

**Full Trustee Board (SI Focus) – Part I Minutes**

Date/Time	18th March 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	Stewart Biddles	SB
Jane Dumeresque (Vice Chair)	JD	Chris Gould	CG				

<b>ACTIONS</b>
<b>DECISIONS</b>
<b>QUESTIONS AND CHALLENGES</b>

In Attendance	Initials	Minutes to
Susanne Kiff	SK	Attendees
Melissa Trudgill	MT	Apologies
Dan Morrow	DM	
Hazel Fox	HF	

Apologies	Initials	Reason
None		

Meeting started at 4.07pm

Please note that Trustees agreed for the meeting to be recorded for minute taking and it was deleted on 06.04.21.

<b>1 - Apologies</b>
None.
<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 – Agree and sign off previous minutes</b>
<b>Minutes from: Full Trustees Meeting (Resource Focus) held on 11.2.21 and EM Minutes held on 25.2.21</b> were agreed as a true record and will be signed by TS in person when Covid 19 restrictions are lifted.
<b>4 –Matters Arising</b>
See update to actions in table below.
<b>5 – School Improvement Focus</b>
<b>5.1 CEO Report</b>

- GB praised the presentation from Elizabeth Underwood at the recent Ethos Committee and was impressed with her grasp of the shared approach to working within a MAT and SI. DM thanked GB for his comment and would pass it on.
- JS thanked DM for his report which she had found clear, concise and easy to navigate. She had appreciated the links to wider reading and the clear information around the attendance of SEN and EHCP pupils. She remarked on the good attendance levels across all of the schools and the vulnerable pupils' summary was helpful. She was also pleased at the testing rates at the secondary schools. **Q JS asked whether DM expected this to continue?** DM said he had been surprised re the testing – the majority of children and parents had engaged with the testing and the loud voices which had made objections early on, were very much in the minority. He explained that the testing had been an efficient process and helped by many volunteers, some from governance, which he had really appreciated. He said he had concerns now that the testing would be undertaken in the home, as the tests were not easy and he was worried that the results would not be so accurate or so regular.
- The Trust is within the top 2% for attendance on return.
- **Q CG asked for clarification on the new Director of People role recently advertised?** The Early Career Framework is a challenging and welcome change within the system and Michael Green, the new Director of People, has been instrumental and worked with Ofsted to develop the wellbeing and workload report with the DfE and has been engaged on a strategic level with the ECF. **Q CG asked for clarification on who would have full responsibility for the Maths Hub work within the Trust as he had noted some confusion over this in a recent meeting and how does the new Director of People fit in to this?** DM said that we are developing our own training offer within the MAT and we will be building something to trade as a National Leader; Michael will be able to shape this under HF's leadership. HF said it will be about identifying the specialisms we already have within and that Adam Hill has been identified and will be leading for maths (primaries) and Gareth Smith is leading (in the interim period) for secondary and will be overseeing this work. HF said they were looking forward to sharing this with Principals across the MAT. CG confirmed that he would continue to do work with Adam Hill directly on the maths hub work and has given AH a framework to work from. DM added that all primary principals have been allocated a strategic area of responsibility and cross-Trust work. However, with the secondaries, they have been advertised internally and the intention is to open up these opportunities for the senior teams to encourage a strong field to make these appointments from.
- **Q GB asked if Trustees could be informed prior to general notification about important appointments such as the Director of People as he felt this should have been emailed to Trustees, before it was announced via Twitter. JL and PS agreed with this point, particular as it was such a key appointment.** DM said the appointment had been confirmed following the submission of his report and would be announced widely in the Trust Update the following day. He did not agree that announcements about new appointments needed to go via Trustees as a priority. TS suggested that an email sent to Trustees to inform, on this occasion, would have been welcomed.
- **Q MW asked if names could be added to the report e.g. so that we can gain an awareness of the Trust Champions' contributions?** DM answered that the evaluation of their contribution is for the Executive under the appraisal and performance routines. The Trust Champions will now be embedded in schools and so their main impact will be to individual site school improvements with a wider brief, held to account by the Executive Principals.
- **Q MW felt that he the Trust needed to give more public credit to individuals for their achievements.** DM agreed that this was just starting with recognition to staff in the staff briefings, weekly TU and engagement with the local press and will be triangulated in 360 protocols.
- **Q MW felt that the word 'strategy' was used throughout the report but he felt that there was little sense of strategy but more operational plans aimed at a given goal statements and he felt that the MAT does need an overarching strategy. He asked can we have some idea of when the work on this will begin, when can we expect some output and will the Board have an input? – he assumes yes?** DM responded that strategy is in itself

a plan of action to achieve a long-term aim and many of these are remedial and will be framed in the overall plans. A Full Trust Strategic Plan will be presented to the Trust Board in Summer 2 and more formalised strategic days will be organised to form part of this strategic work.

