

Full Trustee Board (Resource Focus) – Part I Minutes							
Date/Time	19 th December 2019 4.00pm		Location		Okehampton College		
Attendees	Initials			Attendees	Initials		
Ian Courtney	IC	Tania Skeaping	TS	Jeanette Savage	JS	Daryll Chapman	DC
John Lawlor	JL	Jane Dumeresque	JD	Graham Briscoe	GB	Amanda French	AF
Philip Sanders	PS						

Apologies	Initials	Reason
Rebecca Ledger	RL	Work Commitment

ACTIONS
DECISIONS
QUESTIONS AND CHALLENGES

In Attendance	Initials	
Susanne Kiff	SK	CFOO
Hazel Fox	HF	Vice CEO
Melissa Trudgill	MT	Governance Manager

Minutes to
Attendees
Apologies

Meeting started at 4.10pm

1 - Apologies
MT confirmed apologies had been received from RL.

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 28 th November 2019 were agreed and signed as correct by IC.

4 – Matters Arising

Trustees reviewed the action table from the meeting on 28th November 2019 and MT will update the table to display actions completed.

5 – Resource Focus

5.1 Resources Introduction

JD thanked SK and her team on behalf of the Trustees. JD voiced concern that SK still had too much work which she was undertaking herself, when it could be delegated to her team. This meant that unfortunately reports were delayed getting to Trustees and there was not sufficient time for them to consider them before meetings.

Concerns were also raised that some of the reports were presented in a too detailed format, making the numbers difficult to get to grips with. All agreed that they wanted to see what the differences were in a clear structure.

The following points were discussed:

- Current summary of 16 schools on 5 spreadsheets with a summary sheet of the DMAT would be easier to review.
- Income section we can see the variance is 4% different to what we were expecting which is acceptable and did not raise concern.
- The Resource Chair JD said it was about working smart rather than working hard. The aim is to get to the stage that we look at these reports and can immediately see the areas of worry to focus on. By expanding the report categories we can now easily answer our own questions on the variances. There is still more work to do.
- Presentation of cash balance to be revised to show all cash balances whether invested or not.
- JD has spoken with SK about her team tidying up the creditors and debtors.
- However, the Audit demonstrated that positive changes were occurring. DC said that the change is happening but it is taking time – DC said compared to other MATs we are making good progress and we are confident with the progress we have made. DC explained it was important to recognise the capacity of SK and in particular in HF's absence. There have been immense issues around buildings, which have used up a lot of time.
- SK said there is a discrepancy between Trustees not wanting to see too many pages but auditors recommending that Trustees do need to see all the pages. We have to get the right balance of detail which Trustees require and need.
- All agreed with the Resources Chair that this is not a criticism of SK at all and that the Trustees want to support SK. JD asked the question whether more could be done to support SK as she had concern that SK was under too much stress and a heavy workload which should be delegated more effectively. SK was a valuable asset within DMAT and all were concerned that SK's wellbeing must be paramount.
- Period 2 to date show the actual figures. **A Trustee commented that there used to be a year-end forecast document and asked whether there were any plans to have this again in the future?** SK responded that at the moment the software does not have that capability. The software will be tested in January/ February and hopefully this report will be forthcoming next year.
- Clarification was sought regarding spreadsheet 5 P2 forecast projecting -£570,000 loss for the combined trust for this financial year. Executive team were asked to propose a way to balance the figures. SK hoped that the late adjustments to figures that happened last year due to inaccurate budget imports would not recur.
- **Questions regarding cashflow on Appendix 1 – money market investments on a rolling overnight £3 million investment.** The Trustees thought that this was not useful for the Board to see but would like to see the overall figures which would be more meaningful.
- SK is having regular meetings with the Headteachers and they are developing a greater understanding of finance so the training is paying off. The Headteachers have reported that they feel well supported and appreciate the regular contact with the Executive Team.

