

EM Full Trustee Board – Part I Minutes							
Date/Time	25 <sup>th</sup> February 2021 5.00pm	Location		Wardhayes, Okehampton College and via Microsoft Team (due to Covid 19)			
Attendees	Initials			Attendees	Initials		
Morgen Witzel	MW	Tania Skeaping	TS	Chris Gould	CG	Dan Morrow	DM
John Lawlor	JL	Jane Dumeresque	JD	Graham Briscoe	GB	Philip Sanders	PS
Stewart Biddles	SB	Pete Last	PL				
<b>ACTIONS</b>							
<b>DECISIONS</b>							
<b>QUESTIONS AND CHALLENGES</b>							

In Attendance	Initials		Minutes to
Susanne Kiff	SK	CFOO	Attendees
Hazel Fox	HF	Vice CEO	Apologies:
Melissa Trudgill	MT	Governance Manager	Jeanette Savage Amanda French

Meeting started at 5.04pm

Please note that Trustees agreed for the meeting to be recorded for minute taking and it was deleted on 09.03.21.

<b>1 - Apologies</b>
Apologies were received from Jeanette Savage and Amanda French these were sanctioned.
<b>2 – Declaration of Interest</b>
All Trustees present were reminded to declare any conflict of interest that may arise during the meeting.
<b>3 – Approval of New Governor</b>
<b>2 Approval of New Governor – Holsworthy AC – Kerry Hardy.</b> <span style="color: green;"><b>DECISION: Trustees were pleased to approve the application of Kerry Hardy as a new governor for the Holsworthy AC.</b></span>
<b>4 – To Discuss and Recommend to Members: New Governance Plan</b>
<b>4.1 Discussion on new Governance Plan in order to recommend to Members for approval</b>

- TS said Trustees needed to consider the Plan and be able to recommend it to Members for approval on 30<sup>th</sup> March.
- TS thanked MT for her work to facilitate the co construction of the Plan. The timeline demonstrates the amount of consultation and stages there have been to the process. She also thanked the Cohesion Strategy Task and Finish group and the Governance Working Group.
- MT gave detail of the membership of both groups, which worked on the plan - Cohesion Strategy Task and Finish membership: HF, SK, DM, Sarah Jones, Andrew Sweeney, Lisa Paton, Phil Whittle, John Lawlor, Morgen Witzel, Kate Scrivener, Bridget Down, Emma Neath and Richard Parsons. The Working Group consisted of: MW, Emma Neath, Bridget Down, Kate Scrivener and Richard Parsons.
- The plan had been returned to the WG for their comments and they had made some further queries: 1) information on the clusters (yet to be announced to staff teams); 2) SEND budget would need to be included in the TOR for the LSB as school specific; 3) Plan should list the Lead Governor roles (Safeguarding, Ethos, Foundation and SEND).
- **Q GB asked if there should be a H&S Lead Governor?** TS felt this was not necessary at the local level. GB responded that he would like to see a tracker for H&S, as a Trust Board responsibility, but this could be a future discussion item. PS reminded that H&S was listed with the TOR roles and responsibilities for the LSB.
- MW suggested 2 additional governance leads; one for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and one for Environment – i.e. should there be a governor and a trustee who take these lead responsibilities across the MAT? although Equality Diversity and Inclusion should be the focus of all and these leads could coordinate policies around both of these issues. MW said it would be ideal to have these leads at both governance levels: Board level insight and strategy and at local level taking the lead with community activities and involving the schools. PL said this was an exciting prospect and supports the direction of the Trust and the developing civic Trust concept.
- PS voiced concern that if there were too many specialist leads at Board level, there may be the risk that the Board as a whole, rely too heavily on certain individuals, instead of these topics being the focus and held by all members. HF agreed that there was extensive work being carried out on behalf of the whole Trust which encompass emergency climate change and aligned for zero carbon and with the Devon Plan and ensuring that we are setting targets around this She felt that at all levels it needs to be the focus and threaded through all the work we do. MW responded that alternatively if no one person held a focus of these lead roles, then it could mean that everyone thinks someone else was doing it and it was missed altogether. If there was a lead then these topics could have someone who could initiate the work and focus in these areas and also provide crucial updates and oversight to the Board on all the actions going on in schools in these areas, which otherwise might get missed by Trustees.

