



**ABRIDGED MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS HELD ON THURSDAY 27
FEBRUARY 2020 AT LEEDS WEST ACADEMY, COMMENCING AT 5.30PM**

Present: Colin Booth (from Minute 19/20.26a), Caroline Gruen, Erica Hiorns (Chair), Paul Morrissey, Helena Phillips, David Strachen, Andrew Whitaker and Craig Williams

In attendance: Sam Corbett, Clerk to the Board, Lee Garner, Strategic Lead for Alternative Provision (AP), Stuart Jolley, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Chris Reynolds, Trust Vice-Principal (VP) and Christian Wilcocks, Associate Executive Principal (AEP)

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

19/20.23 a Apologies for absence and welcome (if any)

Apologies were received from Lydia Devenny, Margaret Parkes and Kate Pearlman-Shaw.

The Chair referred to an email that was circulated to the Board in December notifying everyone of Jane Pither's resignation. She expressed thanks on behalf of the Board for Jane's service and commitment to the role, indicating that she would express the Board's gratitude in writing following the meeting.

Action – the Chair would write a thank you letter to Jane Pither following the meeting

The Chair welcomed Helena Phillips to the meeting and introductions were made. Helena provided a brief summary of her career history.

b Any declarations of interest

Erica Hiorns, Caroline Gruen and Craig Williams reminded the Board of their standing declarations relating to their employment, which was particularly relevant in relation to Minutes 19/20.26a and 19/20.27ai.

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

BOARD MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

19/20.24 a Minutes of Board meeting held on 12 December 2019

The Minutes of the Board meeting held on 12 December 2019 were considered and approved by the Chair.

Resolved – The Minutes of the Board meeting held on 12 December 2019 were approved as a correct record by the Chair.

Disappointment was expressed in relation to the late cancellation of the Board's Away Day. The Chair explained that the decision to cancel the day had been taken following consultation with the CEO after receiving Jane's

resignation. It was agreed that it would be re-arranged after a new Chair of the Board was elected.

Action – the Clerk would re-arrange the Board’s Away Day

b Matters arising

i Summary produced by Clerk

The summary of matters arising to date was considered.

The Board noted the updates against each item.

With regard to Minute 18/19.03e relating to recent efforts to recruit another member to the Audit and Finance Committee, the Clerk reported that no progress had been made. Directors made a number of suggestions, which would be followed up by the Chair and Clerk following the meeting. It was noted that ideally someone would join both the Audit and Finance Committee and Leeds West Local Accountability Board (LAB) as there was a skills gap on the LAB to be addressed.

In respect of Minute 18/19.53b, relating to learning taken from Leeds East's expansion, the CEO indicated that areas for improvement related to reviewing indicative costs in more detail, clarity regarding the extent of the project and gaining a commitment in advance from the Local Authority had informed a recent request to expand LCA.

With regard to Minute 18/19.03b, regarding Board members meeting with representatives from other Multi-Academy Trusts, the CEO indicated that this would be covered under Minute 19/20.26a relating to strategic partnerships.

The Clerk provided an update in relation to Minute 19/20.15b, indicating that after checking training records, it was essential that more Directors and Governors undertook Safer Recruitment training. It was agreed that a one-day session would be organised for both staff and Directors/Governors.

Action – the Clerk would organise Safer Recruitment training

With regard to Minute 19/20.16f, regarding appointing an Equality and Diversity Link Director, it was agreed that due to Directors' existing commitments, an external partner could be commissioned to write an annual report.

Action – the Clerk/CEO would make arrangements for an annual report relating to Equality and Diversity

ii Any other matters arising

No other matters were raised.

COMMUNICATIONS

19/20.25 a Chairs’ & Directors’ communications

The Chair referred to correspondence that had been received from the ESFA in relation the Trust's Complaints Policy, indicating that a response had been drafted which demonstrated that the policy was compliant though would be revised to provide clarity around the second stage of the process having a timeframe of ten days.

Action – the Clerk would make a slight revision to the Trust’s Complaints Policy

Private and Confidential

The Chair referred to a complaint that had been escalated the ESFA, which focussed on bullying. She assured the Board that she had reviewed the complaint and had no concerns to make the Board aware of. At this stage, the complaint had been acknowledged, but a response had not been sent.

b CEO's communications

The CEO reported, as per recent email communications, that the Trust had not been shortlisted following the Special School Free School bid but had been successful in reaching the interview stage for the 11-16 Free School. The CEO advised that there would be a student panel on 10th March followed by a management panel on 12th March.