- **A Trustee asked if there is anything which should be highlighted as a matter of concern?** SK said that the main concern was for next year as most of the DMAT schools are forecasting an in-house deficit. In January we will need to do some hard work with them. **Can we take on this action without having an adverse effect on the teaching?** It will be difficult in some schools and Headteachers may have to lower their expectations but it is achievable in some of the smaller schools. The important aspect is that the Headteachers are committed in the year to look at their staffing and budgets.
- A Trustee remarked that the focus should be on looking at this year's expenditure before thinking about next year's budget. The Trustee Board must issue a directive to DMAT Schools to produce a balanced budget. **Headteachers know that this is required so a Trustee asked why are they still putting in a deficit budget?** SK responded that it was almost impossible to set a 3-year balanced budget. She reminded Trustees that the MAT is only 18 months old. In January conversations will be had reminding the Headteachers that they may have to make some difficult decisions for implementation in September 2020. We have issued a requirement from this Board that every school will set a balanced budget but DC looks at this budget and worries where the funds will be stripped from. Rhetoric is always about balanced budget, but the reality is we have gone back to the bones and that is why in the scheme of delegation this has been addressed and is a focus.

5.2 To Monitor Budget and Report

SK informed the plan regarding payroll. DCC have moved over to a system called iTrent. Unfortunately, there have been some issues with iTrent, which have impacted on SK and her team's workload and DCC have had to close down some of the systems. DMAT has been working on trying to bring payroll in-house and some team members are having training on this. There will be a dual run of the payroll with DCC and then a transfer to solely ourselves from the new financial year. SK is confident that we can run the payroll more efficiently in house and there will be a financial saving (Currently DMAT pays DCC £55k for doing the payroll). DC has complained to Dawn Stabb about iTrent. We are protecting ourselves with 3-month shadowing.

5.3 Update on Capital Projects

SK will circulate this report when it has been completed. DC has emailed the EFSA deputy directors regarding quality of Tavistock College's buildings. They have responded sympathetically and said they would like to help us move forward on resolving this but still recommend using the school conditions allocation money. DC, AK and JW have drafted a reply. If we do not have any assistance in the next financial year then DMAT will have to close parts of the buildings.

ACTION: The Trustees supported the letter being sent to the EFSA.

There has been a hint that DMAT should have looked at it at the time of due diligence. However, we had poor surveys from Devon NPS. Although feedback from AK, demonstrates that the original NPS surveys showed more problems than the more recent ones.

Regarding the Tavistock pitch – it had been a condition of the FA grant that there should be a sinking fund to resurface the pitch. It will be tested in August; if it fails, then the pitch will need to be resurfaced and DMAT will need to find the £200,000. If the pitch had been regularly and well maintained then the upcoming survey may determine that it does not require work, but unfortunately it has not been regularly maintained, so it is likely to require expenditure. We do not have any legal right not to fund the pitch resurfacing.

5.4 To consider and review small school leadership structure.

SK and DC have been working on this and modelled 7-8 different versions – e.g. looked at combining some of the Dartmoor and Holsworthy schools but it could be to the detriment of the Holsworthy area. Options such as one headteacher overseeing 2 schools with no executive headteacher was also considered and seems like the most cost-effective way forward. The model of having a tier of an executive head has cost implications, but works in structures as the Three Hares cluster. It is important that these posts are attractive for recruitment. DC will circulate a report including the many different, possible variations with his recommendations. IC explained that we may need to consider more creative solutions – like merging some of the smaller schools, which are not viable currently.

A Trustee raised that there will be the risk that the MAT might lose the income of some pupils as they may go elsewhere to different schools. It is a moral dilemma and the Trustees need to consider whether we are doing the right thing for the pupils

in small schools where there are mixed year classes. However, these communities do not have good transport links and no-one would be happy for a 3-year-old to get on a minibus to travel to their nearest school and nursery. All are aware that closing village schools is damaging to the communities and villages where the schools are the focal point and hub of the community. From a business point of view, it is not a good business move to keep maintaining these small schools and they need to be educationally and financially viable. All agreed that closing them/merging them would be a last resort and not the initial ethos of DMAT.

