

Full Trustee Board (Resources Focus) – Part I Minutes							
Date/Time	26th November 2020 4.00pm	Location		Wardhayes, Okehampton College and Virtual via Microsoft Team (due to Covid 19)			
Attendees	Initials			Attendees	Initials		
Tania Skeaping	TS	Morgen Witzel	MW	Philip Sanders	PS	Jeanette Savage	JS
John Lawlor	JL	Jane Dumeresque	JD	Graham Briscoe	GB	Hazel Fox	HF
Pete Last	PL	Chris Gould	CG	Stewart Biddles	SB		
ACTIONS							
DECISIONS							
QUESTIONS AND CHALLENGES							
In Attendance	Initials			Minutes to			
Susanne Kiff	SK	CFOO		Attendees			
Dan Morrow	DM	Associate Member		Apologies			
Melissa Trudgill	MT	Governance Manager					

Meeting started at 4.10pm

Please note that Trustees agreed for the meeting to be recorded for minute taking and it was deleted on 4.12.20.

1 - Apologies
Apologies were received from Stewart Biddles and Jeanette Savage.
2 – Declaration of Interest
All Trustees present were reminded to declare any conflict of interest that may arise during the meeting.
3 – Agree and sign off previous minutes
Minutes from: Full Trustees Meeting (SI Focus) held on 22nd October were agreed as a true record and will be signed by TS in person when Covid 19 restrictions are lifted.
4 –Matters Arising
Discussion over Red Actions:

- 4. SK/Gill Tremain to revisit the HR policies to reflect our organisation and distribute to Trustees for final approval either by email or via a Trustee Meeting. (Executive Pay Policy, pay policy, Grievance, Disciplinary)** – SK to check that the policies relate to all Trust staff or just school-based staff.
6. All of the SCRs uploaded onto SharePoint has been confirmed (Jane Lake).
9. TS has responded to ML re her email (concerns over communication) to the Trust Board.
- 10. To investigate and report back at the next meeting on those children who are on school roll but have not returned since lockdown. HF.** This had been raised at the LA over the high level of home education and HF had been able to confirm with Jane Lake re this point. It will also be included in her CEO report for the next meeting.

5 – Resources Focus

5.1 Resources Introduction

- For P1 SK and SP have devised a new format for ACs to enable them to better monitor spending. The previous format will be continued for Trustees' management figures and with the figures re-forecast.
- P1 has a lot of reversing adjustments from the year end and P2 will be looked at in more detail as SP will have looked at the forecast, pre-payments and accruals.

5.2 To Receive Management Accounts P1 and commentary

- A detailed reconciliation has been done and been presented to HF, JD and DM. A Trust balance sheet with agreed creditors and debtors and cashflow to come to Full Trustees on 10.12.20.
- SK requested again for a decision on KPIs, so they could be included in the pack as it is a requirement in the AFH. DM responded that he would be undertaking a larger piece of work around this which will develop monitoring and KPIs for each aspect of our performance (finance, operation, education).

ACTION: DM will work on a proposal to include KPIs and to include balanced scorecards (and include examples from other MATs) to present to Trust Board in the Spring Term.

- SK said she was able to grant Trustees access to the DfE benchmarking site with their own log-ins, if they wished.

ACTION: Trustees to email MT if they wished to have access to the DfE benchmarking site and she will pass these on to SK.

- DM noted that the variations seen are in line with those he is seeing in his current role – clear and large variations which are due to the situation with the pandemic. The package had shown improvement, but further work was needed around the narrative and explanations.

5.3 To receive CFOO report

- **Q MW asked for a status report on when Trustees would be able to see the risk register?** This is on the agenda for the Audit Committee and SK has worked on the business-critical risks. This will also come to Full Trustees on 10.12.20.
- Trust Champions (the meeting went into Part 2 at this point).
- DM said that there would be a Trust Press and Communications Plan which MT is working on with the external PR company.
- **Q GB asked for a reassurance that those policies shown on the policy schedule which are due for review (or coming up to) are being worked on and will be coming to the Trust Board in the near future. e.g. P8 those dated 2018 and March this year will be worked on.** SK said she would liaise with NMCD to ensure that those highlighted in yellow would be worked on, although those at the end of the list are statutory statements and reports (e.g. SCR) which are required for the website and SK will include an explanation as they currently read as being policies.
- SK asked for feedback about whether the information and format on staff absences was useful, as it was the first time that she had presented this.