**ACTION: TS asked MT to add into the governance plan under future consideration of these additional Lead Governor roles.**

- **Q HF said as we were in a time of change with the new governance plan, it was a good opportunity to consider the reporting structure which Trustees required.**
- **Q CG said H&S was one of the largest responsibilities in the current crisis for him as a Headteacher and said that the role of the H&S Lead trustee had been vital – he asked where does H&S fit into the MAT structure?** DM said there would be changes around the responsibilities within the central services team around estates and a director level post for estates, which would encompass H&S, will be advertised. **Q TS asked how would we triangulate this as a Board?** DM said the operational aspects for H&S will be covered in the Every system. This would provide reports which would give the strategic overview and feed into the KPIs. DM said a second aspect would be to commission an independent H&S audit from a neutral party to reassure the Board that the operational work meets our statutory expectations and responsibilities and meets the needs of the educationalists in the schools.
- **Q TS asked what role would the LSBs have in H&S?** DM said this was emerging but he expected they would receive the copy of the audits and they would match the development plans in place for each of the Boards. They

would identify any areas which will be fed up to Trustees and this is where the triangulation from local level (auditing operationally and the lived experience of H&S) with the strategic auditing. The Board would be asking the LSBs re the accountability aspect of asking HTs to ensure the process of H&S is being followed.

- **Q SB asked could this be part of the internal audit checks to look at H&S processes in order to give reassurance to the Board that everything is in place?** JL said it is part of the TOR for the Audit Committee to review H&S processes but we would need to decide how/who we would enlist to undertake the external audit for this area. DM agreed with SB that it would go in to the internal audit function but this internal/external function will be under review and ensuring that we have the right external audit partnership. DM said there has been an issue that H&S has been a compliance only issue up until now but it needs to also become part of the culture piece as well as compliance.
- **QTS said that the WG had raised about the LSBs responsibilities towards policies?** TS had answered that most of the Trust policies would sit with the Trustee Board, although local schools' specific appendices will need oversight from the LSBs such as uniform and behaviour. DM added that some policies will be framed by the Trust but locally adopted. DM said for policies such as behaviour would need to be maintained by the Board so it is consistent across all schools and ensure that the culture for the whole Trust is translated for all schools.
- **Q TS would this list of policies clearly identify which were required for adoption locally and which by the Board?** This is to be confirmed and we need to look at the whole policy suite, as it is more than simply complying, getting them reviewed and adopted, but that they sit with our vision and values, are in line with our overall approach and that they are understood and structured in a way that all colleagues understand them and are part of them. They should have a change summary document and some of them will need to be simplified and take out procedure sections to create adopted handbooks. LSBs would then be looking at and approving the handbook with HTs so that they understand the implementation and impact of policies as well as the framing of them.
- **Q WG had asked re Ofsted inspection – how much input from LSBs?** DM said at the moment it will depend on what part of the framework will be investigated by Ofsted. Sitting down with local governors is an older style inspection and is now not seen as the best way to triangulate the information and make an assessment on the framework. DM said that instead, they will check governance effectiveness though assessing other areas such as websites which are still not compliant (this is an AC function). They would speak to the ACs to find out why governance is not fulfilling its role in this area. CG added this is a checklist which governors can follow, to ensure that the websites are compliant and this feeds into the Leadership and Management section.
- **Q MW asked if it was not compliant what the outcome would be?** CG said if it was not complaint then the AC would hold the HT to account to ensure the website was updated. It is ultimately the HT's responsibility that the websites are compliant. CG added he had been interested in the new role of LSBs on curriculum and supporting curriculum leadership; he felt this was an important aspect for governors to support subject leaders and checklists.
- HF said she had put together a support service to get ready for Ofsted to include a menu of all types of compliance and includes workshops, rehearsals, training and support HTs and middle leaders. DM reassured that he would be meeting with the HTs whose websites were not compliant but emphasised that when there is accountability, it is enforced i.e. up until December website compliance had been the responsibility of the ACs in their role as the HT line managers. Along with accountability, training, monitoring and reporting also needs to be in place to ensure this responsibility is carried out effectively and comprehensively.
- TS raised the other queries from the WG: QEBs – Ofsted involvement and SIAMS (there needs to be a foundation trustee on this committee and SIAMS needs to be included under QEBs TORs. **Q They had also asked where now do the pay committees sit?** This will be facilitated by the Board who will put together a panel committee derived out of the HR/People Committee). Complaints would continue to follow the existing policy – local level to be involved initially and stage 1, 2 and 3 to try and address complaints at the root cause which is always preferable. **Q Are there specific admission committee for the Church schools to hear appeals?** Admission process would be

