

Uttoxeter Learning Trust (ULT)

Minutes of the Meeting of the Trust Board held in a virtual setting on Tuesday 17 May, 2022 at 5.30 p.m.

Present: Mr. Slater (Chair), Dr. Clark (CEO), Ms. Livesey, Mrs. Bennett,
Mr. Harper

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

1 Welcome:

Trustees were welcomed to today's Trust Board meeting by the Chair. It is likely that at some point in the future, Trustees will revert back to meeting in a face-to-face capacity or at least some kind of blended model will be adopted. Documentation had been circulated in advance of the meeting along with a clear and focused agenda. There were a number of decisions that Trustees needed to take that would be formally ratified during the course of today's meeting.

The meeting was quorate.

2 Apologies:

Resolved: That apologies for absence be received and accepted from Rev. Sherwin and Mr. Haswell.

3 Chair Power to Act:

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

- Wrote a governance plan for Bramshall Meadows First School. This plan is now being implemented.
- Produced with the support of the CEO a full and comprehensive response to a parental complaint at Ryecroft C of E Middle School that had been sent straight to the ESFA.
- Agreed to a tender for INSET to be arranged for ULT staff with a specific focus on preparing Subject Leaders for deep dives within their respective curriculum areas.
- Agreed a letter on behalf of the CEO which was sent to the unions and shared with members of staff.

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:

No declarations of interest were made by Trustees in respect of any items appearing on today's agenda.

5 Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Trust Board held on Monday 28 March, 2022 (including Confidential Appendix) be approved as an accurate and true record.

The Chair did suggest a couple of wording tweaks to the minutes which the Clerk will action in the immediate aftermath of today'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 March minute record. The following summary points can be noted:

1.1 – CIF Bids

The CEO confirmed that the outcomes of the new CIF bids have now come through.

There was a discussion around the two bids that have been successful – i.e. Thomas Alleyne's High School for windows (0.4 million) and electrics (3.1 million).

Trustee Challenge: Whilst the School contribution for the two successful bids will be 15% in each case – i.e. 60K and 480K with a loan being used in relation to the electrics to be paid back over eight years, Trustees felt that they needed to be assured that Thomas Alleyne's can make the loan repayments without any adverse impact on the School Budget. With this in mind, the Chair and CEO asked to see the reworked budget for Thomas Alleyne's with these CIF repayments included to satisfy themselves that these loan repayments can be made in future years.

Resolved: That the CIF bids be approved in principle, subject to this extra level of diligence being applied. The CFO will share the requested budgetary information with the CEO and Chair in the coming days so that any further questions/challenge can be put forward before the ULT responds to the ESFA by 10.06.22.

Other updates included the CIF bids that have not been successful in the latest round, the progress that has been made with pre-existing CIF bids (for example, the All Saints boiler and heating system) and, finally, confirmation that visits with the preferred provider, Surveyors for Education, are underway for all schools within the Trust. Trustees noted these useful updates.

1.2 – Articles of Association

The CEO confirmed the revised Articles of Association have been formally approved by Companies House. Approval by Members is also imminent. There is therefore no further action that is requested by the Trust Board at the present time.

1.3 – Cybersecurity

Trustees were informed that an action plan is currently being formulated by the IT network manager to strengthen provision. It was reported that RPA insurance includes cybersecurity

from September 2022, albeit there are a number of requirements including staff and governance training that need to be satisfied.

7 CFO Finance Report:

The CFO focused on one significant issue at today's meeting – the adjustment to the top slice as a result of the restructuring of the Central Team.

At the last Finance and Audit Committee, Trustees had discussed both an increase to the top slice that would be required from ULT schools and when it was likely to take effect. The CFO had been tasked with drafting various financial models around the top slice increase and its implications which were shared with Trustees in advance of today's meeting.

Trustees felt that a top slice of 4% was reflective of the changes that had been made to the Central Team and were also happy to see the increased top slice being introduced from January 2023. It was felt that 4% is still a more than reasonable top slice when compared to other Trusts, there was an acceptance that with the Trust looking to expand, school leaders should have anticipated that such an increase was likely and, finally, the lag time (January) should be of benefit to leaders as they plan budgets and take account of any variances in income/expenditure before the start of a new financial cycle.

