes from the previous meeting held on 30th January 2025. Resolved: Trustees approved the part 2 minutes as a correct record of the meeting.</p> <p>d. Matters arising</p> <p>The Chair reviewed the action log. It was confirmed that actions from the previous meeting had been met or would be addressed on this agenda. There were no matters arising.</p>	
<p>5. Chair's report</p> <p>There were no chair's actions to report at this meeting.</p>	
<p>6. Strategic Update</p> <p>a) Trust Strategic Plan-by term-Paper 6a)</p> <p>DTh spoke to the paper:</p> <p>Trust Offer: DTh highlighted the significant work which had been carried out on the development of clear and open top slicing arrangements and a clear plan for delivering services.</p> <p>Trustees raised challenges over the top slice which they had understood to be 5% for all schools but it now appeared that some primaries had been paying 10% with the actual average cost being closer to 7%. They queried whether this reflected a growth in central services and costs. DTh responded that the recharge was 5% but there had been charges for additional services and some legacy costs. The proposed top slice of 6.7% for all schools reflects the true position and so is more open and transparent. It was agreed that top slicing would be the first item on the agenda for the next Finance and Staffing Committee in May 2025. This would involve a consideration of the full budget scenario of the central team and a summary of the services provided. ACTION</p> <p>Trust Premium: The Chester Zoo link had been re-established and the TLP award programme for the primary schools was in progress to be introduced next year. Some work had been deferred due to the current financial position.</p> <p>Strategic Partnerships: relationships are being strengthened with the LA, especially in relation to support for SWS. Work is also being carried out with other MATs and schools. All subscriptions are in the process of being reviewed to ensure value for money for 2026-27.</p>	<p>DTw/Clerk</p>

<p>b) Growth Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowering of the age range projects at DPS, BFPS and DBPS had been completed and approval granted. • One potential school is in negotiations to join TLP. • The Studio School relocation is being prepared for consultation prior to submission to the DfE. A potential site has been identified. More detailed plans would be presented to Trustees in due course and in advance of any DfE submission. <p>Trustees commented that they would need to see the details of the Studio School relocation to ensure that the proposals did not advance too far before trustees had been provided with an understanding of any financial impact. DTh responded that the finance team were currently working on the financial profile and funding on actuals had been discussed with the DfE. The latest iteration of the plan would be shared with Trustees at the next meeting of the Finance and Staffing Committee in May 2025. ACTION</p> <p>c) Trust Culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in this area is progressing well. • A staff forum has been launched which does not include members of the senior leadership teams. Staff want more collaboration. They appreciate the staff wellbeing offer. • The ethos of “one organisation” is being developed. • The central team offices are being merged and all the central team will be based at the UTC. • A Strategy Day for Trustees and Executives would be held at the Lion and Swan in Congleton on 6th May 2025. Further details to follow. • There are some significant examples of effective culture in the schools. <p>Trustees asked which schools had the strongest culture and DTh responded that there are already effective models operating at the UTC, TOA and SPS, especially around values driven leadership. Culture is powerful when it can be articulated by students and all staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Trustees asked for clarification on how often staff surveys are carried out. DTh responded that currently the schools administer their own surveys are there also some cross-Trust ones. The approach to staff surveys needs to be more consistent and will be built into the plan. The Trust uses the expertise of Edurio who help Trusts to collect and analyse feedback from surveys.</p> <p>Trustees challenged whether there is any reference to governors in the Trust’s cultural work. DTh explained that work is being carried out this term to consider the purpose of the LGBs. This would be addressed at the Chair’s Forum on 2nd April 2025 and at the Trust Governance Conference on 14th June 2025.</p> <p>7. Education Update</p> <p>KB provided a general education update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress with regards to educational priorities has been based on the principles within the framework. The aim is to create a “one team” community and collaboration is very important. • The Trust is considering ways to work more efficiently and effectively to ensure that funding is directed to pupils within the schools. 	<p>DTw/Clerk</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A significant amount of work has been completed to improve attendance. Examples of good practice have been shared to construct an attendance framework for use in the schools. This approach has been followed at SWS and has already led to an improvement in attendance. A key factor has been to clarify the roles and responsibilities of staff. • A Reading strategy has been developed to address the issue, particularly in the Crewe schools, of a high number of students with reading ages well below their chronological age. This is a three-phase approach to develop a love of reading, to provide a universal offer and an intervention offer and is evidence based. • Further work is required on adaptive planning. This is currently happening within individual schools, rather than being led by the Trust and needs more central focus. • Developments in subject leadership and coordination are in the early stages. Best practice from the schools is being identified by the Directors of Education and shared. <p>Trustees requested data on reading ages in the Trust which could be used to measure progress over a 12-month period. KB would provide this data. ACTION</p> <p>Trustees asked for clarification over why adaptive planning needs to have more central input and direction. KB explained that it is about ensuring that all teachers are aware of the minimum expectation that there will be adaptation for learning within the classroom. This also involves considering how teaching assistants are deployed to improve teaching, learning and accessibility for all, rather than the current focus in some schools on support for individual children. Trustees noted that SEND practices are sometimes effective in a local context and are not always transferable to a different setting. KB responded that the aim is to enhance current good practice.</p> <p>8. Finance Update-Part 2 item</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Scenario Planning-UTC b) Capital Spend c) Monthly Management Accounts d) 2025-26 Target Setting Progress e) 3-year forecast for schools f) School Reserve Management Self-Assessment Forecast <p>Trustees noted the above papers which had been referred to in the part two discussions under agenda item 8.</p> <p>9. Safeguarding-Strategic Update</p> <p>AP had now assumed link responsibilities for both Safeguarding and SEND. The ESP Committee had requested that he join that committee to provide regular updates. The Governance Committee would review committee membership and consider the request in the context of allocation of Trustees to all Committee. ACTION</p> <p>KB informed Trustees that she had met recently with AP and the Trust Safeguarding lead and that no concerns had been raised.</p>	<p>KB</p> <p>GC/AH</p>
<p>10. Reports from Committees</p> <p>a. Chair’s report-Finance and Staffing Committee 14th February 2025</p>	

