

## Uttoxeter Learning Trust (ULT)

### Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee held at Bramshall Meadows First School on Thursday 9 February, 2023 at 3:00 p.m.

**Present:** Mr. Haswell (Vice Chair), Dr. Clark (CEO), Mr. Slater, Mr. Harper (joined via Teams)

**In attendance:** Mrs Gallimore (PA to CEO)  
Mr. Storer (CFO)

#### 1 Welcome:

Trustees were welcomed to today's meeting by the Vice Chair. Documentation had been uploaded to Governor Hub in preparation for the meeting and Mr Harper joined the meeting remotely. In keeping with the Trustee remit, there were a number of challenge-based questions and points of clarification that were put forward during the meeting as a robust level of due diligence was applied in relation to the shared documentation.

The meeting was quorate.

#### 2 Apologies:

Apologies were accepted from Mr Pearce.

#### 3 Declarations of Interest:

No declarations were made.

#### 4 Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

**Resolved:** That the Minutes of the Finance and Audit Committee held on Thursday 1 December, 2022 be approved as an accurate and true record.

The Clerk will sign and date the ratified minutes on behalf of the Vice-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.

#### 5 Matters Arising:

Item 1.2 the implications of the Harper Trust v Brazel ruling regarding holiday entitlement; Insight HR advised that the Government have begun a consultation process on the ruling therefore ULT have been advised to await the outcome of the consultation before further action.

Mr Storer informed the Committee that Mr McKenna (ULT IT Lead) has now returned from long term sick leave, on his return he has met with Mrs Grattage, Headteacher at Ryecroft Middle School to discuss their IT requirements. Mr Mckenna will update Mr Harper on the discussion.

The revised Scheme of delegation was sent to the Trust Board.

Mr Davies to source terms of reference for LGBs.

Following up on the national tutoring programme; Dr Clark confirmed there were three schools who had some clawback. Picknalls First School (£1012.50) clawback was due to them not using the funding calculator, Mr Storer has shown them how to use it and this won't be an issue going forward. Windsor Park Middle School (£4072.50) didn't satisfy the funding requirements with their summer school. Ryecroft Middle School (£5562.88) were unsuccessful in recruiting tutors last year but have been successful in recruiting tutors this year.

The CEO confirmed that all actions listed in the matrix have either been progressed/closed down or will be referenced during the course of tonight's meeting.

## **6 Risk Register:**

An updated risk register was shared prior to the meeting, Trustees had no further questions.

## **7 Updates on use of reserves – CIF Bids / Building Projects:**

Mr Storer discussed with school leaders whether their CIF bid contributions could be increased to improve their CIF score and therefore increase the chance of a successful bid. These have now been confirmed at 15.1% or 20.1%.

Surveyors to Education have submitted the CIF bids by the December deadline and the outcomes are expected in May.

Mr Storer has begun to look at the timescales of when information needs to be presented to the Finance and Audit Committee.

Mr Storer met with Mrs Tapp, headteacher at Picknalls First School, to discuss their CIF bid and their request for reserves. Mrs Tapp is putting together more detailed plans for their proposed use of reserves to present to the Finance and Audit Committee.

## **8 Report from Estates and H&S Lead – initial findings**

Mr Beaver shared a report with Trustees prior to the meeting.

### **8.1 The Asset management report**

This report was via a non-intrusive questionnaire therefore some answers are given to the best of a school's knowledge. The only way to give a definitive answer to some questions would be via an intrusive survey.

Action: Mr Beaver to contact the local authority to verify the status of some aspects of the report.

Mr Beaver informed the committee that there are a number of services available to school staff regarding well-being. Dr Clark confirmed these services are being shared locally via headteachers. This has been confirmed at HPB and SRB.

ACTION: Check with LGB's that the links have been shared and are being accessed.

### **8.2 Statutory Compliance**

The ULT schools have an SLA with Entrust which covers most of the statutory compliance testing required by schools. The management fees for this service costs the Trust around £10,000 per year. This service could be taken by the ULT to eliminate the management cost. Mr Beaver highlighted a number of statutory servicing of equipment that hasn't taken place in the middle schools. Including the servicing of the science fume cupboards across the middle schools and the water testing at Windsor Park Middle School, due to the long term absence of their site technician.

ACTION: F&A committee agreed to allow Mr Beaver appoint companies to action any urgent servicing which needs to be carried out ASAP.

ACTION: Mr Beaver was asked to put together some long term compliance management options to present to the F&A committee at the next meeting.

Mr Beaver flagged up an issue at Ryecroft Middle School as they share the site with Dove First School who is not part of the ULT. Therefore, there has been an issue properly flushing the shared water system as both schools need to synchronise this procedure. Mr Beaver would also like to mandate external water testing.

ACTION: Mr Beaver to write to the Headteacher at Dove First School to offer ULT services in carrying out this statutory procedure.

### **8.3 Asbestos Report**

Asbestos surveys have been carried out at all schools circa 2004/5. A file is produced as a living document with is continually updated as and when building changes happen. Mr Beaver queried whether this was a robust system?

ACTION: Mr Beaver to present pricing options for updating this system.