VA or for VC schools and we are tied currently into the local authority's admissions arrangements and therefore we would work with county on appeals.

- TS reminded that currently ACs monitor the variances in budgets and JD felt this all coming up to a finance committee would be a big ask. JD is awaiting to hear from SK and AR how the new finances will be presented and work. JD said until she sees the new format, she cannot work out the most effective governance process to align with this part. DM said that in discussion with the ESFA, they felt that variances should be taken up to Board level only to be looked at and that we must make sure in our reporting, that we have clear understanding what the thresholds and materiality level are and the LSBs will be looking at the curriculum spend (less than 6%) the issues are more to do with staffing (84% ) will be held by the Board committees of resources and HR/People committee.
- **Q JL asked DM to comment on the cluster arrangements and the line management for the teaching structure?**  
DM is having conversations with executive colleagues about some of the changes and therefore the order for this needs to be respected. There will be a Primary Executive Board (to include DM) which will line lead all primaries. DM explained that the clusters after much shaping and changes, through stakeholder engagement and thinking: Ruby Country (Holsworthy primaries), Holsworthy College, Okehampton College; Dartmoor Fed (three sets of 2 schools to include the following partnerships: Northlew and Boasley; Lydford with Bridestowe; Highampton and Exborne) but there will be one governance board for these groups; Three Hares; OPS and St James as a joint board. meetings with governance and staff. Heads of Schools and Headteachers will be named as Principals and Executive Principals. MW asked for the decisions to be made asap from a governance point of view in order to recruit governors to the new clusters. DM explained that he will go through the structure at Monday's Monitor and Update Meeting without the full detail. HR confirmation will follow and in the following week, DM will produce a full structure document.

**DECISION: Trustees agreed to recommend the new governance plan to Members for their approval on 30<sup>th</sup> March (unanimous votes).**

#### **4.2 Next Steps and Communication**

- TS and MT will email out the new governance plan (after Monday's Monitoring and Update meeting with AC Chairs and Trustees) with a covering email asking governors if they wish to continue to sit on the LSB under the new governance structure. MT will collate the information (gathered by the clerks) so that TS and MT can assess governor vacancies and take next steps re capacity and recruitment. Deadline Friday 12<sup>th</sup> March.
- TS asked Trustees to select 2 committees (plus one reserve) and email preferences to MT. Trustees need to highlight if they would like to be considered as a Chair of a Committee or as Vice Chair/Chair of the Board.
- TS said the governance plan will follow a journey and be sent to the RSC, EDEN for their information and then the Members for approval. The SOD would need to be amended to reflect the changes.

#### **5 Date of Next Meeting**

**Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> March at 4pm – Full Trustee Board Meeting – School Improvement Focus**

Meeting ended at 6.21pm.