

Uttoxeter Learning Trust (ULT)

Minutes of the Meeting of the Trust Board held at The Bramshall Meadows First School on Wednesday 12 October, 2022 at 5.30 p.m.

Present: Mr. Slater (Chair), Mr. Pearce, Ms. Livesey, Mrs. Bennett, 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. The meeting took place in the most recent addition to the ULT family of schools with Dr. Bennett joining the meeting forum remotely. Documentation as is now standard practice had been uploaded to Governor Hub in advance of the meeting along with a clear and purposeful agenda. There was a healthy level of engagement throughout the meeting as Trustees considered a range of strategic issues as well as receiving various information updates. There was also a need to ratify some resolutions arising from discussions that had taken place at the Education Committee the previous day.

The meeting was quorate.

2 Apologies:

Resolved: That an apology be received and accepted from Mr. Harper.

3 Election of Chair:

There was a requirement to elect a Chair of the Trust Board at tonight's meeting. Nominations were sought and Mr. Slater was put forward – a role he was more than happy to take on for the next 12 months.

Resolved: That Mr. Slater be appointed Chair of the Trust Board up to the first meeting of the Autumn Term, 2023.

4 Election of Vice-Chair:

There was a requirement to elect a Vice-Chair of the Trust Board at tonight's meeting. Nominations were sought and Ms. Livesey was put forward – a role she was more than happy to take on for the next 12 months.

Resolved: That Ms. Livesey be appointed Vice-Chair of the Trust Board up to the first meeting of the Autumn Term, 2023.

5 Chair Approval – Power to Act:

Trustees were asked to approve the transfer of Chair Power to Act to Mr. Slater for the next 12 months.

Resolved: That Trustees ratify this decision with immediate effect.

6 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 letters that have been sent to staff at The Richard Clarke First School to confirm the revised offer with a deadline of 07.10.22.
- Agreed the wording for the plaque that will be fixed to the Bramshall Meadows site following the official opening ceremony that is scheduled for 14.10.22.
- Agreed the appointment of the Chair (Mrs. Castle) and the Vice-Chair (Mr. Newton) for The Bramshall Meadows First School.
- Participated in recruitment and selection activities which relate to the expansion of the Central Team – i.e. full time CFO and H&S Premises Lead.

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

7 Declarations of Interest:

The CFO 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.

There was also a requirement to review the committee structure, membership and terms of reference as contained within the circulated Scheme of Delegation.

Other than clarifying whether the Finance and Audit Committee could remain as one combined entity, Trustees saw no reason to recommend any further changes to the Scheme of Delegation.

8 Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Trust Board held on Wednesday 6 July, 2022 be approved as an accurate and true record.

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.

Trustee Challenge: A Trustee asked that a standing agenda item should be added for each meeting to enable Trustees to consider how their strategic discussions will benefit both the ULT and the family of schools within it. This is considered good practice. Also, it was suggested that the action matrix should be reviewed at each meeting to enable an audit to be captured of how the listed actions have been progressed/closed off.

Resolved: That the Clerk/CEO take note of these points when setting future agendas and producing minutes.

9 Matters Arising:

Looking specifically at the action matrix from the last meeting:

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

In terms of additional data support (the only AMBER action), the CEO confirmed she is looking for an external solution around data management having exhausted all internal options. It was confirmed that the CEO is currently in discussion with Redbourne who provide data analysis for all UTCs via Baker Dearing. These discussions are exploring a report for a three-tier system which will support the data analytics process.

Beyond the action matrix, the following additional updates were noted:

1.1 – CIF Bids

Trustees were given the latest information around CIF Bids which included the schedule of works that have been completed to date in relation to successful bids; the possibility of some schools pursuing the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme as an alternative to CIF; the bids that have been appealed and rejected and the follow up mitigation that will now be put in place and, finally, the number of bids that are being considered for 2023.

The key takeaway for Trustees is that there will be a number of projects for Trustees to consider in relation to the use of reserves to support future CIF Bids in a tough financial climate. A timeframe has been set for the Finance and Audit Committee and Trust Board to apply the necessary due diligence to the proposals before anything is formally submitted but the CEO did query whether an additional focused meeting may be required. This is a matter the Chair and CEO will discuss further outside of tonight's meeting.

Resolved: That the CEO/Chair follow up on this matter.