- **Q MW noted that the details of the leadership structure will not be available until the following week and asked if there was an opportunity to review these changes before they would be implemented at Easter? MW felt this was not just a purely operational issue, as its effectiveness will have an impact on several points on the risk register?** DM believed that there had been robust challenges on this topic and this support and challenge has helped to shape the new structure. The Board will then hold DM and the Executive Team to account on the impact of this new leadership structure has on School Improvement. Trust accountability will be more straightforward if the Trustees retain their strategic challenge and overview role rather than being involved in the shaping of the structure, otherwise they could be seen 'to be marking their own homework'.
- **Q TS added that there had been a challenge raised by governance colleagues around the duty we have to our church schools regarding the new leadership changes. TS asked to which of our church schools, the changes affected and asked for the Board to receive assurances that the correct training will be in place for those leaders who have not led a church school before.** DM responded that the leadership changes affected the following church schools: Chagford, Exborne, Black Torrington and Bridgerule. Adam Hill is completing a specific church leadership qualification and he will be mentoring the principals who are going into the church schools, plus these new leaders will be undertaking training with the Diocese. DM confirmed therefore that there will be internal monitoring and external training and support in this area.

#### **6 – Matters Brought forward at the Direction of the Chair**

##### **All Weather Pitch – St James Primary School**

SK reported that further to percolation tests, current drainage is not sufficient and more drainage works will need to be installed into the pitch at a cost of approximately £20,000. There needs to be a new planning application submitted. SK asked for Trustees' approval for the funding for the additional drainage and then it is hoped that Okehampton Sports Charity will do the surface as they had originally promised.

**Q JD asked (re risk) whether the drainage would aid our original planning application and if putting in a new application would mean that we would lose any of the previous planning steps already obtained at a lengthy delay?** SK clarified that we are submitting a new application, as we are applying for a higher finish on the pitch and that the drainage was a condition of the original planning.

**Q PS asked for assurance that the planning officer will not need any further requirements to be met apart from addressing and approving the higher finish as he had concerns that the £20,000 would be approved and yet the planning application would not pass due to other conditions needing to be satisfied? He also raised where the £20,000 would be coming from? Central funds or from a St James surplus of funds which they entered the MAT with?** SK said it would be a new planning application and confirmed that St James brought in a healthy C/F into the Trust and that she recommended that the £20,000 would come from their surplus.

TS thanked JL for all his efforts in keeping the momentum going with this project and all the work he had put in to bring it to fruition. SK added that JL would now be stepping away from the communications and hand it fully back to the Operations Team.

**DECISION: Trustees approved the additional cost of £20,000 for the drainage on the all-weather pitch at St James. (PS proposed; JD seconded)**

JL declared an interest and did not vote on this item.

#### **7 Trustee Board**

##### **7.1 Update on Management Accounts P4**

- JD said there had been a slight delay due to a re-work following Steve Perkin's departure and Alex's arrival. P5 would be received by the end of this week and a meeting will be held with JD, TS, SK and AR on Monday.
- She reassured Trustees that previously SK would prepare it with JD reviewing it but now there are: Sam Westwood, AR, then SK and then DM to make up the chain of those viewing the Management Accounts, as well as JD and TS. JD and TS will have looked at P5 by next week and P6 are coming soon after.

- DM added that he keeps a detailed Accounting Officer Log in terms of the support and challenge in this area, which demonstrates a significant improvement in terms of reporting.
- **Q GB asked if there had been any decision made whether a summary report would be shared with all Trustees after JD and TS had reviewed the management accounts?** JD said that she would continue to support TS in reviewing the management accounts every month and suggested reporting by exception to all Trustees, if there were any concerns. DM added that it was not normal practice nor laid out in the AFH to provide an additional report to all Trustees every month on the Management Accounts.
- It was agreed that Trustees would require notification by email when a document was added to SharePoint with its location or the document should be circulated by email to all Trustees.