ACTION: For a working group of Trustees to look at the small school leadership structure going forward. Interested Trustees should contact HF and she will organise a meeting in January. HF

5.5 SRMA Report

Self-explanatory report and has led to some good discussions with the Secondary Headteachers. One area it has looked at is the continued use of SIMS and we will be looking at a change particularly in the primary schools. This can be moved on quite quickly. Aspire have removed SIMS and are using Arbour. It would create some savings - £25,000 across all schools – other savings is relating to staffing. The cost of staffing will continue to go up on top of pension and inflationary costs. Tavistock has quite expensive teaching costs but they have staff who have been with the College for a long period of time so this is out of the Trust's control; it was agreed that we cannot control the staff costs who stay within the MAT and receive pay rises.

5.6 Ensure ACs have completed pay reviews

SK confirmed that pay reviews have been completed by all ACs.

6 Audit Committee

6.1 Audit Report with Management Comments

The Trustees thanked JL for his report with management comments which had been circulated. This year's audit had been very good with no major concerns. Last year there had been 2 red rag rated issues plus ambers and greens, but all red items have been resolved.

6.2 To approve and sign Annual Accounts

The Annual Accounts were approved (Proposed by PS and seconded by GB). It was noted that the auditors had been very complementary with SK and her team. They had commented on SK's professional response to the auditors' questions. The Letter of Representation was approved by the Trustees (Proposed by GB and seconded by TS).

7 Matters Brought Forward at the Direction of the Chair

Tavistock Athletics Club Proposal – There was another meeting in early December with SK and IC present. The terms of a licence agreement were discussed to include the hours of usage and which expenses would be whose responsibility. The ownership of items of equipment was also determined and the agreement was going to be sent back to the solicitors. Outstanding issues which AK will clarify with Michelmores.

The meeting then went into Part 2.

Schedule of meeting dates

The annual meeting dates had been revised by MT and IC to reflect the Trustees' previous decision to hold one meeting per month only. MT will set the draft dates for 2020/2021 in early Spring (to include no late July date or late December date). After formal approval by the Trustees, this will then be distributed to the ACs so that they have plenty of time to set their own meeting cycles.

It was also confirmed that the Audit committee will maintain a specific membership (with other Trustees always welcome to attend meetings). The membership was confirmed as JL, GB, JD and RL. Attendance data for Trustees will reflect this.

Report from Safeguarding Lead focusing on SCR compliance

The Trustees thanked Jane Lake for the comprehensive report. The following comments were made:

- A Trustee raised concern that Lydford and Exborne Primary Schools were still rag rated as red. It was confirmed that since Jane's last visit, Exborne had gone green but Lydford is still red, but SK said she was confident this will soon be rectified.
- **A Trustee asked if there were dates set to return to schools which were currently amber, as amber was still not good enough in this very important area?** Yes, this will be undertaken and it was positive that Jane was going into the Schools; the ACs should be challenging and checking. SCR is the responsibility of the ACs, Jane Lake (as designated Safeguarding Lead) and the Executive Headteachers to monitor.
- A Trustee challenged whether as a Board of Trustees, we are sure that the Headteachers and ACs have had the appropriate learning and training in this area and queried why their SCRs were not accurate. Jane is giving the ACs training as to what look for at governance level.
- Tavistock College has gone green and can be used as an example of good practice
- **A Trustee noted from the report that 7 incidents were reported under pupil safety, which seemed quite a high number. Do we have confidence that schools are using the same judgements e.g. to do with safe-handling? Trustees asked how the incidents were being recorded, were the numbers getting better or worse and whether, if the numbers were increasing, if this was due to a higher profile? Also how secure are the recording systems?**
- There was confusion from the report regarding behaviours and exclusion – confusion over green and yellow categories. Has the number of internal exclusions gone up or down?
- Concern was raised over attendance amongst SEN children in particular at secondary schools. HF has scheduled a meeting in February as there was not enough information on persistent absence. HF wants to provide the Trustees with more secure data and she will meet with attendance leads and EWOs. A debate ensued about whether the SOL programme, used at Okehampton College, would be effective in Holsworthy College and Tavistock College.

