

Uttoxeter Learning Trust (ULT)

Minutes of the Meeting of the Trust Board held at Thomas Alleyne's High School on Wednesday 6 July, 2022 at 5.30 p.m.

Present: Mr. Slater (Chair), Mr. Pearce, Ms. Livesey, Mrs. Bennett, Mr. Harper,
Rev. Sherwin, Mr. Haswell

In attendance: Dr. Clark (CEO)
Mr. Davies (Clerk to the Trust Board)
Mr. Storer (CFO)

1 **Welcome:**

Trustees were welcomed to tonight's meeting by the Chair. A warm welcome was extended to Mr. Pearce as the ULT's newly appointed Trustee. There is no doubt the skills and competencies of Mr. Pearce will complement those of the existing membership, particularly around financial compliance and accountability. Documentation had been circulated in advance of the meeting with the agenda ensuring a number of areas of discussion that had begun at committee level were tabled again at tonight's meeting to reach a consensus on the way forward. There was a healthy level of engagement throughout the meeting.

The meeting was quorate.

2 **Apologies:**

There were no apologies on this occasion.

3 **Chair Power to Act:**

The Chair confirmed he had taken the following actions on behalf of the Trust Board since the last meeting:

- Signed the lease for the new School (Bramshall Meadows) that will open from September 2022.
- Signed correspondence linked to the Redundancy Scheme so that information could be shared with staff around the revised offer.
- Signed the Filing Resolution for the Articles of Association which are now filed at Companies House and available on the ULT website.
- Supported the interview process at Ryecroft CE Middle School to successfully recruit a new Deputy Headteacher.
- Discussed the full-time CFO role with Mr. Storer.

Resolved: That Trustees fully endorse the actions taken by the Chair of the Trust Board in each of the identified areas.

4 Declarations of Interest:

Mr. Storer declared the following interests in relation to items that were likely to be discussed at tonight's meeting:

- Redundancy Scheme
- ULT Central Team.

No declarations were made by Trustees in respect of any specific items on tonight's agenda.

5 Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

Two sets of minutes needed to be formally ratified at tonight's meeting which included the Minutes of the Trust Board held on Tuesday 17 May, 2022 and the Minutes of a Special Meeting of Trustees on Tuesday 31 May, 2022 which had been convened to discuss Thomas Alleyne's successful CIF Bid and any associated financial implications.

Resolved: That the Minutes from 17.05.22 and 31.05.22 be approved as an accurate and true record.

The Chair did suggest a couple of wording tweaks to the 17 May minutes which the Clerk will action after tonight's meeting.

Resolved: That the Clerk take account of this action.

Resolved: That the Minutes, Agenda and all reports and other papers considered at the meeting be made available for inspection if required.

The Clerk will sign and date the ratified minutes on behalf of the Chair. This task is important to ensure the PA to the CEO can ensure there is an electronic copy of historical minutes, retained for future reference and audit purposes.

6 Matters Arising:

The CEO was invited to provide a brief verbal update of any matters arising from the circulated sets of minutes.

1.1 – CIF Bids

It was confirmed that authorisation has been given by Trustees for Thomas Alleyne's High School to progress the successful CIF Bid and loan. Trustees were also reassured that the process followed is fully compliant with the ULT Procurement and Tendering Policy.

As a related point, the CEO confirmed that all schools have been asked to submit any future CIF bids and loan applications by the end of Autumn Term 1. The Finance and Audit Committee will then apply the necessary due diligence to the submitted proposals before any bids that can progress are formally signed off and ratified by the Trust Board. It is felt such actions will streamline the existing process with all stakeholders having clear visibility as the various steps that need to be taken.

Other CIF-related updates included confirmation of those bids that are being appealed and those bids that are being considered for resubmission in 2023. There was also some additional commentary provided on the work 'Surveyors for Education' is carrying out around the generation of asset management plans (AMPs) for schools and the on-going support that will be provided to schools with future CIF bids. Headteachers like Trustees welcome the fact that the ULT is using an alternative provider to deliver CIF-based support going forward.

1.2 – Length of School Week

Trustees are aware that in the recently published White Paper, there is an expectation that all mainstream state-funded schools are open for a minimum of 32.5 hours per week by September 2023. With this in mind, it was reported that The Richard Clarke First School and Thomas Alleyne's High School currently fall slightly short of this alignment. The CEO informed Trustees what actions both schools will be looking to take to address this issue with Richard Clarke set to meet this expectation by September 2022 and Thomas Alleyne's 12 months later as the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) plans to co-ordinate any change in this area with a review of lesson timings. Trustees were comfortable that the necessary due diligence is being applied to this issue.

