

**Uttoxeter Learning Trust  
Trustees' Board**

Minutes of a meeting of the Trustees' Board held remotely (via Microsoft Teams) on Wednesday, 30 June 2021 at 5.30pm.

**Present:**

Mr S Slater (chair), Mrs V Bennett, Mrs P Livesey, Rev M Sherwin, Mr T Sutcliffe.

**Also Present:**

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – Dr S Clark

Chief Finance Officer (CFO) – Mr A Storer

Clerk to the Uttoxeter Learning Trust (ULT) – Mr R Sheldon

**Apologies:**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr S Harper and Mr L Trigg.

**369. Business Register:**

Trustees were reminded to inform the clerk if any changes to the business register were necessary.

**370. Declaration of Interests:**

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

**371. Chair Power to Act – Report on Actions Taken:**

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

- Following the parental complaint at Windsor Park Middle School he had requested that a further external safeguarding review be undertaken at all schools. The CEO confirmed that this had been arranged and the review would be undertaken by the local authority's safeguarding team.
- He had recommended that the executive headteacher post, shortly to be advertised for Bramshall Meadows First School, should be permanent. The application pack had now been prepared and sent to trustees and would be discussed later in the meeting.
- At the recent meeting of the School Representation Board he had confirmed that all ULT policies were subject to ongoing review and that any views submitted by governing bodies would be considered.
- He proposed to write, on behalf of trustees, to Rachael Baramuszczak, headteacher, at Ryecroft CE Middle School to thank her for everything that she had done to support the school, the wider community and the continued development of the ULT during her role as headteacher. He also proposed to all headteachers to thank them and their staff teams for all of their hard work during what had been a difficult for all concerned due to the impact of Covid-19.

It was resolved –

That trustees fully support all actions taken by the chair, with thanks to him.

### 372. Trust Board Minutes:

Minutes of a meeting of the Trust Board held on 12 May 2021 had been previously circulated.

It was resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting be received and approved.

### 373. Matters Arising:

a) Richard Clarke First School (Minute 357(b) refers)

The CEO reported that discussions continued regarding land registration but the Charities and Trust committees had agreed in principle for a 'tenancy at will'. Things remained on track for the school to join the ULT on 1 September 2021.

b) Bramshall Meadows First School (Minute 357(c) refers)

The CEO was pleased to report that the S10 consultation had recently been completed and that there had been over 100 responses, which was very positive. A number of key issues had been raised and a report was being prepared to share with trustees before publication.

The CEO further reported that consideration was also being given to the appointment of the school's headteacher and trustees were reminded that a decision had been taken previously for an executive headteacher to be appointed. The post would shortly be advertised and all ULT headteachers able to apply. Trustees were informed that the salary would be negotiated, and dependent on the headteacher appointed to the post, and that the chair of the Trust Board had recommended that first school experience should be shown in the person specification as desirable rather than essential.

Discussion followed and trustees recognised the funding implications for this post particularly as the funding agreement for the new school was still to be formally secured. The CEO confirmed that it would only be necessary for the executive headteacher to be available for only one day week before the school officially opened and that the funding initially made available to the ULT to support the development of the new school would cover such a commitment.

It was resolved –

- i) That trustees confirm that an executive headteacher be appointed to the new school and that the post be offered on a permanent basis, although the executive headteacher designate would initially be employed on a temporary basis until the funding agreement had been secured.
- ii) That trustees approve the person specification to show first school experience as desirable rather than essential and that the initial time allocation for the headteacher appointed would remain under review with the appropriate governing body.
- iii) That the interviews be held before the end of the current term and that trustees would advise the CEO of their availability to support the interviews.

c) Trust Capacity Framework (Minute 357(d) refers)

The CEO reminded trustees that the ULT was participating in a mentoring programme launched by the RSC to support its development and was working with Ark Academy Trust. A number of meetings had already been held to look at vision and values and further meetings planned to help support other areas, including assessment, school improvement and finance. Trustees would be kept updated.

d) CIF Bids (Minute 357(e) refers)

The CFO was pleased to report that CIF bid outcomes had been received and that funding of around £1.7 million had been allocated for the following projects:

- All Saints – boiler and heating system
- Picknalls – heating
- Hutchinson Memorial – roof
- Thomas Alleyne's – fire safety

The CFO further reported that other CIF bids had been unsuccessful and that this could have future implications for the UTL, particularly with regard to the school roof at All Saints. Details around reasons for the bids being unsuccessful were awaited but would be considered once received before any decisions were taken to appeal.

e) Articles of Association (Minute 357(f) refers)

The CEO reported that she had discussed the updating of the Articles of Association with the DfE and that the Trust's solicitors had drafted a number of necessary changes. Work would be undertaken during the summer holidays to update the Articles with a view to them being submitted to members at their Autumn term meeting for approval.

f) Summer Schools (Minute 361(b) refers)

The CEO reported that funds had now also been allocated to the high school in addition to the three middle schools to support the delivery of summer schools. Funding was being used to support activities, including targeted intervention delivered by PET-xi in relation to specific groups of students.