## **9. ULT Finance Report**

### **9.1 Additional Capital Grant and Supplementary Grant Updates**

Mr Storer shared with Trustees the additional Capital Grant and Supplementary Grant updates. The capital grant monies are initially ear marked for energy saving projects however headteachers have been advised that if they don't have such a project available the money can be spent where they would normally spend their devolved formula capital. The Capital grant has to be spent by 31<sup>st</sup> August and the auditors have been asked to comment on the spend. Mr Storer confirmed that school could spend the capital grant on Health and Safety following the previous agenda item.

The Supplementary Grant which will run from April 2023 to March 2024 will be paid in two instalments. The first will be 5/12 expected in May and then the second will be 7/12 expected in October. All grant information has been shared with finance teams within schools.

### **9.2 Finance Report 31 December end**

Mr Storer shared the cash flow forecast with Trustees. Mr Storer highlighted a big fluctuation at Thomas Alleyne's High School due to a greater increase in energy cost than originally budgeted for. Thomas Alleyne's High School are looking at ways to reduce the costs particularly with the running of the swimming pool.

Mr Storer has a monthly meeting with Dr Clark and Mr Pearce to look at the ULT figures in depth.

Trustee Challenge: Mr Harper queried how much the increase in energy cost has eaten into the reserves held by schools. Mr Storer will look into this question and feedback.

### **9.3 Land and buildings Collection Tool**

Deadline for submission is 21<sup>st</sup> February 2023. Mr Beaver has been supporting Mr Storer with this and the Church schools well underway. There will additional work required for Richard Clarke First School submission as this is an addition however Mr Storer confirmed these will be submitted before the deadline date.

### **9.4 SRMSAT – guidance and timeline for completion and approval 15 March 2023**

Criteria has been shared with Trustees prior to the meeting.

ACTION: Dr Clark, Mr Storer and Mr Slater will meet to complete the document prior to submission.

### **9.5 Pupil numbers and projection updates**

Potential issues were highlights due to pupil numbers at Richard Clarke First School, Windsor Park Middle School and Ryecroft Middle School. Dr Clark confirmed that Ryecroft Middle School and Windsor Park Middle School are both engaging with the marketing team to push numbers up. Richard Clarke First School require encouragement to do the same.

**ACTION:** Link trustee for Richard Clarke First School to discuss marketing opportunities with Headteacher.

Mr Storer would like Trustees to be mindful of a potential drop in numbers at Windsor Park Middle School following the expansion at Oldfields Hall Middle School. This will be discussed in further detail at the next meeting.

Trustees would like to highlight the positive projections received at Bramshall Meadows First School.

### **9.6 MAT Expansion Plans**

Dr Clark informed Trustees that Springfields First School would like to engage in an associate membership. This will be for 1 year with a 1% contribution due to their limited requirements. This is expected to begin in April 2023.

The Finance and Audit committee agreed the 1% membership fee for Springfields First School.

Dr Clark informed Trustees that Alleyne's have invited ULT representatives to attend a LGB meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> May to discuss the next steps. Dr Clark, Mr Storer, Mr Beaver and Mr McKenna visited the site at Alleyne's recently. The site also includes a leisure centre with a drained swimming pool, a sports hall and an AstroTurf pitch. There are a number of works required on the leisure centre which could potentially cost millions. A number of possible scenarios were discussed.

**ACTION:** Mr Slater and Mr Harper would be keen to visit the site at Alleyne's when possible.

**ACTION:** Mr Slater and Dr Clark to raise the issue with RSD at their next meeting.

**ACTION:** Mr Storer to commission a condition survey of Alleyne's Stone, to be carried out by Surveyors to Education.

## **10 Safeguarding:**

No safeguarding issues were discussed.

## **11 Documents/Policies:**

The following policies were shared with the committee prior to the meeting:

- Finance policy and procedures
- Gifts and hospitality
- Procurement and tendering
- Investments
- Reserves and Charging

Mr Slater flagged up an issue with the wording on the Reserves and Charging Policy.

**ACTION:** Mr Slater to send the wording there is an issue with to Dr Clark following the meeting.

The Reserves and Charging Policy now has an appendix for requesting a ULT loan however this aspect of the policy will need further work.

**12 Any Other Business:**

There was no additional business on this occasion.

**13 Dates and Times of Future Meetings:**

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

The next meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee will take place on Wednesday 15 March, 2023 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 tonight's meeting. The meeting was brought to a close.

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**Chair**

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**Date**

## Uttoxeter Learning Trust (ULT)

Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee held at Bramshall Meadows First School on Thursday 9 February, 2023 at 5.30 p.m.

### Action Matrix

Minute	Owner	Action Required	Deadline	Action Update
4	CEO	Make December minutes available as a public record if required.	NA	
4	Clerk	Sign ratified minutes on behalf of Chair and forward to PA to CEO.		
5	Clerk	Source Terms of Reference for LGBs.	09.03.23	
8	CEO	Check well-being resources have been shared and LGB's are aware of access	Next SRB	
8	H&S Lead	Present long term compliance management options	Next meeting	
8	H&S Lead	Present quotes for updating asbestos reports in schools	Next meeting	
9	CFO	Feedback on how the energy increase at TAHS has impacted the reserves.	Next meeting	
9	CFO	Commission a condition survey of Alleyne's, Stone		

**Date of next meeting:** Thursday 9 March, 2023 at 5.30 p.m.