#### **7.2 Recommendation from Chair on pooling proposal for approval**

- TS reminded Trustees that a WG had been delegated to explore thoroughly the pooling proposal. MT said there had been 5 two-hour WG meetings consisting of a Trustee, an AC Vice Chair of an AC, an AC Chair, a Headteacher (Secondary), Executive Headteacher (Primary) and SK had chaired the meetings.
- TS had attended their last meeting to quality assure the process and be satisfied that issues had been debated rigorously. TS wished to thank the WG members for their time and careful consideration of all the facts.
- SK shared a presentation with Trustees which had been shown to TS on Monday to demonstrate to the Board the rigorous process and what had been considered.
- JL said that had been a unanimous recommendation from the WG to the Board. There had been a shift during the process with a change of emphasis from just income to resource pooling and the belief that pooling will underline our ethos and place the money where the need is.
- MW confirmed that we will need to make a case that shows our ethos supports the notion of pooling and we cannot assume that all will understand this. **Q MW asked for more detail on how the Trust Fund works, who has access to it, what it would be spent on and accountability?** SK responded that currently within the central team budget there is a SI budget which is used for priority need and for additional capacity and provision to be purchased. HF is currently the budget holder for this and she would decide where this is spent and what on. **Q MW asked whether there was a cap on sending and approval required?** SK said that our usual finance policy authorisation applies so she can sign up to a certain amount and then after this she would need a second signature. The fund is currently approximately £20,000. MW suggested that a limit to the maximum size of this fund should be considered.
- **Q MW asked if there was an appeal clause for individual schools?** SK confirmed that there was an appeal process in the draft policy which was in the original report and which will need to come to Trustees for approval; it has to be within the policy.
- **Q PL asked re the future growth of the Trust, are there any schools which are interested in joining us?** DM said in the last 8 weeks, we have had 9 schools approach us for discussions and we have approached a further 6. DM is having meetings with the RSC to progress this and the way we are communicating externally with stakeholders had generated some excitement about the way we are developing the MAT. DM will update on developments as they occur. HF said she had developed relationships and been a sensible partner with our local neighbouring schools and those that feed into our secondary schools. They are appreciating our partnership working and it has benefitted our schools to have a wider network. DM added that on the request of the RSC, he is mentoring 2 local CEOs of smaller trusts.
- **Q MW said he supported the idea of growth, but observed that currently there was not an over-arching strategy for the Trust and also taking on new acquisitions takes a lot of time and resource to undertake due diligence and then to integrate the new school. He asked do we have sufficient management capacity to do this when they are quite over-stretched at the moment? Are we able to bring new schools in and integrate them in an effective and cost-effective manner?** TS said there is a need for a wider discussion on growth in the future. DM said there was a timely reason for undertaking this growth as Gavin Williamson had recently outlined that within the next 18 months, if you are not the organisation growing, you might be the one forced to join a larger MAT. All agreed with MW that investment in capacity would be essential if the MAT was to grow further.
- JD reminded the Board that with pooling, in her opinion, it was always about equity and whether it was right for the Trust. Her previous challenges on whether we would get the buy-in and support from the Trust had been satisfied and she congratulated SK and JL on working effectively with a diverse group and getting all to a joint consensus and to agree with the proposal. It has been worth taking the time to do this work and get the full support. **Q JD's remaining challenge was whether we have got the resources in the team to deliver it?** but she feels that we do now have the ability with AR and the new structure that we have the capacity to deliver it.

**DECISION: Trustees approved the pooling proposal and agreed to proceed with pooling for the academic year 2021-22 to include:**

- 1. To set the budgets using this premise**
- 2. The handbook is written to explain how the process works**
- 3. The need to review and finalise the policy which was in the original document which came to Trustees and get that signed off by the Trustee Board.**

**(PS proposed; JL seconded)**

DM abstained from voting as Accounting Officer.

### **7.3 Update on SCA Allocations process**

SK gave an overview as delivered at the Resource Leads Meeting, regarding the capital projects which are going on: capital expenditure, SCA monies, and decarbonisation expenditure. She explained that with all of the work at Tavistock College and the decarbonisation grant projects plus some other large projects in the pipeline, there is no further capacity to take on anything in addition.