8 Trustee Board

8.1 Governance Conference and the Scheme of Delegation -

DC will circulate the updated questions and answers document to MT to circulate to Trustees. He wished it to be noted that the answers were draft and were the opinion of the Executive Team, at this stage, so should not be distributed until Trustees had reviewed them.

The SoD Working Group meeting will be on 29th January and will give a final opportunity to ensure the draft SoD is amended, up to date and all have made their contributions. Claire Kelly will send the latest SoD to all Trustees via MT.

MT had received suggestions from Christina Mabin and DC had noted those which were appropriate.

8.2 Schools joining the Trust

DC was approached in November by Brixham College and Furzham Primary School, showing an interest in joining DMAT. They had made an initial approach because they shared a similar ethos to the MAT. DC had met with the Headteachers and then asked the RSC for their opinion, in light of the Schools' different geographical area. The RSC has not been able to comment at the moment because of the pending election.

Milton Abbot Primary School has also shown an early interest in DMAT. This School feeds into Tavistock College.

A Trustee questioned whether there was currently too much work and changes taking place to consider extending the MAT. DC explained that these were early conversations and he had been approached by the interested parties. He thought whilst it was important to consolidate what we have achieved, there was always the positive aspect of moving forward and more schools might be needed in the long term. A lot had been learnt from due diligence. Many Trustees agreed that although this might be a plan for the future, we seem short of leadership resource and it was important not to move too quickly.

St James update - At this point in the meeting IC declared an interest as a member of the Okehampton Skills and Sports Trust and as Chair of St James Academy Trust.

IC had written to DCC last week regarding the delay in planning approval being granted and whether DCC can issue the lease in the meantime with DMAT taking on the risk involved. This is an urgent matter and affects the School's promise to the community regarding nursery and wrap around provision.

The Governing Board of St James had met and DC was verbally requested to combine the governing body of Okehampton Primary and St James Primary Schools. DC had met with the Chair of Okehampton Primary AC and the Headteacher of St James. All are in full support of this.

DC has asked the Chair of Okehampton Primary AC, Richard Parsons, to hold a meeting of the governing bodies of both primary schools by the end of January, with the proposal of collapsing them to form one full governing board. The hope is that this would be operational by the end of February half term. The idea will be that St James will be part of a cluster, ready for when it comes into DMAT. An IEB will need to be put in place. Some Governors of Okehampton Primary may have concerns regarding potential risks as St James has yet to be included in the MAT. HF was concerned that St James had been managing with an interim governing board. The two Governing Boards will probably be reconstituted into one rather than recruiting. This will hopefully resolve some of the current issues amongst Okehampton Primary with a board which has too many staff governors so it is a good time to dissolve and reconstitute.

8.3 Trustee Visits

IC will undertake visits twice a year and will circulate the dates, in case other Trustees wish to join him. He commented that MT, JL and himself had undertaken a very positive visit recently of the Three Hares Schools. There was real value with the Trustees being seen and engaging with School Staff.

8.4 Feedback on Complaints Made

The new complaints process is active and so far, proving successful. The new policy was resolved and acted upon at the local level, more quickly than expected. The complaints which were already in the system, prior to the new policy, are proving time-consuming.

ACTION: MT will organise some in-house training involving those who had been involved in complaints handling and invite AC members who now had more responsibility in this area.

9. Policies/Documents – Review and Approve

9.1 Risk Management Policy

This was approved but please note amendment under 6.1 – NM to please check the wording, as there is the mention of a different trust.

This was then approved by the Trustee Board subject to the above amendment.

A Trustee asked where is the risk register on the portal and asked if the document could be emailed? SK responded that it is not a document but a software programme. In the future there will be access to a dashboard and Trustees will have a log in.

9.2 Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions

This was approved by the Trustee Board.

9.3 CCTV Policy

This was approved by the Trustee Board.

9.4 Staff Expenses Policy

This was approved by the Trustee Board.

