

**Uttoxeter Learning Trust
Trustees' Board**

Minutes of a meeting of the Trustees' Board held remotely (via Microsoft Teams) on Wednesday, 21 October 2020 at 5.30pm.

Present:

Mr S Slater (chair), Mrs V Bennett, Mr S Harper, Mrs P Livesey, Mr R Oldham, 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

279. Election of Chair:

It was resolved –

That Mr S Slater be elected as chair of the ULT Trust Board until the first meeting of the autumn term 2021.

280. Election of Vice-Chair:

It was resolved –

That Mrs P Livesey be elected as vice-chair of the ULT trust Board until the first meeting of the autumn term 2021.

281. Chair – Power to Act:

It was resolved –

That the chair be authorised to act on behalf of the Trust Board on urgent or minor matters that arise between meetings.

282. Declaration of Interests:

A declaration of interest was given from Mr A Storer (Business Manager at Thomas Alleyne's High School) in advance of discussions around the ULT redundancy scheme. (See Minute 292).

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

283. Chair Power to Act – Report on Actions Taken:

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

- CEO performance management – with the support of Mrs Bennett and Mr Sutcliffe, targets had been agreed with Dr Clark and a review meeting was to be held the following week.
- As a result of the illness of the CEO's father, approval had been given for her to work remotely so that support could be given to him. The arrangements were working well.

- The chair had phoned all headteachers to check on their well-being and to get an update on the work being undertaken in schools due to the impact of covid-19. Information had been received to show that parents were supportive of the work being undertaken by the schools.
- A conference call had been held with solicitors to discuss the Trust's role in architectural plans, appointment of contractors and consultants for the new school. The chair reported that he had made clear that this was not a role for trustees although confirming that trustees would want an input into the final plans and guarantees.
- Agreement had been given for support staff to receive pay awards in accordance with the new Pay policy.
- A letter had been sent to unions regarding the redundancy scheme seeking their views on collective bargaining.
- Letters had been signed to confirm the change to the approved external auditors.

It was resolved –

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

284. Review of Committee Structure, Membership and Terms of Reference:

The clerk reminded trustees that they were required to review the committee structure, membership and terms of reference on an annual basis. The current terms of reference had been reviewed by the appropriate committees and a number of changes recommended. Copies had been previously circulated.

It was resolved –

- i) That the existing committee structure and membership be retained for a further year.
- ii) That the recommended changes to the committee term of reference be received and approved.

285. Trustees' Board Minutes:

Minutes of meetings of the Trustees' Board held on Wednesdays, 8 July and 19 August 2020 had been previously circulated.

It was resolved –

That the minutes of those meetings be received and approved.

286. Matters Arising:

Minutes of meeting held on 8 July 2020

- a) Vision, Mission and Values Statement (Minute 267(b) refers)
A copy of the revised ULT's Vision, Mission and Values statement had been previously circulated. Discussion followed and reference was made to the ULT motto which read – "Inspired Teaching, Inspiring Children". It was suggested that this should perhaps be the other way around – "Inspiring Children, Inspired Teaching". The CEO undertook to check the original document.

It was resolved –

- i) That the revised Vision, Missions and Values statement be received and approved.
- ii) That the ULT motto be further considered at a future meeting.

b) Consolidated Budget 2020/21 (Minute 271 refers)

The CFO confirmed that the consolidated budget 2020/21 had been submitted to the ESFA within the agreed timeframe and that confirmation of receipt had been received.

287. Coronavirus and Safeguarding - ULT Schools:

Trustees noted that detailed information regarding covid-19 and its impact on schools had been included in the CEOs report for the meeting. An outline was given to the following matters in particular:

a) Positive Cases

The CEO reported that one student at Thomas Alleyne's High School had recently tested positive but the CEO was pleased to report that the way in which the matter had been dealt with by the school, in line with advice given by the LA, had minimised the number of students having to self-isolate as a result. The CEO further reported that two members of staff had also tested positive but this had fortunately not impacted on student attendance.

b) Movement of Staff

The CEO reported that with the half term break the following week, a question had been raised regarding staff potentially visiting other family members who lived in the identified high-risk areas. The CEO was currently seeking advice from HR. Discussion followed and governors recognised the importance of obtaining appropriate advice and to ensure that members of staff were strongly advised to follow national guidance.