Resolved: That Trustees ratify a new adjusted top slice of 4% to take effect from January 2023. The CEO will now ensure all relevant stakeholder groups are engaged over this issue.

The CFO was thanked for pulling together all of the relevant paperwork in relation to this issue.

8 Risk Register:

Trustees had received the ULT Risk Register in advance of today's meeting. The CEO confirmed that following some challenge presented by Trustees at the Finance and Audit Committee meeting, she had made some tweaks to the Register – both in terms of the accompanying narrative and on occasion the lowering/increasing of the risk scores to take account of recent developments in each of the respective areas.

Trustees were more than happy with the changes made and saw no reason to offer additional challenge at today's meeting.

9 Covid-19/Health and Wellbeing/ULT Schools Update:

The following updates were shared:

1.1 – Covid-19

Trustees are aware of the position the Trust has been taking in recent months around Covid-19. This position which includes providing access to twice weekly testing and testing on return from isolation will be retained up to half-term. From this point forward, the Trust will revert back to government guidelines with any unused tests being retained in case of an outbreak at a later date. Headteachers are generally supportive of this move with Trustees thanked for all of the due diligence they have applied around this sensitive area.

1.2 – Survey

The CEO confirmed that surveys have taken place across all ULT schools with a specific focus on stress and wellbeing. It was confirmed that the outcomes will be collated and shared with Trustees for further analysis and discussion at a future meeting.

Resolved: That the CEO take account of this action.

1.3 – Ukraine

Trustees were informed that 11 pupils have been admitted into the full age range of schools in the Trust from Ukraine. Schools are collaborating with each other to ensure resources to support this vulnerable group are being streamlined as much as possible. There is a real focus on getting the level of support for these children right from the outset rather than waiting for financial support to filter through from central government. Trustees were pleased to see how proactive schools are being to welcome this vulnerable group of pupils and their families into the ULT community.

10 CEO Report – Other ULT Matters:

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

The latest performance data set as reported by schools at the end of the Spring Term was shared with Trustees. This included some data comparisons with previous years across the different Key Stages. It is likely the Education Committee will analyse this data set in greater detail along with the various components of the recovery curriculum that are being deployed across ULT schools.

1.2

The CEO confirmed that two schools (The Richard Clarke First School and Thomas Alleyne's High School) currently have a school week below 32.5 hours.

Trustee Challenge: Trustees challenged that both schools should be strongly encouraged to fall within the expected guidelines as soon as possible. This comment particularly applies to Thomas Alleyne's High School with the CEO asked to check with the Executive Headteacher whether the movement to 32.5 hours can be accelerated in anyway.

Resolved: That the CEO take account of this action.

1.3

The latest Ofsted inspection outcomes were shared with Trustees. In addition, the CEO confirmed what action had been taken by the Headteachers Professional Board to translate the ULT vision and values into 'fundamentals,' i.e. 'look fors' across the Trust. A copy of this document was shared with Trustees in advance of today's meeting.

In addition, Trustees were informed of the CEO's plans to secure support for Subject Leaders to prepare for Ofsted deep dives and peer reviews. Looking at various external third-party support, the CEO has settled on a CPD package that will deliver an immediate twilight and a series of additional twilight sessions to staff across the ULT. Headteachers have agreed in principle for an existing INSET day to be broken up in this way to ensure from an Ofsted Readiness perspective, their staff are benefiting from the professional development opportunities that have been provided. Trustees were informed that the John Taylor Teaching School Hub, Ark Academies Trust and an ex-HMI have been approached to deliver the CPD that is required.

Resolved: That Trustees fully endorse and ratify the CPD approach that is being taken. The CEO will now convey these final training plans with Headteachers in the coming days.

1.4

The latest situation with regard to the Stone schools was shared. Following a successful presentation on 03.02.22, the Trust has now been asked to deliver further presentations at Alleyne's Academy and Pirehill First School. The CEO will be making arrangements for the

teams who will deliver these presentations in the coming weeks and will approach Trustees as necessary.

Resolved: That the CEO approach Trustees as needed.