9.5 Acceptable Use Staff (Staff and Pupils)

Concern had been raised amongst the ACs regarding the wording of this policy. It was suggested to adopt the following under 2.6 after any such damageunless it can be attributed to reasonable wear and tear.

This was then approved by the Trustee Board subject to the above amendment.

10 Academy Committee – Minutes

This item was taken as a whole.

The Trustees thanked Tavistock AC for their completed skills matrices.

All AC minutes had been read and items noted.

MT raised there were some areas in the AC minutes where despite the AC Clerk not naming pupils, there was still a case of identification being possible. All agreed that in these instances the meeting and minutes should have gone into Part 2.

ACTION: MT will discuss this with the AC clerks.

A Trustee asked if the Headteachers have a standard report which they send to their ACs. It was considered good practice and time saving to have a standard document across the MAT and perhaps a standard safeguarding section would also be recommended and prove time-saving.

11 – Date of Next Meeting

- The date of the next Full Trustees Meeting (SI Focus) 30.01.20**

The meeting closed at 6.42pm.

Action Table from 19/12/2019		
WHO	WHAT	WHEN
IC/PS	To arrange a walk around with Geoffrey Cox at Tavistock College. (delayed due to election)	ASAP
HF	To organise a working group to look at the small school leadership structure going forward.	JAN
JL/IC	To carry out final independent review of Executive Team Pay Policy	DONE
MT	To remind the AC Clerks for the continued need to move into Part 2 meeting and minutes if there is any identifiable discussion regarding pupils, parents of staff.	ASAP
IC	To write to the Chair of Tavistock Governors chair to request sight of full Academy Committee skills audit by Christmas.	DONE
MT	To organise some in-house training involving those who had been involved in complaints handling and invite AC members who now had more responsibility in this area.	Spring Term
IC	To report in full to Trustees regarding Tavistock Athletics Club (once meeting has occurred).	DONE
NM	To provide Records Management Policy for Trustees	ASAP
JS/IC	To prepare a draft report and forward it to IC in time for the AGM	Jan 2020
SK	To design and implement the Staff Absence Report for Autumn term 2	Spring term
AK	To check the surveys carried out at on Tavistock College at the time of transfer need and compare these surveys by NPS (2 years ago) with the current one.	DONE
AF/SK	To have a meeting to unpick the issues involved with Tavistock Athletics track and AF will produce a diagrammatic diagram including issues, impact and timelines and then report back to the Trustees. AF will liaise with IC to see what the position was currently	ASAP
TS	To ask Dartmoor Federation AC to prepare an update on the project for the Trustee Board.	30/1/20

DC	To remind Headteachers to go to their AC with any future plans or projects in the first instance then bring to Trustees after discussion.	DONE
DC	To provide SEND report from HCC for Trustees' review.	ASAP
SK/JW	To report back after discussion with Health and Safety Portfolio Lead re use of inhalers in emergency situations.	DONE
SK/JANE LAKE	Update from JL for the next meeting with an update regarding SCR compliance.	DONE
JL	Safeguarding Portfolio Lead to provide a report for every Trustee meeting going forward.	ONGOING
SK	To send the draft Scheme of Delegation to solicitors for them to review.	AFTER WORKING GROUP MEETING
MT	To distribute all questions and answers from the Governance Conference once they are fully typed up and any few remaining questions have been forwarded to the Panel for answering.	ASAP
DC	To provide a document tracking complaints so Trustees could easily see their progress through the system.	ASAP
MT/IC	To review the frequency of meetings for the remainder of the year.	19.12.19
MT/IC	To investigate the possibility of providing a conference call facility at meetings.	ASAP
GB	To provide for SK an example of a specimen which contained three levels of risk (risk appetite) for inclusion in Risk Management Policy.	ASAP
MT/TS	To request skills audit from Dartmoor Federation AC and demonstrate detail of new governors' appointments skills set to meet the skills required in the AC.	30/1/20
MT	To produce a yearly summary of meeting reviews by Trustees to understand common issues raised.	End of 2019-2020