### **374. ULT Finance Report:**

a) 3 and 5-Year Budget Modellers

The CFO reported that the draft budget modellers had been considered at the recent meeting of the Finance and Audit committee. Due to the recently received CIF bid outcomes, trustees were informed that it had been necessary for him to update the budgets to reflect the financial implications of both successful, and unsuccessful, bids. The CFO also reminded trustees that the 3-year budget modeller had to be submitted to the ESFA by the end of July. Trustees were also informed that the central budget had been revised to include £25K to fund external support with school asset management plans as previously agreed by trustees.

Discussion followed and consideration given to those schools with concerns around their budgets. This related in particular to the smaller first schools (Hutchinson Memorial and All Saints). The CFO also reminded trustees of a possible need to repair the school roof at All Saints at a cost in the region of £150K, although a possible appeal could be made against the unsuccessful CIF bid for this work. This matter was also being discussed with the local authority. The chair of the Trust Board confirmed that the Finance and Audit committee had agreed, if considered necessary, to meet with headteachers and chairs of governors of those schools with financial concerns to discuss plans to ensure that balanced budgets could continue to be set.

It was resolved –

- i) That the consolidated 3 and 5-year budget modellers be received and approved with thanks to the CFO for the work undertaken and that the 3-year budget modeller be submitted to the ESFA by the required date.
- ii) That the CEO be requested to arrange for the headteachers and chairs of governors of the two small first schools to meet with the Finance and Audit committee early in the Autumn term to discuss future budget plans.

### **375. CEO Report:**

A copy of the CEO's report had been previously circulated. The CEO reported that most of the issues outlined in the report had already been discussed earlier in the meeting and referred in particular to the following matters:

#### a) ULT and School Governance

The CEO reported that it was necessary for the ULT to appoint an additional trustee (at the recommendation of the DfE), a new member (to replace Mr Morley) and a number of local school governors to fill vacancies that currently existed. The CEO further reported that she was currently writing a Trust newsletter, to be circulated before the end of term, and would take the opportunity to include an item to seek possible interest from the wider community.

#### b) Link Trustee – Health and Safety

The CEO reported that it had been advised that the Trust Board should appoint a link trustee for health and safety matters. Discussion took place and trustees considered that Mr Harper had the necessary expertise to take on such a role, if willing.

#### c) Oldfields Hall Middle School

The CEO reported that consultation for the new teaching accommodation and sports hall had now been completed and the application was shortly to be considered by Cabinet. If approved, the project would be submitted to the DfE for funding approval.

#### d) Picknalls First School

The CEO reported that a request had been received from the governing body of Picknalls First School for release of school reserves to help fund a school extension (cost in the region of £230K) to replace the mobile units currently used by Y3 and 4 pupils. The CEO further reported, however, that an application would also be made for S106 funding, linked to the housing development at Hazelhalls Farm, to support this project.

It was resolved –

- i) That the CEO be thanked for her detailed report and that it be received.
- ii) That trustees welcomed the use of a Trust newsletter to seek community interest in supporting both ULT and school governance.
- iii) That the CEO be requested to contact Mr Harper, trustee, to ask if he would be willing to be appointed as link trustee for health and safety matters.

- iv) That the headteacher and chair of governors at Picknalls First School be invited to attend the next meeting of the Finance and Audit committee to give a presentation regarding plans for the build of a new school extension and that Mrs Livesey, link trustee for the school, also be invited to attend.

**376. Safeguarding/Covid-19 and ULT Schools - Update:**

The CEO reported that the number of students testing positive for Covid-19 had increased since writing her report and that some pupils were being asked to self-isolate in accordance with Government guidance. As previously discussed, plans were in place for summer schools and arrangements also being made for a number of end of school year activities. Trustees noted that a number of trips had been cancelled but others were going ahead in accordance with local and national guidance. School risk assessments had been updated as necessary to reflect this, including also plans for the staggered start to school in September, and copies had been previously circulated to trustees. Further information was awaited regarding the future plans for lateral flow testing.

