

Full Trustee Board (Resources Focus) – Part I Minutes

Date/Time	11th February 2021 4.00pm	Location	Virtual meeting via Microsoft Team (due to Covid 19)
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Attendees:

Tania Skeaping (Chair)	TS	Morgen Witzel	MW	Philip Sanders	PS	Pete Last	PL
John Lawlor	JL	Jeanette Savage	JS	Graham Briscoe	GB	Dan Morrow	DM
Jane Dumeresque (Vice Chair)	JD	Chris Gould	CG				

ACTIONS
DECISIONS
QUESTIONS AND CHALLENGES

In Attendance	Initials				Minutes to
Susanne Kiff	SK	CFOO			Attendees
Melissa Trudgill	MT	Company Secretary/ Executive Liaison Facilitator			Apologies
Hazel Fox	HF	Vice CEO			

Apologies	Initials	Reason
Stewart Biddles	SB	Work Commitment
Amanda French	AF	Maternity Leave

Meeting started at 4.07pm

Please note that Trustees agreed for the meeting to be recorded for minute taking and it was deleted on 24.02.21.

1 - Apologies
Apologies were received from Stewart Biddles and Amanda French and these were sanctioned.
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 21st January were agreed as a true record and will be signed by TS in person when Covid 19 restrictions are lifted.
4 –Matters Arising
See update to actions in table below.
5 – Resources Focus
5.1 Resources Introduction

- JD stressed the importance and need for a separate Resources Committee to carefully scrutinise the finance policy, the management accounts and the Financial SOD.
- JD explained that the delay in receiving the Period 4 consolidated accounts is due to the work being done on a new format and Alex Richardson, the new Finance Director, will be doing some work on this. However, all the Schools have had their income and expenditure statements and therefore are able to ask questions of their HTs.
- JD has set dates for Resource Leads Meetings for the Spring Term.

5.2 To receive Management Accounts P4 and commentary

None received – reasons as above.

5.3 To receive CFOO report

- SK explained that the production of the management accounts will be taken over by AR for the short term whilst the team decides what format is needed.
- **Q JD asked as a benchmark re total staff days lost and for comparison, what was the equivalent for last year? This would be useful to know i.e. the proportion which is Covid related.** SK said it would not be possible to do an accurate comparison as the Trust did not have a dashboard to collate this data. Going forward, Arbour and Every for HR would make this much simpler and enable comparisons to be undertaken with a detailed analysis possible (e.g. different staff categories and different reasons). SK confirmed that much of the absence is Covid related.
- DM said re the MIS - the lack of ability to record, monitor and then report data was problematic but Arbour for the pupil and staff information, Every HR package and new SI package will be able to provide the necessary information and reports going forward. The amount of work required to provide direct comparisons currently, would be time consuming, but going forward, there will be greater visibility with the new packages in place.
- **Q JD re GDPR with a new issue for 2020/21, how do we make this a priority for staff as she was concerned about the penalties if we do not get it right.**
- **Q JD had found the benchmark data useful – were there any points which SK wanted it raise? JD had realised that the property values per pupil seemed quite low compared to the other schools, but it was important to look at the median rather than the average as large property costs throw the figures out.** SK and DM explained that the church schools are zero rated, but they are still included as buildings, so we are negatively affected in the way it aggregates that.
- We do have a large spend in our support and administration staff but the way we do our recharge and coding is out of step compared to others and how we recognise some internal recharges as part of the pooling piece, there are some aspects which should not be included under administration staff.
- **Q JL said within the policy information, it appeared there are 10 policies overdue for review and approval?** SK said the schedule had been passed from NMCD to a new member of staff so it was not as up to date as it should have been.
- **Q Would there be some GDPR training available for Trustees?** The training modules may be available through Educare. DM said that we will need to revisit the Trust's position as it needs to be a culture point rather than just a compliance issue. The policy needs to be revisited to ensure that we are not overdoing the statutory requirements whilst ensuring it is effective and the importance of how it is seen by leaders and in everything we do.

ACTION: SK will ask NMCD if there is some current GDPR training available for Trustees.

- **Q GB asked for any developments regarding the new Tavistock build?** No new developments.
- **Q Was there any update regarding the tribunal mentioned previously (but not in the report)?** HF said that was resolved.
- GB said it was a very good CFOO report and thought it was an example of best practice.
- TS remarked upon the incredible achievement of the decarbonisation grant.
- **Q TS asked SK what the process would be this year for the SCA?** SK had spoken to AK as there had been a 5-year plan around the Tavistock build which had come to the Trust Board. DM will meet with SK and AK and then SK will

come back to the Board about the next steps. JD reminded that there were dates set in March for a Resource Leads' Meeting where this year's SCA process could be outlined.