In response to questions, the CEO confirmed that Board members would be invited to support the CEO, CFO and AEP on the panel, details of which would be circulated following the meeting.

Action – the CEO would circulate full details of the 11-16 Free School interview following the meeting

In response to a question relating to representation from students, the CEO confirmed that two pupils from the Trust's Student Voice Group were involved.

c Any matters referred by LABs

The Chair indicated that the LCA LAB had asked for Alternative Provision be considered in detail by the Board. This would be covered under Minute 19/20.27c.

VISION AND STRATEGY

19/20.26 a Strategic partnerships

Colin Booth joined the meeting at this juncture.

The CEO delivered a presentation relating to potential partnerships with Leeds Learning Alliance (LLA) and TogetherEd. He explained that both organisations were suitable partners in terms of their values and ethical leadership approaches. He acknowledged the work of all staff and pupils, which had led to the Trust being sent invitations to join various groups.

The CEO highlighted key areas for consideration, which included potential opportunities for improvement, utilising resources and the widening of forums to support a more values based education across the region.

The Board reviewed each organisation's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Detailed discussion took place regarding the memberships. In response to questions, the CEO provided the background to each organisation and confirmed the cost of the LLA membership. He indicated that he would confirm the cost of TogetherEd following the meeting, though emphasised that the cost would be minimal as the charges would relate to administration costs only.

Action – the CEO would confirm the cost of the TogetherEd membership following the meeting

The Board supported the proposal to become a Partner in TogetherEd.

Resolved - the White Rose Academies Trust (WRAT) would become a partner in TogetherEd

After reviewing the LLA's Associate Member and Partner Memorandums, the Board indicated that the preferred option was to become a Partner though the governance arrangements outlined in the MOU was not acceptable to the Board It was agreed that the WRAT would become an Associate Member of the LLA, though requested that the CEO liaise with the LLA to question if the Partner MOU could be altered to be more flexible for Multi-Academy Trusts.

Resolved - the WRAT would become an Associate Member in Leeds Learning Alliance.

Action – the CEO would question if the LLA's Partner MOU could be altered to be more flexible for Multi-Academy Trusts

b Primary school data – including Mill Field Primary

Chris Reynolds, Trust Vice-Principal (VP) provided a brief update in relation to due diligence at Mill Field Primary.

In response to questions, the CFO outlined the cost of improvements.

Following questions relating to funding streams, the CFO provided details of options available.

The VP delivered a presentation relating to primary data sets, focussing on the current position at Mill Field Primary. He highlighted areas of concern.

In response to questions relating to when the school last received a Local Authority (LA) moderation visit, the VP advised he would seek clarification.

Action – the VP would seek clarification regarding LA moderation

The Board made various comments in relation to the update.

The Board thanked the VP for his update.

c Key dates for future decisions

The Board noted the paper outlining key dates for future decisions.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT & SCRUTINY – SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

19/20.27 a AEP's Report & Data Dashboards

i Executive Summary/narrative re dashboards

The Board received and considered an Executive summary and narrative in relation to the dashboards. The Associate Executive Principal (AEP) provided a verbal summary. He highlighted a number of key matters, i.e. Ofsted qualifying complaints and attendance levels.

The Board noted their disappointment in Ofsted not meeting response deadlines.

In response to questions regarding attendance, the AEP explained the efforts remained ongoing to address declining attendance over time.

A Board member highlighted the variances in processes relating to formal sanctions across the three academies. The AEP explained that this was due to variance in practice of SENCOs. He explained that he aimed to share best practice across the three academies.

ii Outcomes dashboard

The Board received and considered the Outcomes Dashboard.

iii PDBW dashboard

The Board received and considered the PDBW Dashboard.

iv SEND dashboard

The Board received and considered SEND Dashboard.

b Assessment Systems – Reports from Academy Improvement Partner

The Board received and acknowledged the Academy Improvement Partner (AIP) Report relating to Assessment Systems.

Following discussion regarding tracking the implementation/non-implementation of the AIP's recommendations, it was agreed that the AEP would collate key themes and report on actions taken following the reports to the Board bi-annually.

Action – the AEP would collate key themes from the AIP Reports and feedback to the Board bi-annually

c Alternative Provision

The Board received and considered a paper relating to Alternative Provision (AP), supplemented by a presentation delivered by Lee Garner, Strategic Lead for AP.

A Board member asked how the Board and LABs should monitor off rolling. The Strategic Lead for AP explained that they needed to be vigilant around pupil numbers in AP and Year 11, asking probing questions when numbers of pupils declined between years 10 and 11. It was also recommended that site visits were undertaken.