The CEO reported that there were no specific safeguarding matters to bring to the attention of trustees.

It was resolved –

- i) That the CEO be thanked for her safeguarding/Covid-19 update and that it be noted.
- ii) That the updated school risk assessments be received and that trustees would submit views, if any, to the CEO.

**377. Education Committee:**

Trustees had been previously circulated with minutes of the Education committee held on 27 April 2021. Trustees also noted that a meeting of the Education committee had recently been held on 15 June 2021. Mr Sutcliffe, chair for the meeting in the absence of Rev Sherwin, outlined the issues that had been considered. In particular, Mrs Rudge, headteacher at Thomas Alleyne's High School, had been invited to the meeting to outline arrangements in place to work with the John Taylor Teaching School hub, as a result of the national decision to no longer fund Teaching Schools. Two new policies (Appraisal and Capability) had been considered but the decision was taken not to recommend their approval to allow a number of amendments to be made in consultation with HR. The policies were to be re-submitted for approval at the next meeting.

It was resolved –

That the minutes of the Education committee held on 27 April 2021 be received and accepted and that the report of the meeting held on 15 June 2021 be noted.

**378. Finance and Audit Committee:**

Trustees had been previously circulated with minutes of a meeting of the Finance and Audit committee held on 5 May 2021. Trustees also noted that a meeting of the Finance and Audit committee had recently been held on 23 June 2021 and Mrs Bennett, committee vice-chair, confirmed that most of the issues considered had been discussed earlier in the meeting. Particular consideration had been given to the IT review including proposed charges for first schools to take account of budget pressures. Consideration had been

given to school leadership salaries and it was agreed that there was a need for greater clarity around the responsibilities of trustees and school governors. Approval was also given for the CFO to go out to tender for external support with school asset management plans. A number of policies had been submitted for review (Business Continuity Plans; Redundancy / Redeployment; Reserves and Charging) but no decisions taken pending further review.

It was resolved –

That the minutes of the Finance and Audit committee meeting held on 5 May 2021 be received and accepted and that the report of the meeting held on 23 June 2021 be received and noted.

### **379. Risk Register:**

Trustees had been previously circulated with an updated copy of the risk register and the CEO reported that changes had been made to reflect discussions at the recent committee meetings.

It was resolved –

That the updated risk register be received and noted.

### **380. Policy Approval:**

The following policies had been previously circulated and the CEO confirmed that each of them had been reviewed by the appropriate committee and recommended for approval:

- ULT Early Career Framework policy
- ULT Risk Management policy
- ULT Whistle-blowing policy

It was resolved –

That all policies be approved as presented.

### **381. Scheme of Delegation and Pay Policy:**

The CEO reported that, as with other policies, both the ULT's Scheme of Delegation and Pay Policy were reviewed annually and that as they were closely aligned both documents should be reviewed together. The CEO further reported that it was important to ensure that both documents gave greater clarity around the roles of the Trust Board and local governing bodies. The CEO therefore recommended that a special meeting of the Trust Board be held early in the Autumn to focus on these documents and other important issues including the redundancy scheme and IT review.

It was resolved –

That approval be given for a special meeting to be held for the reasons given and that the CEO be requested to circulate possible dates to trustees.

**382. Other Business:**

a) Pen Portraits

The CEO requested that those trustees still to return their updated pen portrait did so at the earliest opportunity so they could be added to the ULT website.

b) Rachael Baramuszczyk

As previously discussed under the chair's power to act, the chair would write to Mrs Baramuszczyk to thank her for all that she had done for Ryecroft CE Middle School whilst headteacher. Arrangements would also be made for a virtual presentation to be made at the next meeting of the Headteacher Professional Board.

c) Appointment of Trustees

The clerk reported that the terms of office for Mrs Livesey and Mr Trigg were to come to an end during the Autumn term and that member approval was necessary to appoint them for a further term of office.

It was resolved –

That trustees fully support the re-appointment of Mrs Livesey and Mr Trigg as trustees, if willing, and that this matter be included on the agenda for the members' meeting to be held the following week.

d) Record of Thanks

The chair wished to place on record his thanks to all trustees for the full support they continued to give to the ULT, particularly during what had again been a difficult year due to the pandemic.

**383. Date of Next Meeting:**

Trustees were reminded that the next termly meeting of the Trust Board was to be held on Wednesday, 13 October 2021 at 5.30pm. (Venue to be confirmed).

S. Slater  
Signed.....

13 October 2021  
Date.....