



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS HELD ON THURSDAY 4 JULY 2019 AT LEEDS CITY ACADEMY, COMMENCING AT 5.30PM

Present: Colin Booth, Lydia Devenny (From Minute 18/19.68 inclusive), Caroline Gruen, Erica Hiorns (From Minute 18/19.68 inclusive), Paul Morrissey, Kate Pearlman-Shaw, Jane Pither [Chair] (excluding Minute 18/19.64), Andrew Whitaker and Craig Williams.

In attendance: Toby Cale, Vice Principal, Sam Corbett, Clerk to the Board and Stuart Jolley, Chief Financial Officer.

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

18/19.64 a Appointment of Trust Chair for 2019/20

The Clerk reported that only Jane Pither had expressed interest in being appointed as Chair of the Board. It was unanimously agreed that Jane be reappointed as Chair for the 2019/20 academic year.

Resolved – The Board approved the appointment of Jane Pither as Chair for the 2019/20 academic year.

b Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Claire Rix, Darren Shickle and David Strachan.

c Any declarations of interest

There were no further declarations of interests, other than those declared in the Register of Interests.

BOARD MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

18/19.65 a Minutes

i Meeting held on 10 May 2019

The Minutes of the Board meeting held on 10 May 2019 were considered and approved.

Resolved – The Minutes of the Board meeting held on 10 May 2019 were approved as a correct record.

b Summary of matters arising

The summary of matters arising to date was considered.

With regard to Minute 18/19.28b, relating to financial management support and guidance for families, the Executive Principal (EP) provided a verbal update indicating that the Strategy Groups would consider the broader role that each academy should have in the community, as well as exploring funding opportunities in relation to lifelong learning.

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With regard to Minute 18/19.37 relating to Board and LAB engagement in reviewing the curriculum, the Clerk agreed to add this to the annual business calendar for future consideration.

With regard to Minute 18/19.55 relating to the two Strategy Groups, the EP provided a verbal update.

The Clerk updated the log to reflect discussion confirming the status of each item.

c Other matters arising (if any)

No other matters were raised.

COMMUNICATIONS

18/19.66 a Chair's & Directors' communications

It was noted that there were no specific matters to report on this occasion.

b Executive Principal's communications

The EP reported that a series of complaints had been sent to Ofsted, which had been responded to accordingly and closed. Disappointingly, a further complaint had been sent to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) which related to the same matter that required a further response. The EP advised that he was drafting a letter, a copy of which would be sent to the Chair of the Board.

The EP referred to dialogue with two teaching unions regarding 'an unreasonable quality assurance schedule' and 'concerns not being addressed by the Senior Leadership Team.' He advised that following discussion, correspondence had been received from both unions confirming their satisfaction.

Unions had also requested a Joint Consultation Committee (JCC) be formed. The EP expressed his concerns to the Board. Following discussion, the Board supported the viewpoint of the EP that a JCC was not required.

The CFO reported that there had been a SIMS Database malfunction during the inspection by Ofsted at Leeds West Academy(LWA).

c Any matters referred by LABs

No matters had been referred to the Board by the LABs.

OFSTED READINESS (standing item)

18/19.67 a Review of inspections at LWA and LCA

The EP articulated the positive feedback received at both LWA and Leeds City Academy (LCA), noting that Governance had been effective at each.

The EP thanked the Board for their support during each of the inspections, indicating that the focus was now to move towards outstanding. Each Board member was provided with a Reflection of Year Three brochure, for information.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT & SCRUTINY – SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

18/19.68 a EP's Report & Data Dashboards

The Board received and considered a Dashboard pack, which included an executive summary. The Vice Principal (VP) provided a verbal summary of

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each section, which included reference to areas of risk, particularly challenging areas and the focus for 2019/20.

Discussion took place in relation to challenging areas, with particular focus on Leeds East Academy (LEA). Following a verbal update from the EP indicating the positive steps taken for rapid improvement, a Board member asked a number of questions in relation to the action taken to strengthen the Senior Leadership Team. The EP clarified that there had been a clear message regarding supporting and improving performance which addressed both concerns over individuals' performance as well as preparing for the new academic year. The EP explained his involvement in the process, which included an explanation regarding how he envisaged future years' performance management to transpire.