It was resolved –

That the CEO be requested to seek advice from the local authority, in addition to any received from HR, and to keep trustees updated.

c) On-line Safety

The CEO confirmed that priority continued to be given to ensure on-line safety and that the matter remained under review by the Headteacher Professional Board.

d) Financial Implications

The CEO reported that schools continued to be reminded of the need to continue to log all additional costs due to the impact of covid-19 and also reminded trustees that approval had previously been given for ULT reserves to be used to financially support schools, should it prove necessary. Approval had also been given for the ULT to fund flu vaccines and trustees hoped that staff were taking advantage of this.

288. CEO Report:

A copy of the CEO's report had been previously circulated and read. The CEO reported that many of the issues outlined in the report had already been discussed earlier in the meeting. Other matters included:

- Richard Clarke First School – it had been hoped to refer this to a meeting of the regional headteacher board in November but had now been deferred to a meeting in December. The DfE had confirmed, however, that it was looking to support the school being able to join the ULT from March 2021 if possible. The CEO further reported that the preliminary searches had to be undertaken before completion. Grant funding was, however, available to support this.
- Governor/trustee recruitment – the chair reported that there were currently a number of governor vacancies across the Trust. With this in mind, he suggested that it could be an appropriate time to review the composition of the local governing bodies rather than just automatically appointing to the vacancies.
- Headteacher Well-being – the chair reported that headteacher well-being remained a key priority, particularly at this moment in time. He further reported that trustees could further support this through their link trustee role.

It was resolved –

- i) That the CEO be thanked for her informative report and that it be received and noted.
- ii) That the CFO be requested to obtain costs for undertaking the relevant searches and for them to be completed prior to Richard Clarke joining the Trust.
- iii) That trustees agree to undertake a review and audit of the composition of local governing bodies, to include a review of the necessary skills set required by governors.
- iv) That trustees be requested to contact their link school headteacher to check on their well-being.

289. ULT Finance Report:

The CFO and CEO reported on the following financial matters:

a) CIF Bids 2020/21

The CFO reported that appeals were to be submitted in respect of 6 of the unsuccessful CIF bids and an emergency bid was also to be submitted on behalf of All Saints First School. Consideration was also being given to the bids to be submitted for 2021/22 and trustees would be kept updated.

b) Headteacher Salaries

See confidential appendix (attached).

c) Headteacher Performance Management

The CEO reported that the performance management of all headteachers had now been completed. All reviews had been successful and targets also agreed for the following year.

d) Pay Policy

The CEO reported that the updated Staffordshire County Council model Pay policy had now been received and that the revised policy had also included the recommended national pay rises for teaching staff. In view of the need to ensure that pay rises were included in the December payroll the CEO had written to trustees to seek their approval in advance of the meeting. The CEO was pleased to confirm that trustee approval had

subsequently been given and all appropriate actions taken. The CFO confirmed that the ULT budget modeller would also be updated to reflect the changes made to teacher salaries.

It was resolved –

That the financial report be received and noted.

290. Education Committee:

Trustees had been previously circulated with minutes of the Education committee held on 23 June 2020. Trustees also noted that a meeting of the Education committee had recently been held on 22 September 2020 and the committee chair outlined the issues that had been considered. Trustees noted that Rev Sherwin had been elected as chair to replace Mr Oldham who did not wish to be re-elected as chair due to work commitments. The meeting included a discussion with the headteacher of Ryecroft Middle School regarding the school development plan to bring about required improvements to pupil outcomes. Agreement had also been reached to undertake an external review of IT across schools in the ULT and the CEO further reported that she had recently met with Mr Oldham to consider the scope for such a review before finalising the business case. Mr Oldham was also pleased to report that a colleague from Staffordshire University had also kindly agreed to assist with the review.

