

**Uttoxeter Learning Trust
Trustees' Board**

Minutes of a meeting of the Trustees' Board held remotely (via Microsoft Teams) on Wednesday, 13th October 2021 at 5.30pm.

Present:

Mr S Slater (chair), Mrs V Bennett, Mr S Harper, Mrs P Livesey, Mr R Oldham, Rev M Sherwin, Mr L Trigg

Also Present:

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – Dr S Clark

Chief Finance Officer (CFO) – Mr A Storer

Cover Clerk to the Uttoxeter Learning Trust (ULT) – Ms P Tortoishell

390. Apologies:

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Mr T Sutcliffe.

391. Election of Chair

There were nominations for Mr S Slater. No other nominations / volunteers were received.

It was resolved –

That Trustees appointed Mr S Slater as Chair

392. Election of Vice-Chair

There were nominations for Mrs P Livesey. No other nominations / volunteers were received.

It was resolved –

That Trustees appointed Mrs P Livesey as Vice-Chair

393. Picknalls First School KS2 Project – Request to use Reserves (presented by Ann Tapp):

Picknalls First School have submitted a request to be able to use £283,971 from reserves to support 2 projects:

- £230,000 KS2 project to replace 2 x portacabins
- £53,971 current 21/22 CIF bid contribution for heating (10%)
- Leaving just over £100,000 in reserves which is circa 8% and above what Trustees are aiming for schools to build in reserves, currently between 2-5%

AT explained that the school had worked hard to build up reserves to replace the KS2 accommodation for 120 pupils and outline the options available to the school.

Trustees Challenges:

Have you received a full report on the state of the building from Entrust?

A. Entrust have visited the school and have since asked for further information to support the CIF bid. No formal report has been received to date.

What are the current maintenance costs for the portacabins?

A. The estimated cost is £5,000 per annum, rising year on year.

When will you know the outcome of the CIF bid?

A. The successful bids will be notified March / April 2022.

What complaints have been received about the current accommodation?

A. Several complaints including part of the ceiling falling down, animals getting into the buildings, a badger set nearby causing problems with underpinning and complaints from staff and parents.

Have you explored any other options rather than rebuilding?

A. Yes, the school initially looked at replacement mobiles, but that was too expensive as new toilet blocks are also needed.

Trustees discussed various options and costs and agreed that further information is required prior to making an informed decision.

It was resolved –

- i) That trustees should have sight of the Feasibility Study and Report from Entrust on the life of the buildings
- ii) That Trustees should follow up on 106 funding available and carry out an options appraisal
- iii) That the school should continue with the CIF bid

394. Chair Power to Act – Report on actions taken by the Chair since the last meeting:

The Chair reported on the following actions taken between this and the last meeting:

- i) Signed lease / tenancy agreement for Richard Clarke First School
- ii) Signed the agreement for the lease at Bramshall Meadows First School
- iii) Agreed that funding left over from Richard Clarke First School joining the Trust should be returned to the school
- iv) Met with Ofsted inspectors at Windsor Park Middle School – some concerns with the single Central Record – the CEO and Chair agreed that all SCR's across the MAT are to be reviewed
- v) Agreed the cover clerk for the Trustees meeting
- vi) Acted as a sponsor for SC for NPQEL
- vii) Agreed Headteacher appointment – see Confidential Appendix
- viii) Requested a further review of governance across the Trust school and the Trust Board
- ix) Agree to sign the proposal letter to appoint new auditors

It was resolved –

That Trustees fully support all actions taken by the Chair, with thanks to him.

395. Declaration of Interests:

There were no declarations of interest from Trustees relevant to agenda items.

396. Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 30 June 2021

Minutes of a meeting of the Trust Board held on 30 June 2021 had been previously circulated.

It was resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting be received and approved as a true record of the meeting.

Minutes of a meeting of the Trust Board held on 9th September 2021 had been previously circulated.

It was resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting be received and approved as a true record of the meeting.