ACTION: SK/DM to report to the Board on 18th March about the process around the SCA allocations.

ACTION: SK/TS to discuss setting a date with AC Chairs for SCA discussion.

5.4 To approve Finance Policy and Financial SOD

- JD and TS had forwarded queries to SK but only in recent days so it was decided to forward this item to the next meeting on 18th March. There were also changes to make which had occurred after submission of the document such as adjustment re the Trust Accountant etc. Trustees would forward any comments to MT to forward on to SK.

ACTION: SK to bring finance policy (to include reserves policy) and financial SOD to the next meeting.

- TS said, in order to manage the email flow to the CEO, emails should be sent to MT FAO of DM. She will collate them for his attention in a weekly session.

6 – Matters Brought forward at the Direction of the Chair

None.

7 Trustee Board

7.1 Report by CEO and Strategic Masterplan

- DM said he had given a lot of time to get things established during the Autumn Term, support the transition and build the team with SK and HF. He reminded Trustees that it was important to frame the expectations and the work streams that are being undertaken. Amongst this, this has been in the context of returning to remote learning, the back drop of the pandemic and contradictions on government policies.
- This is a direction and an emerging strategy; a collection of thoughts based on the transition period and where we have got to as an emerging team. The MAT is becoming the new civic structure. A strategy could not have been created in 5 weeks nor until DM had spoken to key stakeholders such as children and parents which was not possible during the pandemic.
- Our leaders have really understood and appreciated about what it means to be in a family of schools, being part of a MAT. However, this is not the case yet for parents and children and although there has been some 'wins' around FSM and deliveries and there is a greater understanding of what the Trust can be, this is being fleshed out now. However, what we will need to do is drill into some much tighter planning so we have KPIs and milestones.
- DM explained that we must deliver on our charitable objective which is much more than the children who are in our schools. It is also about framing a proposition which is much more enticing and civic as public service as this is public money and the expectation from the DfE is that we will be framing civic structures. This will fulfil our ethical and moral obligations under the Charity Commission.
- DM will also be informing Trustees of his decisions around the executive and teaching structures. These pieces of work would be easier if there were committees to work with, on specific areas of work. Decisions will be made from the right value base and strategic, civic and local understanding. DM said it was important to understand roles very clearly – the CEO will form the strategy and the Board will receive and hold strategy.
- **Q GB said he had heard that the mission, vision and values were being discussed within the leadership teams in the schools. He voiced concern if the proposal for the mission, vision and values came forward, without the Board having had an input into that, as he feels this is the responsibility of the Board.** DM agreed with this, however the Board has held the mission vision and values for the last 3 years but has not managed to cascade them effectively throughout the organisation so DM has made the initial premise that the Board does hold the mission vision and values which he was appointed on and which has been shared and discussed and is now ensuring that the executive teams understand, refresh and own them and then these will be shared again with the Board.
- **Q JL considered whether all Trustees fully understood the vision of the Trust and what it means and thought a half day to ensure that we have all signed up to that vision and all appreciate the same, wider direction and meaning that DM has spoken about.** DM and TS agreed with this suggestion. DM has asked Leora Crudas, CEO of CST to come and facilitate a half day with the whole Board around what it really means to be a civic trust. DM believes through her wisdom and clarity on how MATs can be used as new educational structure for change and transformation, the Board can revisit our values through her framing and tie in the executives work on vision and values.

- **Q JD found the direction of travel really helpful in DM's paper and asked when did he think would have the depth and detail in the plan i.e. ideas on 'what does good like', what will it cost, when are we going to get there and what are the risks?** DM said there had been some aspects which had caused delay i.e. lack of committees to undertake important bespoke work, but he reminded that there would not be one big structure plan, but incremental changes, which will feed through into an overall strategy. Some of the big changes will have a cost impact such as getting everyone onto a Trust contract.
- **Q JD asked when will the Board receive KPIs so Trustees know where we are trying to get to and how we measure whether we have got there or we have not?** DM said the KPIs will be ready by next half term in an initial format but not tied into Arbour (new MIS), as they will be going forward, so that monitoring will be easier. DM wants some strategic goals agreed around short, medium and long term and that is why the Trust Development Plan will have a 6-month deliverable, which KPIs can be assessed against until the 3-5-year plan is produced.
- DM said that the KPIs should strategically link to the Board Committees TORs, which in turn will be linked to the SOD which is the articulation of the Trust's Articles.
- **Q CG asked how will DM make sure that he is bringing the Schools on board with him, during what is a very challenging time? CG completely understands that there needs to be change, but obviously it is in balance between what schools are facing right now?** DM said that the leaders are on board, are passionate and fully supportive and it was important now to unite the strands so all understand that it is one team with one approach. HF added that DM has put the HTs in control and empowered them to take the lead and direction and they are impassioned about the visioning work.