ACTION Trustees to let SK know if they had any feedback on the staff absence report format or if different information would be useful.

- **Q TS asked if SK believed the pattern of staff resignations were in line with other years and if payroll and HR were being notified in good time regarding staff departures?** SK reported that since payroll has been brought in house, staff departures were being notified and processed in a timely manner, but she believed that staff leaving was higher than usual. Exit interviews had been introduced more widely and SK and GT were particularly scrutinising those staff who joined the Trust and then left in a relatively quick time span (i.e. a term). For these employees, SK was selecting a more independent person to conduct the exit interviews to ensure that an authentic discussion and explanations were had.
- **Q TS asked if this was mostly teaching or support staff?** SK replied that it was a mixture between teaching and non-teaching staff.
- DM said he believed that there were 3 main strands involved: a failure to follow through on some HR processes and induction programmes at local levels, which had also been voiced at AC meetings. Difficulties with staff understanding their training entitlements and may not feel brought in or part of the Ethos of the Trust 3. Overall resilience and stamina of colleagues within the sector dealing currently with the Covid pandemic.
- New Digital Plan is being worked on and there should be a 5-year strategic plan to present to the Executive Team soon.
- PS voiced concerns about any weakness in the induction programme, as he felt this was fundamentally important. A discussion followed on this matter. DM wanted to clarify, in response to PS's concerns, that he believed that the Trust was good at the statutory requirements and completing the processes, but he believed the Trust was less good on, the softer side of induction which made new staff feel part of the bigger picture and their role within the whole Trust.
- CG agreed with all the points around induction, but reassured the meeting that Trustees should not be too concerned as these are particularly challenging times, more so than he has known in 20 years working in the sector.
- **Q GB had asked about arrangements with staff working from home in relation to our IT licenses and accessing the school networks.** SK confirmed that all Trust networks are now cloud based so they use One Drive and Office 365 so there is no issue here.

5.4 Letter re Executives Remuneration

- Response from ESFA regarding Executives Remuneration had been circulated and was noted by Trustees.

5.6 Update on Income Pooling

- Cohesion Strategy Task and Finish group will be having a 4-hour meeting next week to discuss income pooling. **Q GB under 7.2 will we receive any notes from the Cohesion Strategy?** MT will issue Notes from the Cohesion strategy meeting for Trustees.
- JD wanted to make Trustees aware (as she had only recently become aware of this) that in theory the Trust is already committed to pooling Trust reserves and this was confirmed in the Finance Policy.
- **Q CG thought that the Trust Update meeting had gone very well and although he had originally held doubts, he now felt this was the right direction for the Trust and asked if there had been feedback since?** DM said that the consultation in the Task and Finish group around Governance and during the AC meetings which he and TS had attended, has suggested that there are 2 key issues 1. historic issues around trust and 2. around the pace of change. DM confirmed that we are trying to ensure through communication and further consultation, that everything is clear and detailed and we are taking everyone along with us.
- MW had not been aware that reserves pooling had already been agreed and thought that the ACs might not be aware of this either. SK confirmed that this statement on pooling reserves has always been in the finance policy. JL reminded Trustees that verbal assurances had been given at the time that reserves would stay with schools and although he understood that changes take place, thought there may be a journey to ensure everyone

understands. SK reminded the meeting that in the eyes of the EFSA we are one entity and if we had schools in deficit, there is the understanding that we would cover these from our deficits.

5.7 Finance and Reserves Policy

See above.