397. Matters Arising from 30th June 2021 and 9th September 2021 meeting:

a) Trust Capacity (Minute 373 refers)

The self-audit highlighted that process and procedures are not aligned across the schools – this is currently being addressed

b) Bramshall Meadows Fist School (Minute 386b refers)

SC confirmed that the name and address of the school has now been agreed

c) Richard Clarke (Minute 386a refers)

The school have requested a short report from their solicitors on Tom Thumb Nursery

d) Health and Safety Link Trustee (Minute 375b refers)

Thanks to Mr S Harper for agreeing to take on the role – SC and SH are to meet to discuss further – KPI's are being developed for reporting to the Trust and are to include H&S

398. Review of Committee Structure, Membership and Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference for the Education Committee and Finance and Audit Committee had been reviewed by the committees.

It was resolved –

i) That the Committees Terms of Reference be accepted and approved

ii) That the Trust Board Terms of Reference to accepted and approved

399. Redundancy Consultation

See confidential appendix

400. Safeguarding / COVID-19 and ULT Schools – Update

Safeguarding:

The recent Ofsted inspection had raised concerns with the Single Central Records and the CEO is now visiting all Trust schools to review the SCRs and employee records – with the support of Insight HR.

It was resolved –

That training is to be arranged for all Chairs and Safeguarding Link governors and the CEO is to ensure that there are no Safeguarding gaps on the training records of all Governors/Trustees.

Covid-19:

The member schools are experiencing staff absences and schools are strengthening their Covid controls – further information in CEO Report

401. Articles of Association

It is noted that the Articles of Association have been sent to the solicitors and the Diocese re the new school joining the MAT.

It was resolved –

That the Members are to make the decision on any changes to the Articles of Association

402. Scheme of Delegation and Pay Policy

It is noted that the reviewed Scheme of Delegation has been uploaded to the website and will continue to be reviewed on a regular basis.

There are some concerns about the Financial Scheme of Delegation being repeated in the Financial Policy and Procedures Manual and the Scheme of Delegation and the risks associated with that , and schools evolving different job descriptions.

It was resolved –

- i) That the Trust need to ensure that when one document is amended other documents are amended to match and that all job descriptions are to be aligned.
- ii) That the Board agree and approve the Scheme of Delegation

403. CEO Report

Key Points:-

Pay Policy - A paper is being prepared by the CEO on arrangements being made to deploy support staff to support other schools across the Trust.

Maths – there is a big focus on maths through the phased meetings with the aim of strengthening maths at Key Stages 1 and 2.

Free School – work is ongoing in preparing a governance plan for the new free school.

Oldfields - the building project proposal has been agreed.

Finance and Resources -

- i) The CFO is procuring asset management plans for all schools in the Trust.
- ii) Reserves and Charging Policy – has been reviewed and updated following feedback from the CFO and CEO.
- iii) IT – Hutchinson need a new server as the Cloud may not give all requirements. The Trust do not have a central IT budget, but the school does have some reserves.

Light Up Uttoxeter – has been rearranged to take place at Easter 2022

It was resolved –

That the CEO be thanked for her report and updates

404. ULT Finance Report

It was reported that most internal audits have taken place with Hutchinson due week commencing 18th October 2021. The external auditors have met with the internal auditors to discuss the changes in the Academies Trust Handbook and the external audit is due following October half term 2021. It should also be noted that the changes in National Insurance will impact on all schools budgets, e.g. Thomas Alleyne's High School will have an additional £30,000 on salary costs. The support staff pay increase will also impact on budgets, as well as gas increases and the Trust are now reviewing all budgets based on these assumptions.

It was resolved –

That the Finance update be received with thanks

405. Education Committee:

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2021

The minutes of the meeting of 15th June 2021 had been circulated with the agenda papers, with discussions including Covid-19 and School Responses to the Government's Road Map, Safeguarding, Policy reviews and Curriculum Development

To receive a report of the meeting held on 21 September 2021

It is noted that discussions included reviewing the Terms of Reference for the committee and receiving an update on the IT review.