1.2 – Staff CPD

The CEO confirmed that she shared at the Education Committee the wealth of training initiatives that are currently available to all staff and leaders across the ULT. It was reported that the offer is very varied and includes CPD for schools responding to Ofsted feedback; Ofsted Readiness training; network opportunities for Subject Leaders; bespoke one-off events

such as Light Up Uttoxeter and core curriculum events which ensure like-minded practitioners can come together and share best practice. Trustees welcomed the diversity of offer and the level of strategic thinking that has gone into this training framework which will be instrumental in progressing the professional practice of all staff across the ULT.

Trustee Challenge: Trustees challenged whether the Stone schools are being incorporated into this training offer and wider ULT support structure.

The CEO confirmed what steps have been taken to date to involve some of the Stone schools in future training events. It was reported that there has also been an offer of help made to Alleyne's High School to support it with any future CIF Bids, particularly given the fact this school has expressed an interest in joining the ULT. No doubt such collaborative-based activities will increase as relationships with some of the Stone schools are strengthened even further.

1.3 – External Review of Governance

It was confirmed that a tender for an external review of governance and the Trust Board is being concluded. The CEO intends to catch up with Ms. Livesey in the coming days to progress this matter.

1.4 – NGA Skills Audit

It is considered good practice that Governors and Trustees carry out a Skills Audit on an annual basis to identify any knowledge/skills gaps which can inform future training/investment decisions. With this in mind, Trustees were asked to complete the NGA Skills Audit and return it to the CEO so the data can be analysed.

Resolved: That Trustees take account of this action.

As an aside, it was also confirmed that there will be a renewed focus on Link Trustee roles in the months ahead. At the Education Committee, some useful information had been shared pertaining to the Safeguarding/SEND Link Trustee role. It is envisaged that from this circulated information a role descriptor can be shaped that will direct future Link Trustee engagement in this area. The expectation is that this model will be applied to other Link Trustee roles with the necessary follow up discussion at meetings as appropriate.

Resolved: That the CEO/Chair co-ordinate this activity.

1.5 – Trustee CPD

There was a brief discussion around the need for Trustees to access the latest Level 1 Safeguarding training and Prevent training. The necessary actions will be put in place to facilitate this process with Trustees not needing to revisit the Safeguarding training if they already hold the appropriate certification.

Resolved: That the PA to the CEO ensure the training is being accessed by Trustees and the central training log is up to date.

1.6 – Redundancy Scheme

This item has already been referenced in the course of these minutes. Essentially, a revised offer shared with staff employed before January 2020 has been accepted with the required consultation-based activity now playing out at The Richard Clarke First School.

1.7 – Governance Arrangements – ULT Schools

The governance arrangements for The Bramshall Meadows First School (Chair/Vice-Chair) have already been referenced in these minutes and were highlighted in the CEO Report circulated in advance of the meeting.

In addition, it was confirmed that the Chair of Governors at All Saints First School is retiring with the Vice-Chair stepping forward to take on the Chairmanship of the Board. Trustees asked that the CEO write to the retiring Chair (Mrs. Snowden) to thank her for her leadership of the LGB in recent years.

Resolved: That the CEO take account of this action.

10 Risk Register:

The Risk Register is scrutinised on a regular basis within meetings with the CEO confirming this strategic overview is maintained as a live, evolving document.

Some time was spent discussing the three designated high-risk areas – R3 (Sustainable budgets), R6 (IT/Cybersecurity) and R7 (Condition of buildings). The supplied narrative was helpful for Trustees as they commented on each of these three areas.

In relation to R3, the CEO confirmed there is currently a live consultation enacted by the JCB Academy to increase admissions for Y9 and Y13. Trustees felt that any threat to pupil numbers from a local competitor did warrant a response, particularly when there is the space in the existing provision to take this perceived extra demand. It was agreed the CEO and Chair would send a letter on behalf of the Trust Board in response to this live consultation.

Resolved: That the Chair/CEO take account of this action.

Trustees did again revisit some of the scores in the Register and queried whether some of the listed values may be understated in relation to particular risk areas. Trustees were asked to contact the CEO by email if they had particular observations to make in this area.

Resolved: That Trustees take account of this action.

11 CEO Report:

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

1.1 - Data

The CEO Report contained key headline data for EYFS through to KS5 as at the end of the academic year 2021-22. There was an accompanying narrative around the supplied data with the following key highlights worthy of note:

EYFS

- As a Trust, EYFS teacher assessment data exceeds the national comparator for 2022 for Good Level of Development.
- National averages for Reading, Writing and Maths are expected in November 2022 but Trust averages currently do exceed 2019.