**ACTION: MT/SK to email out the documents from the Resource Leads Meeting to all Trustees and collate any questions for SK.**

### **7.4 Update on Operation Team structure**

SK confirmed that there were adverts out for both the Director of Estates and Facilities and HR Director. Gill Tremain who currently leads on Trust HR, is moving into a new position, working with some of the education colleagues under inclusion, attendance and SEND. Alan King is moving into a new role as Estates and Facilities Operation Manager.

Within the Finance Team, Sharon Perkins will become Trust Finance Team Leader and Sam Westwood, will become Trust Management Information Lead.

### **7.5 Update on Governance Restructure**

- TS announced that JD has rescinded her resignation and will continue as Resource Lead Trustee.
- To follow best practise, DM has suggested that the CEO should not also be a Trustee and TS will raise this at the Members' Meeting on 30.3.21. DM gave his reasons behind this proposal and Trustees discussed this direction of travel.

**DECISION: Trustees agreed to recommend to the Members that the CEO would not hold a position as a Trustee and the Articles would need to be amended to reflect this.**

- TS gave an update on the new governance plan. New governors were being interviewed who had responded to a central advert. Overall there were few gaps – most of which had occurred from creating 2 additional LSBs. **Q MW asked where were governors' adverts being placed/recruitment strategy?** MT responded that community FB pages were being used, E-Teach, Linked-In, social media, Church noticeboards, DMAT websites, Trust Update, parent newsletters, school newsletters, parish bulletins etc.

### **7.6 Confirmation of Board Evaluation Exercise**

- HR, People and Pay Committee will be leading the Board Evaluation in the Summer Term (2<sup>nd</sup> half). Microsoft Forms would be used to frame the Part A and Part B questions to all Trustees.

## **8 Policies/Documents – Review and Approve**

**8.1 Policy Tracker** – noted.

### **8.2 DMAT Finance Policy**

- JD reported that she had gone through the original document and fed her questions back to SK and AR and these had been addressed. However, the issue is that it only reflects where we are now and very soon it will need to be amended in reaction to future changes on the governance restructure, SOD and pooling.

### **8.3 DMAT Scheme of Financial Delegation**

### **8.4 DMAT Protection of Biometric Information Policy**

### **8.5 DMAT Leasing Policy**

### **8.6 DMAT Critical Incident/Business Continuity Plan**

### **8.7 DMAT Debt Recovery Policy**

### **8.8 DMAT Investment Policy**

<p><b>8.9 DMAT Looked After Children in Education Policy</b></p> <p><b>8.10 DMAT Staff Expenses Policy</b></p> <p><b>8.11 DMAT No Purchase Order No Pay Policy</b></p> <p><b>DECISION: Trustees reviewed and approved all of the above policies.          (JL proposed; JD seconded)</b></p>
<b>9 - Academy Committee – Minutes</b>
<p>NONE – local governance pause.</p> <p>Fortnightly Monitoring and Update Meeting held for Trustees and Governors.</p> <p><b>DECISION: Julie Philpott and Simon Leigh were approved as governors at Holsworthy AC.          (PS proposed; JL seconded).</b></p>
<b>10 – Dates of Next Meetings</b>
<b>Audit Committee Meeting – 1.4.21</b>

MT stopped the recording at this point and left the meeting. Part 2 meeting commenced. JD took part 2 notes.

The meeting ended at 5.46pm

<b>ACTION TABLE – from meeting 18.03.21</b>			
No.	WHO	WHAT	WHEN
1	SK/NMcD	To ask NMcD if there is some current GDPR training available for Trustees.	DONE
2	SK/NMcD	To report to the Board on 18 <sup>th</sup> March about the process around the SCA allocations.	DONE
3	SK/TS	To discuss setting a date with AC Chairs for SCA discussion	N/A – update given at Resource Leads mtg 11.3.21
4	Trustees	To send any comments on the Cooperative Leadership paper to MT.	DONE
5	SK/DM	To bring finance policy (to include reserves policy) and financial SOD to the next meeting.	DONE
6	SK	To provide update to Trustees on pooling proposal at the next meeting.	DONE
7	DM	To bring KPIs to Board Committees in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> half of the Summer Term.	2 <sup>nd</sup> half Summer Term
8	HF/MT/DM	To work on proposal governance and advisory boards for DTSA and bring recommendations in March.	Pending DTSA future plans
9	MT/SK	To email out the documents from the Resource Leads Meeting to all Trustees and collate any questions for SK following this circulation of information.	ASAP