In response to a question regarding the re-integration process, the Strategic Lead for AP provided an example of a recent success story.

Following a question regarding tracking onward destinations, the Strategic Lead for AP explained that post 18 data was tracked and monitored through data shared by Further Education Colleges.

Following a discussion regarding the system in place for determining pupils who require an AP place, the Board requested that further consideration be given to Governors and Directors sitting on the AP Committee.

Action – the Strategic Lead for AP to consider Governors and Directors sitting on the AP Committee

In response to a question regarding what appeared to be 'dual rolling' referred to in the report, the Strategic Lead for AP explained that the comments related to a 'managed move', not the use of AP. It was noted that 'managed moves' were monitored via related party transactions with Luminare. When questioned about the percentage of 'managed moves' against national benchmarks, the Strategic Lead for AP advised he would provide confirmation following the meeting.

Action – the Strategic Lead for AP provide confirmation following the meeting around the percentage of 'managed moves' against national benchmarks.

Following a question, the Strategic Lead for AP clarified that the twelve-week period referred to report was the period of time before a decision was made about future actions and not a 'maximum' period of time.

The Board thanked Strategic Lead for AP for the clear and succinct report, which had given them a deeper insight into AP and off rolling.

FINANCE MATTERS

19/20.28 a Financial Performance Reports – December 2019

The Board received and considered the Financial Performance Report, which outlined the financial position for the period ending 31 December 2019.

The CFO advised that after the first four months of the financial year, the Trust had a net surplus.

A question was raised in relation to a favourable variance (year to date) relating to pay awards not yet being paid to staff. The CFO advised that it was included in the 2019/20 forecast figure.

In response to a question relating to a current update on the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) bid, the CFO advised that a response was expected in early May.

The Board noted the pleasing financial position.

b Risk Register – February 2019

The Board received and considered the February 2019 Risk Register.

The Board noted that Risk 19/20.03 had been removed as the risk of not building upon the good Ofsted judgements was already captured under the quality risk listed in the register.

c Gender Pay Gap Analysis (by grade)

The Board received and considered a paper relating to gender pay gaps, after the Board had previously requested further analysis.

The CFO advised that the Trust were looking to address the areas identified as most significant through staff development opportunities.

d School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) Report and Action Plan

The Board received and considered the SRMA Report, noting the caveat around some of the recommendations being likely to damage outcomes for pupils.

The CFO indicated that action was already underway to address some of the issues identified by the SRMA, such as reducing the senior leadership costs at Leeds East Academy.

GOVERNANCE MATTERS

19/20.29 a Review of key governance documents

The Chair reported that a review of key governance documents was overdue. The meeting that had been scheduled to review the documents was cancelled following the receipt of Jane Pither's resignation. The meeting would be re-scheduled following the appointment of the new Chair.

Action – the Clerk would re-schedule the meeting to review key governance documents

It was also noted that if the University Technical College (UTC) joined the Trust, the Articles of Association would also require updating.

OTHER MATTERS

19/20.30 a Policies and Statements

i Exclusion Policy (new)

The Board considered the Exclusion Policy. The Board approved the policy subject to minor formatting changes being made.

Resolved – the Board approved the Exclusion Policy

ii Luminate Modern Slavery Statement and Human Trafficking Statement

The Board considered and adopted the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement, subject to references being changed to WRAT.

Resolved – the Board adopted Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement

iii Anti-bullying Policy (revised)

The Board considered and approved the Anti-bullying Policy.

Resolved – the Board approved the Anti-bullying Policy

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

19/20.31 a Any other business

- i** The Clerk reported that it was now a statutory requirement to have a policy or section within an existing policy relating to biometric systems. It was proposed that a section was added to the existing Data Protection Policy, details of which would be circulated following the meeting for approval.

Action – the Clerk would seek Board approval of an amendment to the Data Protection Policy following the meeting

b Appointment of new Chair of the Board

The CFO, AEP, VP, Strategic Lead for AP and Helena Phillips left the meeting at the juncture.

The Chair advised that there had been one nomination received for the Chair of the Board position, from Helena Phillips.

The Board were unanimous in approving her appointment.

Resolved – the Board agreed to appoint Helena Phillips as Chair for the remainder of the 2019/20 academic year

MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

19/20.32 a Date of next meeting

It was confirmed that the date of the next meeting was Thursday 14 May at 5.30pm at Leeds City Academy.

The meeting closed at 8.10