It was resolved –

- i) That the minutes of the Education committee held on 23 June 2020 be received and accepted and that the report of the meeting held on 22 September 2020 be noted.
- ii) That trustees thank Rev Sherwin for agreeing to take on the role of committee chair and also place on record their thanks to Mr Oldham for all of the work he had undertaken as committee chair.

291. Finance and Audit Committee:

Trustees had been previously circulated with minutes of a meeting of the Finance and Audit committee held on 24 June 2020. Trustees also noted that a meeting of the Finance and Audit committee had recently been held on 30 September 2020. Trustees noted that Mr Trigg had been re-elected as committee chair and he outlined the issues that had been considered during the meeting. Reference was made in particular to a positive meeting with a representative from Mazars Ltd, external auditor, at the start of the meeting.

It was resolved –

- i) That the minutes of the Finance and Audit committee meeting held on 24 June 2020 be received and accepted and that the report of the meeting held on 30 September 2020 be received and noted.
- ii) That trustees place on record their thanks to Mr Trigg for his willingness to continue as committee chair, with thanks also to Mrs Bennett for her role as acting chair during Mr Trigg's absence for health reasons.

292. Review of Redundancy Scheme:

(Mr Storer declared an interest prior to discussion of this item).

The chair reminded trustees that, as previously discussed, the proposed changes to the redundancy scheme remained under review and that a meeting with the unions was to be held the following day to discuss the matter further.

It was resolved –

That a decision on proposed changes to the redundancy scheme be deferred to a future meeting, pending the outcome of the planned meeting with the unions.

293. Trustee/Governor Training Programme:

The chair reported that he had raised the possibility of arranging joint trustee/governor training sessions at a recent of the School Representation Board and was pleased to confirm that there had been support for this proposal. The chair would contact governing body chairs to discuss suitable training sessions to be arranged. The chair further reported that he and the CEO were discussing with the Teaching School how it could facilitate such training courses on behalf of trustees and governors.

It was resolved –

- i) That the report be received and that consideration be given to arranging a training course to help trustees and governors fully understand their legal responsibilities for keeping children safe in education as outlined in the 2020 guidance document.
- ii) That consideration be given to arranging this training session, to last for around one hour, before the start of a future trust board meeting.

294. Risk Register:

Trustees had been previously circulated with an updated copy of the risk register and the CEO outlined the key changes that had been made to the register.

It was resolved –

That the updated risk register be received and noted.

295. Policy Approval:

A number of policies had been previously circulated and the CEO outlined the changes that had been made to each of them. The chair further reported that he had read the policies in advance of the meeting and had submitted views, and suggested amendments, to the CEO for consideration:

It was resolved –

- i) That the following policies be received and approved as presented:
 - Safeguarding policy
 - On-line Safety policy
 - Safer recruitment policy

- Complaints policy
 - Allowances policy
- ii) That the Staff Code of Conduct be received but that the CEO be requested to amend the policy further to ensure that it was wholly applicable to ULT schools only and to then circulate to trustees for formal approval at the next meeting.
 - iii) That the Discipline policy be received and approved, subject to further amendments as identified during discussions.
 - iv) That the combined Redundancy and Redeployment policy be received and approved, subject to the various dates being amended as necessary following completion of the review process.
 - v) That the Scheme of Delegation be received and approved, subject to the necessary amendments to the committee terms of reference as agreed earlier in the meeting.
 - vi) That the renamed Financial Regulations document be received and that trustees note the importance of them being aware of the contents of this document.

296. Other Business:

Pupil Behaviour

Mr Harper, trustee, questioned the role of the Trust Board with regard to pupil behaviour across the Trust.

It was resolved –

That Mr Harper be requested to raise any particular issues directly with the CEO who would investigate further and take appropriate action.

297. Date of Next Meeting:

Trustees were reminded that the next termly meeting of the trust board would again be held remotely (via Microsoft Teams) on Wednesday, 9 December 2020 at 5.30pm.

Signed..... S. Slater

Date..... 9 December 2020