Further discussion took place regarding sharing good practice across the three academies.

In response to a question, the EP provided an overview of the wellbeing and counselling service provided at each academy.

Following a detailed discussion regarding the use of 'booths', the EP explained the differences between how they were being used at each academy.

A Board member raised specific questions in relation to the data around the following areas:

- the performance of boys across the Trust and the most able (especially in English)
- lower outcomes and progress
- boys behaviour

The Board agreed that the areas listed above be added to the list of priorities.

Action – that the three focus areas highlighted by Board members be added to the list of priorities.

b Review of format and content of dashboards

The Chair reported that a small group would review the format and content of dashboard over the summer and welcomed suggestions from Board members.

c Academy Improvement Partner – latest reports:

i LCA

The Academy Improvement Partner (AIP) reports in relation to LCA were received and considered.

ii LEA

The Academy Improvement Partner (AIP) report in relation to LEA was received and considered. It was noted that one report remained outstanding.

iii LWA

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The Academy Improvement Partner (AIP) report in relation to LWA was received and considered. It was noted that one report remained outstanding.

The Board formally acknowledged the support provided by Mark Feldman, further to which it was agreed that a thank you letter from the Board would be sent.

Action – that the Chair would write a thank you letter to Mark Feldman.

The Board raised concerns again relating to timely receipt of future reports being synchronised to the 2019/20 LAB and subsequently the Board meeting calendar.

It was also suggested that the full reports be sent to the LABs, with only a summary to the Board in future, which was agreed.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT & SCRUTINY – FINANCE

18/19.69 a **Proposed Trust and Academy budgets for 2019/20 & Three Year Plan (recommended by the A&F Committee for approval by the Trust Board)**

The Board received and considered the proposed Trust and Academy budgets for 2019/20 and Three Year Plan, which had been recommended by the Audit and Finance Committee for approval. The report was presented by the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) who indicated that the consolidated budget for 2019/20 resulted in an in-year deficit. The CFO highlighted key areas from the report, noting the significant improvement when comparing the expected deficit to actual.

After detailed consideration, the Board thanked the CFO for the quality of the report and approved the budget and financial plan, as per the recommendation of the Audit and Finance Committee.

Resolution – The Board approved the 2019/20 budget and the 2019/20 - 2021/22 three-year financial plan for submission to the ESFA.

b **Other finance-related reports for Trust Board discussion and approval**

i **Finance performance report - 31 May 2019**

The Board received and considered the Financial Performance Report, which outlined the financial position for nine months ending 31 May 2019.

The CFO drew attention to the summary indicating that after the first nine months of the financial year, the Trust had a net deficit.

Discussion took place relating to the closure of the sixth form at LWA and a change in the funding methodology for the post 16 provision. The CFO provided an update regarding the ongoing dialogue with the ESFA and the possible outcomes.

Following questions about contingency planning, the CFO explained that if future years funding was to materially change, a full review would be undertaken.

ii Update regarding energy procurement

The CFO provided a verbal update indicating that following agreement at the last Board meeting regarding the appointment of Trident utility broker, the appointment had now been completed.

AUDIT MATTERS

18/19.70 a Minutes of Audit & Finance meeting held on 20 June 2019

The Board received and noted the minutes of the Audit and Finance meeting held on 20 June 2019.

b Risk Register – June 2019

The Board received and noted the updated Risk Register. The CFO provided a brief summary. The Chair thanked the Audit and Finance Committee for their scrutiny and the CFO for the quality of the report.

c A&F Committee's views re effectiveness of internal and external auditors

The Chair of the Audit and Finance Committee advised the Board that moving forward there would be a formal review of both internal and external auditors completed annually.

d A&F Committee's proposal re provision of internal audit services

The Board received and considered a paper regarding the provision of internal audit services. It was noted that the Audit and Finance Committee recommended the awarding of the contract to Moorlands.

Following questions regarding Moorlands's experience in the sector, the Board supported the proposal.

Resolution – The Board approved the awarding of the Trust's internal audit services to Moorlands.

e Proposed internal audit plan for first period of 19/20

The Board received and noted a paper outlining the proposed internal audit plan for first period of 2019/20. The CFO explained that further to meeting with the auditors, initial suggestions had been to focus on Finance, HR and Payroll and IT.

