



**ABRIDGED MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WHITE ROSE ACADEMIES TRUST (WRAT)
EXTRAORDINARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS HELD VIRTUALLY ON WEDNESDAY 26 AUGUST,
COMMENCING AT 5.30PM**

Present: Colin Booth, Lydia Devenny, Caroline Gruen (in part), Erica Hiorns (in part), Helena Phillips (Chair), David Strachen, and Craig Williams

In attendance: Alison Bush (NovusHR, for item 19/20.55 only), Sam Corbett, Clerk to the Board, Stuart Jolley, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Trudy Morris (Leeds City College for item 19/20.55 only) Hilary Staves (NovusHR for item 19/20.55 only) and Christian Wilcocks, Associate Executive Principal (AEP)

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

19/20.53 a Apologies for absence and welcome (if any)

Apologies were received from Paul Morrissey, Margaret Parkes, Kate Pearlman-Shaw and Andrew Whitaker.

b Declarations of interest with regard to any Agenda items

Lydia Devenny and Colin Booth declared their interest in Minute 19/20.55, relating to Luminate Group's professional services.

c Appointment of Vice-Chair of the Board

The Clerk reported that following the last meeting, Kate Pearlman Shaw had expressed an interest in becoming Vice-Chair of the Board. Kate had discussed the role with the Clerk and Chair of the Board and both were supportive of her taking the role. The Board were asked to approve the proposal, which was unanimously agreed.

Resolved – Kate Pearlman-Shaw was appointed as Vice- Chair of the Board with immediate effect

The Board expressed their thanks to Erica Hiorns who had previously undertaken the role.

OPERATIONAL UPDATES

19/20.54 a Changes in government guidance around Covid-19

The AEP summarised key elements of his report which focussed on the use of masks in social areas and corridors, enhanced safety measures, teaching methods, procedures for those presenting symptoms and continuous professional development for staff.

In response to a question regarding resistance to the measures being anticipated, the AEP explained that they would take the same approach as they do to dealing with non-compliance with uniform.

In respect questions relating to enhanced protection for staff, the AEP explained that all safety measures were to protect both staff and pupils. Teaching from the front of the class was one of those measures.

Private and Confidential

The AEP explained the protective measures that were in place at each academy which would minimise risk to staff and visitors to the academies, as well as minimising social contact between students.

He confirmed that in addition to the wearing of face coverings in communal areas, the following measures were in place for staff:

- Clearly communicated expectations that staff and visitors observe the minimum two metre social distancing.
- Clearly communicated expectations regarding the use of face coverings and strict hand-washing/sanitising routines.
- Office and work spaces had been reviewed to ensure maximum occupancy allows for appropriate social distancing, with sanitizing regimes in place before/after use by staff.
- Visitors to the academies would be kept to a minimum, and reminded of social distancing/protective measures as part of the sign-in procedure.
- Signage, reminding staff and visitors of social distancing expectations, in place in all three academies.

b Update regarding Mill Field Primary

The AEP summarised his comprehensive report for the Board, highlighting the key issues considered as part of the due diligence activity.

The AEP highlighted that the Trust had commissioned AA Projects Limited to undertake a survey of the fabric of the building and mechanical and electrical installations.

The DfE's Project Director had been in touch during early August to advise that many items had been included in the proposal that was to be taken to the panel with a recommendation for funding through the Strategic School Improvement Capital Budget (SSICB).

He advised that the panel met on 10th August and the feedback provided following the meeting suggested that the panel agreed with the assessment made by the Project Director and would pass the recommendation for ministerial consideration to seek approval in principle.

The Board considered this element of the report in great detail, asking a number of questions relating to the asbestos management plan and risks associated with items not being funded by the DfE. The Board also enquired if other options had been considered including a re-build. SJ confirmed other options were considered but discounted as repairing /updating the current building was the most cost effective solution.

The AEP assured the Board that the DfE had provided assurance that any expense incurred as a result of any actions undertaken would be reimbursed in the event of an inability to move forwards with the sponsorship due to the condition of the building remaining unresolved by the DfE.

The Board asked for further information relating to teaching and learning. The AEP provided the Board with further detail on these matters.

The Board again noted their concerns of stretching the executive team's capacity too far and was assured that it would be carefully monitored.

After detailed consideration and questions to the AEP, it was agreed that when balanced against the risk of not progressing with the Trust's growth plans, it would support the proposal to progress with the conversion subject to ministerial approval of the grant being obtained.

Resolved – the Board supported the proposal to progress with the conversion subject to ministerial approval of the grant being obtained

Erica Hirons left the meeting at this juncture.

AUDIT AND FINANCE MATTERS

19/20.55 a Luminate's Professional Services

Alison Bush, Hilary Staves and Trudy Morris joined the meeting at this juncture.

A presentation was delivered by Alison Bush and Hilary Staves which outlined the Group's case, the proposed provision for shared services, the benefits of those services and steps required for implementation.

The Board queried why only certain services were being considered and if others would be considered in the future. Colin Booth explained that other services were shared through an informal close-working agreement between Luminate and the Trust and in respect of procurement, they worked collaboratively with other Multi-Academy Trusts. This meant there were no other services that would require further changes being made.

The CFO indicated that he was engaging with the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) in respect of related party transactions as the Board had agreed to the continuation of the Group's IT service at the last meeting. There had been an unexpected level of questioning from the ESFA. Colin Booth reported that he had been liaising with the ESFA given that he felt the level of questioning was unwarranted in these circumstances.

The Board were fully supportive of the proposal and acknowledged the numerous benefits it would bring, though implementation was subject to obtaining ESFA approval. It was noted that academy level feedback was vital to the future success of the service.

Resolved – that the Board supported the shared services proposals subject to obtaining ESFA approval for the related party transaction

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

19/20.56 a Update regarding IT systems breach

The CFO provided a verbal update in respect of the IT systems breach previously communicated via email to the Board.

The Board requested regular briefings on the matter.

Action – the CFO to send regular email briefings to the Board regarding the IT breach

b Any other business

Private and Confidential

A member of the Board requested the following items were added to the next Board agenda:

- nurturing talent programmes
- lessons learned over the last six months.

The Chair asked that any further suggestions be communicated to the Clerk.

Action – the Clerk to include the two suggested agenda items to the November Agenda

The Board indicated their sympathy to the family of Andrew Dean, who had sadly passed away recently.

MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

19/20.57 a Proposed 2020/21 meeting dates and Autumn Agenda

It was confirmed that the next meeting would take place virtually on Thursday 4 November at 5.30pm.

The Chair indicated that all meetings would remain virtual until December 2020 at the earliest.

These Minutes have been certified as a true and accurate record of the meeting

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____