6 – Matters Brought forward at the Direction of the Chair

6.1 Reminder of Declaration of Interests

A request had been made to revisit declaration of business interest around closed societies. Previously advice from Bishop Fleming had been sought and MT got reassurance again (this time from Babcock) that there was no need to list closed societies on annual business interest forms but any conflict of interest should be raised by governors, trustees and employees when it arose either within a meeting or in operations and transactions.

7 Trustee Board

7.1 Report from Link Trustees

- MW had circulated a paper from the Three Hares. Issues of trust had been discussed at their AC meeting and there are some concerns which if they were not dealt with in an open and transparent way could leave to frustration and resentment.
- SK said she was surprised at the contents of the report as the Chair of the Three Hares attends every meeting which takes place fortnightly with the Executive Headteacher and SK goes through the finances in detail, line by line with them both. The Chair also attended every budget setting meeting with SK and SK had met with her this week. The delay in finances was due to the change in format and they did not go out until 13.11.20 and hence unfortunately missed the Three Hares AC meeting. SK has also provided a training video explaining the new report format which all ACs had received.
- South Tawton Pre School – SK has been working with EN, EU, SM on the pre-school there; it was inaccurate that the portacabin has been rejected by trustees – it has not been brought to trustees as yet. SK has commissioned a full feasibility study on the options that are available which will be accompanied with an options appraisal considering how we can bring the pre-school to not the school site whilst managing the expectations of the community.
- Head of School, Chair of AC and the Executive Headteacher have gone away to consider the options and bring back their thoughts and then this will be shared with trustees. Risks have been assessed and Joe Wood has put some measures in place to mitigate the risks.
- GB queried the appropriate channel for these questions from the Three Hares and felt that they should either come to the Chair of Trustees (governance) or the executive team (operations and leadership). DM said their views had already been expressed to himself and HF so correct channels had been followed but there was possibly frustration with the pace of resolving the issues. All agreed that the TOR for the link trustee needs to be clarified and TS reminded that the link trustee role would be discussed in the cohesion strategy WG meetings.

7.2 Report back from Task and Finish Groups

Tavistock Buildings Task and Finish Group – verbal report.

- JD said that good progress was being made and there has been more information received at the last meeting including a report from AK on what would need to be spent on Tavistock in the next 5 years (including the new build).
- AK and Tim Capps had gone back and revisited the use of the existing buildings. The new proposal still needed new builds as expected, but it gave a better understanding.
- JD said after having a better understanding of the spending needed on Tavistock it now needed to be considered alongside the needs of all the other schools; AK is working further on this and will produce the information so

that it can be presented to the Board and JD said the Board will then need to have a discussion on risk appetite as to what the bigger risks are of not doing them, the 5 year position for the whole Trust.

- The Group has authorised the initial planning applications to be submitted as it is an urgent project. Any project approvals will need to be with the full knowledge of the overall position for all the schools.
- **Q GB asked if there was any potential for funding (property repairs) from the Diocese?** SK said they have tried previously but not been successful.
- PS said that although SJ still has some concerns about the total number of classrooms, is happy with the way things are progressing.
- **Q MW asked JD why the roles of architect and project manager had been combined in one person and understood that for a project of this size, this was not considered good practise and asked what the reasoning was?** JD said at a recent meeting this had been questioned and following detailed challenges, AK and Tim had come back with satisfactory reasons for this to be met by Tim Capps. Timing and costs also had to be considered as part of this decision.
- **Q MW asked if there was sufficient internal resources AK was in a position to oversee a project of this size?** DM had also shared some concerns around the project manager role so there will be tight scrutiny and triangulation and the procurement process has been followed. SK reassured that she would be monitoring the project at every step of the way as this was a very important project for the Trust, being the first big build for the Trust.
- PS also voiced concerns about the combined role of the project management and would not recommend starting this build without a separate qualified project manager in place who can adequately scrutinise and supervise the work of all including those of the architect.