POLICIES

18/19.71 a Senior Post-holders' Pay Policy

The Board received and approved the Senior Post-holders' Pay Policy.

Resolution – The Board approved the Senior Post-holders' Pay Policy

b Summary of remaining policies requiring review

The Board received and discussed a paper regarding the remaining policies requiring review. It was agreed that the Clerk would review further with the EP following the meeting. It was noted that all the HR policies would require consultation with the unions prior to Board approval.

Action – that the Clerk would review the list of remaining policies with the EP following the meeting.

c Arrangements re approval process

The Board discussed future arrangements in relation to approving policies. It was agreed that appropriate Board members would be selected to review a small number of policies, following which a proposal would be sent to the Board.

Action – that the Clerk would consult with the EP regarding appropriate Board members to review policies.

GOVERNANCE MATTERS

18/19.72 a Approval of revised A&F Committee Terms of Reference

The Board received and approved the revised Audit and Finance Committee Terms of Reference.

Resolution – The Board approved the revised Audit and Finance Committee Terms of Reference.

b Update re planned participation in Board Development Programme

The Chair reported that she had discussed the initial stages of the Board Development Plan with the Trust's dedicated consultant, indicating that the first stage of the programme was to complete an online self-review. Following agreement from Board members to pass on email addresses, it was agreed that the Clerk would start the process in relation to online self-assessment and add details of the programme onto the Portal, for information.

Action – that the Clerk would start the process in relation to the online self-assessment and add details of the programme onto the Portal, for information.

c LAB matters:

i Approval of Orla Weaver's appointment to LEA LAB

The Board considered and approved the appointment of Orla Weaver to the LEA LAB.

Resolution - The Board approved the appointment of Orla Weaver to the LEA LAB.

ii Approval of temporary increase in size of LCA LAB from 12-13

The Board considered and approved the temporary increase in size of LCA LAB from 12-13 which would address the current skills gap.

Resolution - The Board approved the temporary increase in size of LCA LAB from 12-13.

iii Changes in Group appointees to LABs

The Board received and considered a paper detailing changes in the Group's appointees on Local Accountability Boards with effect from the new academic year, which were approved by the Board.

Resolution - The Board approved the changes in the Group's appointees on LABs.

d Plans re Effectiveness Audit and 121 meetings with Chair

The Chair reported that an Effectiveness Audit would be completed as part of the Development Programme.

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She indicated that she would like to meet individually with all Board Members over the summer period. The Clerk agreed to coordinate the meetings.

Action – that the Clerk would co-ordinate the meetings between Board members and the Chair.

e Plans re updating Register of Interests

The Board agreed to a suggestion from the Clerk to complete the Register of Interest form electronically over the summer period.

Action – that the Clerk would circulate an electronic Register of Interest Form over the summer.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

18/19.73 a Governor exclusion panels

The Chair reported that co-ordination of exclusion panels during the last academic year had been problematic. It was noted that Vicki Reynolds (Clerk to LABs) would be circulating dates for the 2019/20 academic year shortly, further to which all Board members were encouraged to 'sign up' to those that were most suitable. All Board members were reminded of the issues that last minute cancellations caused.

Erica Hiorns requested that she be omitted from the list due to a conflict of interest, which was supported.

Following discussion, it was recognised that further training was required. The Clerk agreed to raise the matter with Vicki Reynolds.

Action – that the Clerk would discuss training requirements with Vicki Reynolds.

b Confirmation of 2019/20 meeting dates

A schedule showing the proposed dates of Board meetings in the next academic year was considered by the Board.

It was agreed that despite a number of Board members being unavailable for the date suggested in December, it would remain as proposed.

Of the two dates that had been suggested for the July meeting, it was agreed that the 9 July was most suitable.

The Clerk agreed to re-circulate the finalised schedule.

Action - The Clerk agreed to re-circulate the finalised schedule to all Board members following the meeting.

c Any other business

No other business was discussed.

MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

18/19.74 Thursday 17 October 2019 at LCA, commencing at 5.30pm

The meeting closed at 7.55pm.