KS1

- Trust attainment matched the 2022 national figure for Phonics, and Reading, Writing and Mathematics exceeded at expected standard and greater depth, except for Writing at greater depth.
- The national averages that are available are lower in 2022 compared to 2019.

KS2

- As a Trust attainment exceeds the 2022 national figures, except for Grammar Punctuation and Spelling at a higher level.
- The national averages are lower in 2022 compared to 2019, except for Reading.

KS4

- The attainment 8 is lower than 2019.

KS5

- Attainment has improved both in academic subjects and vocational compared to 2019 (APS/average grade).
- National averages will be confirmed post table checking which concludes in October.

There was some follow up discussion around the level of data mining that Trustees may wish to carry out in relation to this KPI, the performance of vulnerable groups and what individual schools are doing where the gap is widening and, finally, confirmation that members of the SLT from individual schools will come to the Education Committee to discuss various strategic challenges linked to their local data set. It was confirmed on this final point that the Headteacher from Thomas Alleyne's High School would be invited to the next Education Committee to discuss key trends and patterns in the 2021-22 data, key lessons learned to inform practice this year and how the current in-year data is shaping up given the national driver appears to be moving again from a mid-point in 2022 to the pre-pandemic standard in 2023.

1.2 – Expansion of Trust

This area has been discussed at the Finance and Audit Committee in some detail. Trustees were given a brief update on the presentations that have been delivered to a number of schools in the Stone area in recent months; the level of interest that has been shown following the various presentations from prospective partners; the due diligence that will need to be exercised for any school looking to join the Trust; the possibility of an Associate membership for some schools and, finally, the collaborative and networking opportunities that are being offered some schools who are looking to strengthen their ties with the ULT. This is clearly a work in progress with no doubt updates to be shared at future meetings.

Trustee Challenge: Trustees felt that the financials will be crucial when any prospective school wishes to join the ULT. Whilst there will be a due diligence process that will run its course, areas such as the state of a school's revenue reserves, its ability to contribute to a top slice arrangement and the general health of the UK economy are all factors that need the necessary scrutiny when any new membership application is being considered. The White Paper has of course set a vision/direction of travel in this area but Trustees were clear on one point – that any growth model has to be sustainable in the mid to long-term.

In terms of the expansion of the Central Team, it was confirmed that following Trustees agreeing on a stepped approach for future recruitment, there have been two rounds of recruitment to find a full-time CFO and H&S Premises Lead with the second round currently live – more on this later.

1.3 - Members

The Chair confirmed he had been approached by an individual who may be interested in taking on a Trustee role in the ULT. He shared the professional background of the individual in question which is impressive and would definitely bring added value to the current governance structure. It was agreed the Chair would take this prospective Trustee application to the Members forum for a resolution to be agreed.

Resolved: That the Chair progress this matter.

1.4 – CEO Training

The CEO confirmed that she had recently accessed some training around 'Designing Central Service Masterclasses' through CST and will share the circulated materials with Members and Trustees. She queried whether Trustees would be happy to attend a facilitated planning day

to inform ULT improvement plans. Trustees confirmed they were more than happy to get involved with this strategic activity.

Resolved: That the CEO circulate the training material and co-ordinate a bespoke planning day for Trustees.

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

12 Safeguarding/COVID-19 and ULT Schools:

The following areas were discussed:

1.1 – Wellbeing Survey

The Headteacher confirmed that the outcomes of a survey in relation to stress and wellbeing across the Trust have been shared with Trustees. The CEO had discussed the outcomes with Mr. Haswell (HR Link Trustee) in terms of any follow up actions that need to be taken. As well as many positive indicator returns in the survey, it was confirmed an area of concern has been explored and is being closely monitored.

From a Trustee perspective, it was recommended that the survey is repeated within a designated time period so any trends over time can be captured. There were discussions about where the Trust can make a tangible difference to staff wellbeing being somewhat removed from local daily practices. There was also a feeling that forums such as the School Representation Board (SRB) and LGB meetings could be used to explore particular wellbeing themes and to establish at a local level what support structures have been put in place – useful for sharing best practice across schools. It was felt that there also needs to be a consistent offer in terms of signposting wellbeing support within schools linked to varying stakeholder needs. As the HR Link Trustee pointed out, the survey is only the start of any wellbeing action that is needed. It is important schools can see that the survey is not a tokenistic gesture and there is a genuine culture (driven from the top) to put in place the support structures and frameworks that individuals may need to turn to at any given point in their working life. The CEO thanked Trustees for these thoughts and will continue to liaise with Mr. Haswell on this theme in the months ahead.