1.3 – Support for Subject Leaders to Prepare for Ofsted Deep Dives and Peer Reviews

The CEO confirmed that this area was a priority for the Trust given a number of schools are in a formal inspection window. There is also the challenge in smaller schools where staff often have oversight of multiple subjects and therefore need a toolkit around deep dives that they can deploy in relation to a range of curriculum areas.

As part of the support package for staff across the ULT, the CEO has already arranged an input from an ex-HMI to focus on Ofsted Readiness and the types of challenge that might be put to staff around curriculum intent. In addition, there will be two MAT-wide INSET days next year so that Subject Leaders can come together to share common approaches and best practice across the curriculum which will be supplemented further with the Trust-wide Light-up Uttoxeter training day which is scheduled for 04.01.23. Trustees were pleased to see that from an Ofsted Readiness perspective, there are various support structures in place for staff to ensure they receive the necessary CPD input and can engage with Ofsted in a meaningful and effective way.

7 CFO Finance Report:

The financial update covered the key headlines that had come out of the Finance and Audit Committee which had been convened on 23.06.22. At this meeting, it was confirmed that there had been discussions around the projected out-turn for the current financial cycle; some of the assumptions that had been used to set future budgets; a brief overview of local budgets and some of the key financial challenges that are being faced and, finally, an acknowledgement that representatives from ULT schools will be invited to future committee forums to discuss their budgets and the path they will be looking to take to secure future profitability.

In addition, Trustees had also approved the 3 Year Budget Forecast Return that the CFO needed to submit by 26.07.22.

Resolved: That the Trust Board formally ratify this approval process that played out at committee level.

Trustee Challenge: As an aside, Mr. Pearce confirmed that he would catch up with the CFO to cover some budget-related questions that came to mind when reviewing the financial documentation that had been shared with Trustees.

Resolved: That Mr. Pearce and the CFO follow up on this matter outside of tonight's meeting.

8 Risk Register:

The Risk Register is a standing item that is covered at every meeting. To begin with, the CEO outlined some of the key strategic risks that the ULT is facing at the present time. This discussion focused on Risk 6 (School Performance) with a number of continuous improvement actions that have been implemented in relation to one of the ULT schools; Risk

7 (Business and Operational) with the current absence of the ICT Network Manager and Risk 10 (Health and Safety) with the urgent repair required to All Saints CE School roof. In all of these areas, the CEP outlined the necessary mitigation that is being put in place to move these issues on.

Trustee Challenge: What then followed was a more wide-ranging discussion about the on-going maintenance of the Risk Register as Trustees discussed some of the column headings in the Register to arrive at a common understanding. There was also some consideration of the alignment between the concept of time and an individual risk in the Register and the circumstances that would be needed before a risk is removed from the Register entirely.

Whilst the CEO has adopted a standard template for the Register, she did welcome these observations and thoughts from Trustees. As time was short, it was agreed that these important strategic discussions could continue at the next Finance and Audit Committee meeting with the CEO taking the opportunity to reflect on this feedback and tweak the Register accordingly in advance of any future discussions on this matter.

Resolved: That the CEO take account of this feedback.

9 Central Team:

Trustees are aware of the steps that have been taken to increase the Central Team of the ULT. With the ULT set to grow/expand further in the coming years, it was recognised that a number of additional posts would need to be considered – i.e. Director of School Improvement (or equivalent) who would focus on academic progress across schools and a Chief Operating Officer (or equivalent) who would focus primarily on operational functions. The Chair of the Trust Board felt that it might only take a couple more schools to join the ULT for these posts to become a distinct possibility, particularly given the demands that are being placed on the CEO to wear multiple hats – clearly not a sustainable position.

To support the CEO in the short-term with data management related tasks, Trustees were asked to approve the CEO taking action to source this additional help. The CEO confirmed with Trustees that she had a possible line of enquiry that she could pursue to build additional capacity in this area.

Resolved: That Trustees approve the CEO taking action in this area. The CEO will now take this issue forward.

Trustee Challenge: Trustees also suggested that it might be a good idea to draft a paper that could look at future expansion and the possible structures that the ULT might want to put in place. The changes that have taken place to the Central Team to date have been borne out of necessity to build additional capacity in the system. Moving forward, there is an opportunity to consider structures that are being used across other Trusts to inform the ULT model and ultimately secure important economies of scale.