It was resolved –

That the Education Committee update be received with thanks

406. Finance and Audit Committee:

To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2021

The minutes of the meeting of 23rd June 2021 had been circulated with the agenda papers.

To receive a report of the meeting held on 29 September 2021

It is noted that the meeting took place on 6th October 2021 with a presentation on the schools/Trust budgets. Two of the small schools have issues with increasing fixed costs and one small school is having issues with the cost of building repairs.

It was resolved –

- i) That the Finance and Audit Committee Report and updates be received with thanks
- ii) That the Committee will continue to monitor the issues reported

407. Risk Register

The Trust have two high level risks identified:

- i) The expansion of the Trust – a review of potential schools is taking place

- ii) Compliance – systems across the schools are not aligned – H&D, GDPR, SCR/Safer Recruitment are all being reviewed

It was resolved –

That the update be received with thanks.

408. Policy Approval

All policies circulated have been recommended for approval by the appropriate committees:

- Allowances
- Appraisal
- Business continuity
- Capability of Staff
- Complaints
- Cyber Incidents
- Online Safety
- Reserves and Charging
- Safeguarding
- Safer Recruitment
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Staff Disciplinary

It was resolved –

That all policies be approved as presented.

409. Other Business

School Trips:

A residential trip by Hutchinson was successfully supported by Entrust/Evolve to ensure Covid guidelines are adhered to. A further request for a residential visit has been received from Oldfields.

It was resolved –

That the CEO is to liaise with the school to ensure there are robust processes in place for the visit, including approval from the LA via Evolve.

Concerns from Trustees:

i) Policy Update

It would be useful, when reviewing policies, to issue a 'change log'. The CEO commented that most of the policies approved at this meeting had fundamental changes, but this will be considered for the future, with adequate administration support.

ii) Single Central Record

What is being done to address the concerns raised during the recent inspection?

A. The following reviews are taking place – SCR, safer recruitment, governance, together with training. Checks and processes are also to be put in place.

iii) Management Systems

There are Management Systems available that would support the centralisation of systems and data that do not include any more work that could be reviewed for the Trust to consider.

Thanks

The Trustees wish to thank the CEO for all her hard work since her appointment, it is greatly appreciated.

410. Date of Next Meeting

Trustees were reminded that the next termly meeting of the Trust Board was to be held on Wednesday, 8th December 2021 at 5.30pm. (Venue to be confirmed).

The meeting closed at 7.17pm

S. Slater
Signed.....

8 December 2021
Date.....

**Uttoxeter Learning Trust
Trustees' Board – confidential Appendix**

Minutes of a meeting of the Trustees' Board held remotely (via Microsoft Teams) on Wednesday, 13th October 2021 at 5.30pm.

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Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – Dr S Clark
Chief Finance Officer (CFO) – Mr A Storer
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Headteacher Appointment

The Trust have agreed to interview for the post of Headteacher at Bramshall Meadows First School. The appointment will be a two year temporary contract.

Risk Register

Executive Headteacher in place across Thomas Alleyne's High School and Ryecroft Middle School from September 2021 and having impact. The Head of School at Thomas Alleyne's High School will be leaving at October half term 2021 however, due to personal circumstances. This release from contract has been agreed by the governing body and Trust but does affect capacity in the short-term regarding the SLT at Thomas Alleyne's High School.

It is resolved –

That the Headteacher position is under review by the CEO

Redundancy Consultation

It is noted that TS has met with the unions who raised undertaking an equality impact report, which can be addressed. TS suggested capped x 2 redundancy payments but the unions suggested uncapped x 2 payments. All agreed that capped x 3 would not be affordable. Discussions took place about the capped or uncapped payments, staffing and voluntary / compulsory redundancies.

It was resolved –

That 1.5 (or 2 as a final offer) capped be agreed by the Trustees (with no difference between voluntary and compulsory payments)

Signed.....

Date.....