ACTION: DM to bring KPIs to Board Committees in the 2nd half of the Summer Term.

- GB added that he thought Covid had brought a new meaning to 'community' and understood the civic role of the MAT with the focus of Dartmoor, not as a collection of schools but as a region.
- **PL said he was excited to read all of DM's documents and asked about the CST paper on 'school trusts as new civic structures' as at the end of the document, there is a template to submit case studies – would DMAT be doing this?** DM confirmed this and had discussed this with Leora Cruddas. DM believes DMAT will be a case study for what it means to be a true civic trust with children, community and a longer sense of sustainable transformation at the heart of all that the Trust is doing.
- **Q PS asked for reassurance on the Trust's HR systems and that we have an understanding about the impact of Covid related stress on staff and then on top of this, the change occurring in the Trust. Do we have a facility to capable to monitor these issues closely?** DM responded that SK was taking a lead on HR with the improved capacity on finance and there would be: 1) changes in our partnership arrangements with HR, 2) an interim People Director will be sought to oversee and manage the transfer to Trust contracts 3) Browne Jacobson will be doing a whole piece on the legal front to advise on staff contracts.
- **Q JL asked how would the new governance plan become in sync with the teaching structure?** DM said he would discuss this with MT and ensure that the governance and educationalists are brought back into balance. MT said that the information around the clusters will not delay the new governance plan being approved and put into place but would have an impact on the amount of LSBs and hence the recruitment of new governors for additional Boards. DM said he could not have made decisions about the structures and groupings until he had met the HTs and spent time with them during the last 5 weeks.
- **Q TS asked for the latest update on the Teaching School.** DM said the previous ideas may have to be altered as the new approach to teaching school hubs is to move away from the teaching school alliance/national leader of education model towards the MAT sector becoming the focus for SI. Locally there are 3 points: we have a strong proposition from the LA in Babcock and we can act as a delivery party in the teaching school hubs but it does not have to be through DTSA, but can be as a MAT and we can consider putting DTSA into a separate company model and then we can see ourselves as a training entity on our side and then we are a delivery partner in the teaching school and create some distance between the two. When the interim structures come to an end 3-5 years, we will need to have our own training proposition.
- **Q CG agreed firstly with DM that Babcock was a strong provider and secondly said that clearly the direction was about making links with national organisations e.g. Maths hubs. He added that this was an area which he was enthusiastic and interested in, can be developed and he had the links already.**
- TS thanked Sarah Jones for her Cooperative Leadership paper circulated to Trustees.

ACTION: TS asked for any comments on the Cooperative Leadership paper to go to MT.

7.2 Counselling Service Proposal

- DM said there would be 3 strands: to look at the provision for children and how a new service could go across the whole Trust; to look at provision for staff (improved signposting to inform staff of the good offer available through various partnerships and service with the Trust); to look at what the provision is for the wider community and look at gaps in these areas. There have been some signposting pieces on the services for the community already.
- DM has found that there are some good services for children, but it is quite fragmented and different from school to school.
- The proposal is to have a contract with Place to Be, which will be able to provide in school counselling, referral counselling and on the telephone. It is unknown at the moment, the effect of the lockdowns on our children. When they return their will be a repair and a renewal piece and some will need professional mental health support.
- JD stated that although she had concerns about the recent expenditures and would like to have a framework about the recent costs, she felt that this was a necessary and vital expenditure and supported this cost.
- DM said that as soon as Alex Richardson has got the system embedded, there will be a sharper focus and he would be able to inform on this in the next 3-4 weeks.
- TS asked for the Reserves Policy to include a formula for calculating reserves and will need to be brought to the Board asap. JD said there is currently no structure around the reserves and feels this is an urgent piece of work as there is no basis to benchmark against and structure is required.

DECISION: Trustees gave approval for DM to explore counselling service options for children.

7.3 Review and Approval of Business-Critical Risk Register

For information for Trustees. This will be approved at the next Audit Meeting on 1.4.21. JL asked for any comments to be forwarded to him as Chair of the Audit Committee. In the meantime, it can be used as a working document if needed.