Resolved: That the CEO and Chair of the Trust Board give this matter some thought in the coming weeks/months.

10 Safeguarding Update:

A brief Safeguarding update was shared. The CEO informed Trustees that all schools are completing the S157 Safeguarding Audit online tool which generates an action plan in line with Local Authority (LA) deadlines. It was reported that an external review of Safeguarding is taking place at one of the ULT schools and that there are also plans to share the outcomes of a survey in relation to stress and well-being that has been carried out across the Trust.

Finally, Trustees were informed that schools are engaging with the Minority Ethnic Achievement Service (MEAS) to support pupils that are enrolled from Ukraine.

Trustee Challenge: Mr. Haswell confirmed he was more than happy to support the CEO with work on the survey return including any associated follow up actions that may be required.

Resolved: That the CEO look to take Mr. Haswell up on his kind offer.

11 CEO Report:

The CEO was asked to report on any other ULT matters that needed to be brought to Trustees' attention at today's meeting.

1.1

Trustees were informed that schools continue to use Covid recovery grants to support interventions across the curriculum. Schools have shared their Spring data and KPI sheets which were discussed at length at the recent Education Committee on 28.06.22 and Trustees were reminded that schools have also predicted (anticipated) performance for 2022 at Key Stage 1, 2,4 and 5 which was shared in the previous report to Trustees.

At tonight's meeting, the CEO was above to share Key Stage 2 data for all relevant ULT schools along with some contextual analysis around Ryecroft CE Middle School's writing data.

Trustee Challenge: Whilst the full analysis of the ULT's performance data for 2022-23 will take place in the Education Committee during the Autumn Term Trustees made one or two initial comments in relation to the shared data sets. As is the case with finance where schools might need to be invited to a Trustee meeting to discuss their Budget and the future path to profitability, Trustees also felt that such an arrangement might also be needed around performance data. Whilst challenge around academic performance should initially play out a local level, Trustees felt that this option should be available if there is a strategic concern with any data set that is shared.

Resolved: That the CEO/Chair of the Trust Board give this matter some thought once the performance data has been analysed in full in the Autumn Term.

1.2

The CEO confirmed that she is pleased with the progress that is being made around governance. Governor Hub is now being used to support Trustee meetings and all Governors/Trustees now have access to resources from the NGA and The Key. An external review of governance and the Trust Board is being secured and there are plans to standardise agendas that will be used in LGB meetings from the Autumn Term.

1.3

An update on the Stone schools was provided. The CEO confirmed that following an initial presentation to eight schools in Stone, further presentations have since been delivered to individual schools and their LGBs. Trustees look forward to hearing what impact these presentations have in terms of persuading schools to join the ULT – an update that will most likely be provided in the Autumn Term.

1.4

The CEO was pleased to report that following the issue of a revised offer linked to the Redundancy Scheme, all staff have now accepted which avoids the need to invite colleagues to an individual meeting. This is a real success story and the CEO was thanked by Trustees for all of her hard work in securing this outcome.

It was also reported that the consultation with The Richard Clarke First School will start on 06.07.22 with due consideration needing to be given as to how these terms are applied to schools who join the ULT in the future.

Finally, Trustees were asked to consider how the revised offer would be impacted should a member of ULT staff be successful in securing an internal promotion within the Trust. Trustees felt that in this scenario the revised offer should still apply.

Resolved: That Trustees ratify this decision.

Resolved: That the CEO be thanked for her informative update.

12 Impact of ULT:

The following areas were discussed:

1.1 – Feedback from Trustees/Governors in relation to Impact

A series of impact statements from individual schools had been shared with Trustees in advance of tonight's meeting.

Trustee Challenge: Whilst the information contained in the impact statements was seen to be useful and, in many cases, extremely positive, it was felt that some work needed to be carried out around the format of the Report and the key areas/themes that needed to be included as such reporting will be required on an annual basis. It was felt that if all schools are encouraged to report on the same themes in their impact statements, Trustees will more easily be able to identify overarching trends that may require further strategic discussion/action.

Resolved: That this feedback be shared with Headteachers and Chairs of Governors at a future School Representation Board (SRB).

The Chair of the Trust Board added at this point that he would be sharing an impact statement of the ULT with Members at their next meeting which will be convened on 13.07.22. Trustees were asked to share any feedback by close of play 08.07.22 if they wanted to see any tweaks made to the impact statement before it is shared.