1.2 – Covid-19

The CEO laid out the current arrangements in relation to Covid-19 across the Trust – a matter that has been discussed on numerous occasions in previous meetings. With cases of Covid-19 expected to rise in line with other winter illnesses, the following recommendation was put to Trustees about how ongoing cases of Covid-19 should be managed:

‘It is necessary to agree a consistent approach to those who have decided to test and have tested positive. Most schools are supporting the recommended 5-day isolation of staff and 3-day isolation of pupils who test positive, with a request for them to work from home. As advised by HR this absence, if directed, cannot be counted against the Bradford school. Most Headteachers agree that a return-to-work meeting should still be in place but leniency shown to such individuals.’

Resolved: That this recommendation be formally ratified by Trustees. The CEO will now convey this message to Headteachers of ULT schools so it can in turn be shared with staff.

13 Committees:

The Minutes of the Education Committee (28.06.22) and the Minutes of the Finance and Audit Committee (23.06.22) had been shared with Trustees in advance of tonight’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 11.10.22 and the Finance and Audit Committee that had taken place on 05.10.22. Trustees noted the points made and can always take in the contents of the published minutes for themselves.

As the Education Committee was not quorate for the meeting on 11.10.22, the following key decision needed to be ratified by Trustees:

- To appoint Rev. Sherwin as Chair of the Education Committee.

Resolved: That this decision be ratified with immediate effect.

All other matters discussed at the Education Committee have been covered in the course of these minutes.

A staffing matter needed to be raised at this point in the meeting – **see Confidential Appendix.**

14 Policy Ratification:

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

- ULT Business Continuity Plan
- ULT Reserves and Charging policy
- ULT Allowances policy
- ULT Fixed Assets
- ULT SPS Discretionary Policies
- ULT Redundancy and Redeployment policy
- Trade Union Recognition & Facility Agreement
- ULT Online Safety Policy
- ULT Safer Recruitment Policy
- ULT Safeguarding Policy
- ULT Staff Code of Conduct
- ULT Staff Discipline policy
- ULT Parent Code of Conduct.

Trustee Challenge: There was feedback shared on the Fixed Assets Policy, a request that the Trade Union Recognition and Facility Agreement be taken away and reflected on before being tabled at a future meeting and confirmation was sought that the changes requested in relation to the ULT Parent Code of Conduct have been made.

The CEO noted all of these points, confirming that the suggested tweaks to the listed policies have been/will be made.

Resolved: That with the one exception, Trustees formally ratify the listed policies.

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 the following item needed to be recorded in a Confidential Appendix to the Minutes:

- Minute 13.

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 7 December, 2022 at 5.30 p.m. The venue for the meeting and whether the meeting will take place in person/remotely will be confirmed nearer the time.

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

The meeting was brought to a close.

PP P. Davies

07.12.22

Chair

Date

Uttoxeter Learning Trust (ULT)

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Trust Board held at Bramshall Meadows First School
on Wednesday 12 October, 2022 at 5.30 p.m.**

Action Matrix

Minute	Owner	Action Required	Action Update
8	CEO	Make paperwork from July meeting available as a public record if required.	
8	Clerk	PP the minutes and send copy to PA to CEO.	
8	Clerk/CEO	Take note of feedback around impact and action matrix.	
9	CEO/Chair	Discuss additional meeting to review CIF Bids.	
9	Trustees	Complete and return Skills Audit.	
9	CEO/Chair	Discuss how best to progress role descriptor for Link Trustee roles.	
9	PA CEO	Ensure training is being accessed by Trustees and training log is up to date.	
9	CEO	Write a letter of thanks to retiring Chair.	
10	CEO/Chair	Respond to JCB consultation.	
10	Trustees	Contact CEO with specific feedback in relation to Risk Register.	
11	Chair	Discuss Trustee application with Chair of Members Board.	
11	CEO	Circulate training material and arrange bespoke planning day for Trustees.	
12	CEO	Relay Covid position to Headteachers.	

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 7 December, 2022 at 5.30 p.m.