

**Uttoxeter Learning Trust
Trustees' Board**

Minutes of a meeting of the Trustees' Board held remotely (via Microsoft Teams) on Thursday, 9 September 2021 at 4.30pm.

Present:

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

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

384. Declaration of Interests / Business Register:

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

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

385. School Risk Assessments:

Copies of school risk assessments in response to the continuing impact of Covid-19 had been previously circulated and the CEO confirmed that all had been updated to reflect national and local guidance and account also taken of union advice. The CEO further reported that all school risk assessments remained under constant review and revised as necessary to respond to local school issues. Trustees noted that several ULT schools were already operating contingency plans due to an increase in positive cases.

The chair reported that the risk assessments had been discussed with headteachers at the recent meeting of the Headteacher Professional Board where he had also taken the opportunity to highlight a number of differences in school responses to the impact of Covid-19 and encouraged headteachers to continue to work together and share best practice wherever possible.

It was resolved –

That trustees, whilst recognising the dynamic nature of school risk assessments, received and approved the risk assessments with thanks to headteachers and local governing bodies.

386. Updates on Richard Clarke and Bramshall Meadows:

a) Richard Clarke First School

The CEO was pleased to confirm that Richard Clarke First School was now a full member of the ULT and placed on record her thanks to the chair of the Trust Board, Mrs Livesey and Rev Sherwin for agreeing to sign, on behalf of the Trust Board, the various documents to finalise membership.

b) Bramshall Meadows First School

The CEO was also pleased to report that work on the site of Bramshall Meadows First School had now commenced and completion remained on track in readiness for the school to open in September 2022. As previously reported, the S10 consultation had been completed with positive feedback to the issues raised. However, the CEO further reported that whilst no concerns had been raised through the official S10 consultation, East Staffs District Council had since raised a concern regarding the proposed name of Bramshall Meadows First School and outlined reasons for this. Discussion followed and trustees recognised that the proposed name of the school had been made clear in all documents relating to this matter and that the land development on which the school was being built was formally known as Bramshall Meadows.

The CEO further reported on the recruitment of the headteacher for the new school and reminded trustees that approval had previously been given for an executive headteacher to be appointed, initially on a temporary basis, and applications sought from ULT headteachers. Interviews had recently been held and the CEO reported that an appointment had not been made and outlined the reasons for this. With the approval of trustees, the CEO was to discuss this matter further with ULT headteachers to see if any interest remained for the executive headteacher post.

The chair, whilst disappointed with the outcome, thanked trustees for their support with the recruitment process.

It was resolved –

- i) That trustees are delighted to formally welcome Richard Clarke First School to the Uttoxeter Learning Trust.
- ii) That, whilst noting concerns raised by East Staffs District Council, approval be given to continue use of the name Bramshall Meadows First School.
- iii) That trustees authorise the CEO to further discuss the executive headteacher role with ULT headteachers and to arrange further interviews if necessary. If not, arrangements would be made the post to be advertised externally.

387. Scheme of Delegation:

A copy of the current Scheme of Delegation had been previously circulated and the CEO highlighted a number of recommended changes to be made to the Scheme. Discussion followed and trustees also suggested a number of other amendments, including in particular the role of the Trust Board in the appointment of local school governors. Trustees recognised their responsibilities in determining the school governance structure and in monitoring its effectiveness.

It was resolved –

- i) That the Scheme of Delegation be approved as presented, subject to the amendments made as suggested by trustees.
- ii) That the updated Scheme of Delegation be shared with headteachers and local school governing bodies.

- iii) That the CEO be requested to arrange for a further external review of governance to be undertaken

388. ULT Pay Policy 2021:

The CEO reported that it was necessary for trustees to approve the ULT Pay policy 2021 and a copy of the current policy had been previously circulated. The CEO further reported that it would be necessary for the Pay policy to reflect any changes to the Local Authority's model policy and to also ensure consistency with the updated Scheme of Delegation, particularly with regard to specific responsibilities of the Trust Board and local governing bodies. Discussion followed and particular focus was given to the agreed appraisal process for both teachers and support staff and how the process was being used to determine pay progression. Trustees also recognised the importance of consistency around job evaluation across all ULT schools to ensure that all staff were treated fairly.

It was resolved –

- i) That the Pay policy be reviewed further once the Local Authority model policy had been received but any changes would be consistent with the approved Scheme of Delegation.
- ii) That Mr Trigg and Mr Harper be requested to further discuss how job evaluation could be developed across all schools to ensure greater consistency and that this matter be considered further by the Finance and Audit committee at its next meeting.

389. Redundancy Scheme:

See confidential appendix (attached).

390. Other Business:

Role of Link Trustee

Mr Harper referred to his role as link trustee and asked if it would be appropriate to visit his link school whilst the number of positive Covid cases remained relatively high. Discussion followed and trustees accepted that school visits should not yet be undertaken although attendance at remote governing body meetings should be encouraged.

It was resolved –

That the CEO be requested to contact ULT headteachers to ask that their link trustee be invited to attend any meeting of their governing body.

391. 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. The meeting would again be held remotely through Microsoft Teams.

Signed.....
S. Slater

13 October 2021
Date.....

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CONFIDENTIAL APPENDIX:

389. Redundancy Scheme:

A report had been previously circulated to trustees to remind them of decisions that had been taken regarding a proposed change to the redundancy scheme and further advice received from ULT lawyers. The CEO took trustees through the report and particularly reminded them of their previous decision to amend redundancy payments to 1.5 times more than the statutory minimum. Any change, however, had been put on hold due to the pandemic. The CEO reported that it was necessary for trustees to determine next steps.

Discussion followed and trustees recognised that, during the consultation period, unions had not supported the proposed redundancy payments at 1.5 times more than the statutory minimum. Consideration was therefore given to the affordability in the event of payments being set at twice the statutory minimum and also whether this might be more acceptable to the unions.

It was resolved –

That informal discussions be held with the unions to seek views around an increase in payments from 1.5 to twice the statutory minimum and that this matter be discussed further at the next meeting of the Trust Board.

S. Slater
Signed.....

13 October 2021
Date.....