7.3 Update on Trust PR

- MT updated Trustees on the new approach to PR and her work so far with PLMR (external PR company) and said it was early days but exciting to start to introduce the new PR process for the Trust which would celebrate all the good news stories going on within the schools.
- There is work to follow on producing a social media strategy, email protocol and PR strategy.
- She was also working on a Christmas newsletter with Claire Kelly to promote a Trust wide poetry competition, introduce Dan and it was their aim to include small celebrations entries from all the schools. It would be going out to all parents in paper form and MT hoped that it would promote and inform parents that their children's school was part of a large trust family.

7.4 Update on Cohesion Strategy Consultation

- MT reported that there had been 3 out of 4 meetings discussing the cohesion strategy relating to the governance changes. MT said the one of the most positive aspects to the meetings was that representatives had come together from governance and education and really listened to each other to try and work out a restructure which has purpose for all.
- MT said the governance members had requested some more time to discuss and work out the detail. They will be forming a working group to hold a couple more meetings to shape and complete the restructure. The proposal will then come back to the Headteachers from the T & F Group so they can act as mirror to continue to refine it and ensure it is constructed. A timetable will need to be planned and task the group with working through the proposal and adding detail.
- JL added that the executive had been very positive about the Cohesion Strategy, but the governance representatives just wanted to ensure that the governance structure reflects our values and our aspirations as a MAT. MW said there is general agreement with the majority of the proposal and there are just 3-4 issues which need further discussion and then reconciling.
- TS summarised that it was likely that the new governance structure would not be introduced until Easter following the working group had developed the details further.

- It was noted that some changes to the SOD would need to be agreed at the next Full Trust Board to reflect line management changes and associated budget control changes.
- DM summarised the following: 1. in January an amendment to the SOD; 2. suspension of the formal AC meetings during the Spring Term due to the pandemic and not causing additional workload but the role of the chairs would still be providing pastoral support and 3. Jan- April encourage ACs to feed into the cohesion strategy for governance and help where needed in the schools.
- TS has offered a fortnightly open-door meeting approach between AC Chairs and herself and JD. **GB asked of there was a date which we could issue ACs with so they were clear?** TS confirmed this would be up to the last day of the Spring Term.
- MW and JL fed back the opinions they had received about the pause in formal governance and MW said it had been fairly favourably received, but with a request to manage the pause in their own way and provide the support as needed by the different Headteachers.

DECISION: Trustees agreed to suspend governance meetings at the local tier for the Spring Term, but would leave it up to colleagues at this level to decide how they want to continue their governance in terms of support for Heads and hearing the stakeholder voice and TS would open a channel of communication to Trustees through joint AC meetings.

ACTION: SK/HF to facilitate the change to the SOD to reflect line management change and the financial regulation regarding budget setting etc from 1.1.21 and then get it checked with Trust's legal advisers ready for Trustees to approve on 10.12.20.

ACTION: TS to email to ACs re the pause on formal governance meetings in the Spring Term.

- MT said that the AC Clerks could utilise this 'quieter' period of time without formal meetings to minute, to ensure all their records and housekeeping was current and the websites compliant from a governance aspect.
- PS added that it was important that this message was cascaded out effectively to all AC Governors in the right manner and tone and it not just resting with AC Chairs. This should not be just passed on by word of mouth but the emailed letter should go to every governor themselves. MT advised that TS and DM would be attending the last Tavistock AC meeting of the year and this could also be expressed in person then.

7.5 Plans for AGM 2021

- MT explained that the next AGM would be in January in order to meet the deadline for posting the Annual Trust reports by 31.1.21 (extended by 1 month this year due to Covid pandemic) on Companies House. The AGM would be a closed meeting as DfE specifies with Members only (Trustees can attend to listen). Next year the AGM could be attached to the last Trustee meeting of the year where the audit committee papers are discussed and approved so Members can attend a Trust Board Meeting and hear the discussion.

8. Policies/Documents – Review and Approve

Policy Updates Tracker

Executive Pay Policy

DECISION: Trustees reviewed and approved this policy.

Pay Policy

TS raised at the end it has teacher's standard but not headteachers standards. DM said to keep it as is but next year it will go via a Pay and People committee. Headteacher standards need to be included on p26.