1.5

The latest update around Bramshall Meadows First School was shared. Key headlines included the current applications for September 2022; staffing appointments; the date for the handover of the building; the signing off of the Funding Agreement; the preparations that have been put in place for the Ofsted pre-inspection visit and, finally, the presentation of several pen portraits for the Local Governing Board (LGB). It was agreed that Trustees would be invited to the site for a tour and or future meeting of Bramshall Meadows First School so they have the opportunity to look around and take in the new Build.

Resolved: That Trustees ratify the pen portraits that they have received to date and that the CEO would update Trustees regarding visit opportunities

1.6

In relation to the Redundancy Scheme, the CEO confirmed she hopes to circulate a table summarising the responses to the Trust Board by 20.05.22. No doubt at this point further analysis and discussion of the feedback will take place.

Resolved: That the CEO share the feedback with Trustees.

1.7

It was confirmed that Mr. Pearce has been appointed as a new Trustee who will join the Finance and Audit Committee. Trustees welcomed this latest appointment.

1.8

Trustees' attention was drawn to the strategic priorities for the ULT which are very much aligned with the soundings coming out of the recent White Paper on educational reform. Trustees fully endorsed the direction of travel that was being proposed in each strategic area.

11 Impact of ULT:

The following areas were discussed:

1.1 – Feedback from Trustees in relation to Impact

The Chair again requested that each Trustee email him with three ways that they feel the Trust has had a positive impact on school. From this feedback, an overall impact statement will be generated.

Resolved: That Trustees respond to this request.

1.2 – Link Trustees

Although Rev. Sherwin was not present at today's meeting, Trustees were reminded that she is currently pulling together some Link Trustee protocols which will be discussed in a future committee forum.

In terms of strategic responsibilities, there was a general discussion around current roles and where any gaps exist. The CEO will discuss any gaps with Trustees who might be interested in taking these roles on outside of today's meeting.

Resolved: That the CEO take account of this action.

1.3 – Training for Trustees and Governors

The CEO confirmed that LGBs are being instructed to carry out skills audits so any training gaps can be easily identified. Governors and Trustees also have access to resources from the NGA and access to the Key which should support them further in their governance-based duties. There are also opportunities to utilise Governor Hub and the added functionality this will provide around logging training courses at both a local and Trust level. Clearly, this is an area that will evolve rapidly in the next 12 months.

1.4 – Bramshall Meadows First School

The updates have already been provided in this area.

12 Committees:

The Minutes of the Education Committee (14.03.22) and the Minutes of the Finance and Audit Committee (24.03.22) 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 27.04.22 and the Finance and Audit Committee that had taken place on 11.05.22. Trustees noted the points made and can always take in the contents of the published minutes for themselves.

13 Policy Ratification:

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

- UT Bereavement Policy
- ULT Early Career Framework Policy
- ULT Home School Communication Policy.

Resolved: That all policies be ratified with immediate effect.

14 Any Other Business:

There was no additional business on this occasion.

15 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.

16 Dates and Times of Future Meetings:

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 6 July, 2022 at 5.30 p.m. This meeting will be held in face-to-face capacity and is likely to be convened at Thomas Alleyne's High School.

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.

PA P Davies

06.07.22

Chair

Date

Uttoxeter Learning Trust (ULT)

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on Tuesday 17 May, 2022 at 5.30 p.m.**

Action Matrix

Minute	Owner	Action Required	Action Update
5	Clerk	Action wording tweaks in minutes.	
5	CEO	Make March minutes available on request.	
5	Clerk	'PP' minutes and forward onto PA of CEO.	
6	CFO	Share budget information with Chair/CEO to take account of impact of CIF bids.	
7	CEO	Ensure all stakeholders are engaged over increase in top slice.	
9	CEO	Collate and share outcomes from Trust survey.	
10	CEO	Check with Thomas Alleyne's whether move to 32.5-hour week can be accelerated.	
10	CEO	Approach Trustees for support with additional Stone school presentations.	
10	CEO	Arrange Trustee opportunity to visit new Build.	
10	CEO	Share feedback linked to Redundancy Scheme with Trustees.	
11	Trustees	Send three impact statements to Chair.	
11	CEO	Approach Trustees to fill any gaps in strategic responsibilities.	

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 6 July, 2022 at 5.30 p.m.