Resolved: That Trustees take account of this action.

1.2 – Link Trustees

As well as a short discussion around the expected role of a Link Trustee, the CEO took the opportunity to confirm with Trustees that they were happy with the schools and strategic areas of responsibility to which they have been assigned. Trustees confirmed this to be the case.

1.3 – Training for Trustees and Governors

Other than the remote access to the NGA and The Key and arranging any on-going CPD sessions that may be required, there was a brief discussion around the steps the ULT will look to take to develop its own teaching school as the Trust grows and expands. Such investment would provide lots of professional development opportunities for staff with the situation to be managed as well as it can be in the short to mid-term until this becomes a reality.

1.4 – Bramshall Meadows First School – LGB and Site Visit

The CEO confirmed where the governance arrangements are currently at in relation to the new School. It was confirmed that the LGB will start off small until such time that the School grows and additional skill sets are needed. With this in mind, Trustees were asked to approve a pen portrait for a prospective new Governor.

Resolved: That this approval be given.

Finally, Trustees were informed that a site visit can always be arranged if individuals are interested and that plans are already underway for an official opening ceremony in the Autumn Term. The CEO will share details on this final point when they are known.

13 Committees:

The Minutes of the Education Committee (27.04.22) and the Minutes of the Finance and Audit Committee (11.05.22) had been shared with Trustees in advance of today's meeting.

Resolved: That all circulated minutes be ratified with immediate effect.

Verbal updates were also shared in relation to the Education Committee that had taken place on 28.06.22 and the Finance and Audit Committee that had taken place on 23.06.22. Trustees noted the points made and can always take in the contents of the published minutes for themselves.

14 Policy Ratification:

The following policies needed to be formally ratified at today's meeting:

- Indexation in the Teachers' Pension Scheme
- ULT Risk Management Policy
- ULT Whistleblowing Policy
- ULT Health and Safety Policy
- ULT Appraisal Policy
- ULT Capability of Staff Policy.

As the Finance and Audit Committee was not quorate when some of these policies were reviewed, it was agreed they would be forwarded to tonight's meeting for formal ratification. Equally, Trustees were asked to accept the recommendation from the LA in relation to the indexation issue. The financial implications of ratifying this approach were discussed which are very minor in nature.

Resolved: That Trustees formally ratify the listed policies.

Resolved: That Trustees formally agree to the recommendation made by the LA in relation to indexation in the final salary section of the Teachers' Pension Scheme.

15 Any Other Business:

There was no additional business on this occasion.

16 Confidentiality:

Trustees were asked to identify if there were any items/materials which needed to be excluded from any Agenda, Minutes, reports or other papers discussed at the meeting which would normally be made available for inspection following the meeting.

Trustees were also asked to identify any items included on the Agenda which require recording in a Confidential Appendix to the Minutes.

Resolved: That it be identified that no items needed to be recorded in a Confidential Appendix to the Minutes.

There were no items/materials identified for exclusion.

17 Dates and Times of Future Meetings:

The meeting schedule for 2022-23 has already been finalised.

The next meeting of the Trust Board will take place on Wednesday 12 October, 2022 at 5.30 p.m.

All that was left to do was for the Chair to thank all Trustees for their attendance and contributions to today's meeting,

The meeting was brought to a close.

PP P. Davies
Chair

12.10.22
Date

Uttoxeter Learning Trust (ULT)

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Trust Board held at Thomas Alleyne's High School
on Wednesday 6 July, 2022 at 5.30 p.m.**

Action Matrix

Minute	Owner	Action Required	Action Update
5	Clerk	Tweak 17 May minutes in line with feedback provided.	
5	CEO	Make minutes available as a public record.	
5	Clerk	Sign ratified minutes and share with PA to CEO.	
7	Mr. Pearce	Catch up with CFO around finance questions.	
8	CEO	Reflect on discussions in relation to Risk Register.	
9	CEO	Seek support around data management tasks.	
9	CEO/ Chair	Consider expansion implications for Trust in terms of evolving structure for Central Team.	
10	CEO	Seek out Mr. Haswell's support in relation to survey return.	
11	CEO/ Chair	Determine whether any schools need to attend a future Trustee meeting to discuss performance data.	
12	CEO	Share feedback on impact statements as suggested.	
12	Trustees	Provide Chair with feedback as requested.	

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 12 October, 2022 at 5.30 p.m.