<p>Trustees noted the report.</p> <p>b. Chair's report-Education 11th December 2024</p> <p>Trustees noted the report.</p> <p>SK provided a verbal update from the meeting held on 21st March 2025:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are lots of examples of success stories from the schools. • Challenges within the three high risk schools had been discussed and evidence of improvements noted. The Trust is committed to supporting these schools and support is also available from the DfE. • Concerns had been expressed over 2023-24 pupil performance data at WPS and BFPS, but the latest educational forecasting indicated improvement. There is greater confidence in the moderation and accuracy of writing assessments. • Trustees would appreciate presentations from the Primary Schools at future board meetings. <p>c. Audit and Risk 28th January 2025</p> <p>RMC provided an update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AG had resigned and RMC had taken over as Chair of the committee. He would ensure that he fully understood the roles and responsibilities of the committee. • The Governance Committee will review the membership of the committee. • The Committee had approved the internal audit report. • The risk register had been reviewed and additional items added. • The Committee received the annual GDPR report. 	<p>KB/AH</p>
<p>11.Reports from Link Trustees-Summary</p> <p>a. Sustainability -Paper 11a) TLP Climate Action Plan December 2024</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MA presented an overview of the plan which follows the DfE outline. • The main areas are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Decarbonisation ➢ Resilience and Adaptation ➢ Biodiversity ➢ Climate Education and Green Careers • The next step is for MA and DTw to develop the plan further for 2025-26. <p>Trustees requested that areas such as the catering contract, ethical issues around food and the impact of climate change and severe weather events be considered.</p>	
<p>12.Operational Matters</p> <p>Risk Register</p> <p>AH noted that the Risk Register had been provided for information and that the high-level risks had been addressed earlier in the meeting. Audit & Risk Committee continued to monitor and review the risk register at each meeting.</p>	
<p>13. AOB</p> <p>a. Governance Conference 14th June 2025</p> <p>AH is in the process of planning the conference. A key theme for the conference would be the effectiveness of governance.</p> <p>b. AI across the Trust</p> <p>Paper 13 outlined the strengths and weaknesses of AI within Multi Academy Trusts and the recommendations for next steps.</p>	

<p>Dates and times of Trust Board Meetings 2024-25:</p> <p>Thursday 17th July 2025</p> <p>Meeting to commence at 10:00 am and be followed by a light lunch. Venue TBC.</p> <p>Trustees were asked to reserve their diaries from 9:00 am to allow time for a presentation preceding the meeting and to block out time to 1.30pm if possible.</p>	
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The meeting closed at 12:44 pm