7.4 Update on income pooling and governance restructure plan

SK updated Trustees that the Income Pooling WG had met twice and the next meeting will be looking at how would it look like in practical terms. There will be 2 further meetings after this and then SK will be able to report to the Board.

DM said that the term to use now will be 'pooling' instead of income pooling as it covers reserves pooling, cost pooling as well as income.

ACTION: SK will provide update to Trustees on pooling proposal at the next meeting.

Q JD asked how does the timing of the WG meetings fit in with our original proposal to introduce pooling in 21/22 and the related budget setting timetable? Is the timing still possible to be introduced in the next academic year as previously proposed? SK said due to some delays in the finance department structure, SK, DM and AR will be starting to focus on the budget work and it is still possible to introduce pooling in September. April had been agreed as the break point in discussions, in the cohesion strategy meetings. SK confirmed that the process was on track for that April break point and the budgets will be worked upon using 2 scenarios, and then by April the finer details can be added. DM feels that it is such a compelling direction of travel both from the ESFA and DfE, but for the Trust and the way it is developing, that he is making the assumption that pooling will be approved and if it does not, then adjustments would have to be made.

7.5 Feedback from Board Evaluation Working Group

TS reported that the WG had held a productive meeting and created a schedule for the Board Evaluation timetable and this would be started in the Summer Term.

7.6 Members AGM, succession planning – Members and Trustees

TS updated that unfortunately, Amanda French will not be returning as a Trustee, following her maternity leave. TS has discussed alternative options with her, for involvement with the Trust in the future.

Trustees all expressed their thanks to Amanda for her valued input and she will be very much missed. MT will be requesting a written notification from her for records and an official leave date.

MT has prepared adverts for the 2 vacancies. After the closing date, a Trustees nominations committee will undertake shortlisting and interviews.

8 Policies/Documents – Review and Approve

NONE

9 - Academy Committee – Minutes

9.1 AC Questions – NONE (no minutes due to Spring Term pause on formal local governance meetings. Fortnightly Monitoring and Update meetings are being held with all local AC Chairs and Trustees).

9.2 Approval of New Governors – Holsworthy AC – Tracey Toft and Ruh Alford.

DECISION: Trustees were pleased to approve the applications of Tracey Toft and Ruh Alford as governors for the Holsworthy AC.

(JL declared a conflict of interest re R Alford in his position as Chair of Carey Federation and did not take part in the approval vote).

9.3 Approval of New Governor – Dartmoor Fed AC (Primary)

DECISION: Trustees were pleased to approve the application of Ian MacQueen as governor for the Dartmoor Primaries AC.

(MW declared a conflict of interest with this application and did not take part in the approval vote).

10 – Dates of Next Meetings

Fortnightly Update Meeting - Friday 12th February at 12pm

Full Board EM Meeting (to discuss and recommend new governance plan) Thursday 25th February at 4pm

Full Trustees Meeting (Resources Focus) Thursday 18th March 4pm

The meeting ended at 6.02pm

ACTION TABLE – from meeting 11.02.21

No.	WHO	WHAT	WHEN
1	SK/NMcD	To ask NMcD if there is some current GDPR training available for Trustees.	18.3.21
2	SK/NMcD	To report to the Board on 18 th March about the process around the SCA allocations.	18.3.21
3	SK/TS	To discuss setting a date with AC Chairs for SCA discussion	ASAP
4	Trustees	To send any comments on the Cooperative Leadership paper to MT.	ASAP
5	SK/DM	To bring finance policy (to include reserves policy) and financial SOD to the next meeting.	18.3.21
6	DM	To bring KPIs to Board Committees in the 2 nd half of the Summer Term.	2 nd half Summer Term
7	SK	To provide update to Trustees on pooling proposal at the next meeting.	18.3.21
8	DM	To circulate papers on 1 st February and will schedule 30-minute individual calls with each trustee to discuss any questions.	DONE
9	MT	To request electronic copy of Holsworthy new governor application so trustees were able to review the information in a clearer format.	DONE
10	MT	To produce a yearly summary of meeting reviews by Trustees to understand common issues raised.	As part of New Gov Structure
11	MT/TS	To provide and work on a model TOR for the full AC boards.	
12	TS/DM	To consider setting up a HR committee, which reports to the Full Trustee Board, in the future.	
13	HF/MT/DM	To work on proposal governance and advisory boards for DTSA and bring recommendations in March.	pending