DECISION: Trustees reviewed and approved this policy

H&S Policy

DECISION: Trustees reviewed and approved this policy

Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions and Administration of Medicines Policy

DECISION: Trustees reviewed and approved this policy

Equality and Diversity Policy

DECISION: Trustees reviewed and approved this policy subject to one amendment: the range for the CEO at the bottom of the page is inaccurate.

Lettings Policy

DECISION: Trustees reviewed and approved this policy

Appraisal Policy

P8 re line management of the Headteachers – from 1.1.21 this will need to reflect the change for next year. DM said we should approve this year’s policy and next year’s policy from 1.1.21 with this amendment.

DECISION: Trustees reviewed and approved this current policy (for 2020) and the revised policy with this amendment noted from 1.1.21.

Intimate Care Policy

DECISION: Trustees reviewed and approved this policy.

9 Academy Committee – Minutes

To include:

AC Questions

- **Q MW asked whether a response had been given to Tavistock AC regarding their queries on their finances raised in their minutes?** TS confirmed that a verbal response had been given but a written statement would need to be produced so it can be included in their minutes.

OPS AC Minutes – 12.10.20

Tavistock AC Minutes – 21.10.20

Three Hares AC Mins – 14.10.20

Approval for 2 new governor applications

DECISION: Trustees approved the 2 new governor applications at Holsworthy.

Announcement of new staff governor

Trustees were pleased to learn about the new staff governors at Dartmoor Federation AC. (no approval needed as only one staff candidate proposed).

10 – Date of Next Meeting

Audit Committee Meeting 3.11.20

Ethos Committee Meeting 8.12.20

Full Trustee Board (School Improvement Focus) Meeting 10.12.20

The meeting ended at 6.10pm

The meeting then proceeded with Part 2 confidential meeting.

ACTION TABLE – from meeting 26.11.20

No.	WHO	WHAT	
1	Gill Tremain	To design and implement the Staff Absence Report for Summer Term	Autumn Term
2	MT	To produce a yearly summary of meeting reviews by Trustees to understand common issues raised.	As part of Board Evaluation – Autumn Term
3	SK/JL/JD	SK to review last year’s benchmarking information on the new ESFA portal and share with Trustees at Audit Committee as a training exercise.	December

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4	SK/Gill Tremain	SK/Gill Tremain to revisit the HR policies to reflect our organisation and distribute to Trustees for final approval either by email or via a Trustee Meeting. (Executive Pay Policy, Pay policy, Grievance, Disciplinary)	DONE
5	MT/TS	To provide and work on a model TOR for the full AC boards.	Autumn Term
6	Jane Lake/SK	To ensure that all SCR uploaded onto SharePoint by the start of term (password protected).	DONE
7	TS/DM	To consider setting up a HR committee, which reports to the Full Trustee Board, in the future.	January 2021
8	HF/MT	HF will forward to MT the contact details of the DFLS so MT is able to email them formal confirmation of DMAT approval. (HF/MT)	DONE
9	TS	To send response to Chair of Dartmoor Federation ACs replying to her email	DONE
	HF	To investigate and report back at the next meeting on those children who are on school roll but have not returned since lockdown.	DONE
11	SK	To share the risk register report at the next audit committee meeting	3.12.20
12	All Trustees	To email MT if they wished to have access to the DfE benchmarking site and she will pass these on to SK.	ASAP
13	All Trustees	To let SK know if they had any feedback on the staff absence report format or if different information would be useful.	ASAP
14	HF/SK	To facilitate the change to the SOD to reflect line management change and the financial regulation regarding budget setting etc from 1.1.21 and then get it checked with Trust's legal advisers ready for Trustees to approve on 10.12.20.	10.12.20
15	TS	To email to ACs re the pause on formal governance meetings in the Spring Term.	ASAP
16	DM	To work on a proposal to include KPIs and to include balanced scorecards (and include examples from other MATs) to present to Trust Board in the Spring Term.	Spring Term