



TRUST BOARD PEOPLE COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the People Committee of the Trust Board of South East Cornwall Multi Academy Regional Trust held on Tuesday 23rd February 2021 at 6.00 pm.

Present	Yes/No	In Attendance	Yes/No
Dr Sue Brownlow- Chair	Yes	Mrs K Williams, Clerk	Yes
Mr D Buckley, CEO	Yes		
Mr Caleb Stevens	Yes		

Summary for Matters for the Trust Board	
a)	The People Committee suggest that Trustee resignations are clearly communicated to the Trust Board and are included in discussions during Trust Board meetings to ensure it is minuted.
b)	The People Committee suggest that the Trust Board should recruit additional Trustees to allow the committees to be larger and also recommend that local governors could be invited to attend Trust Board Committee meetings.
c)	The People Committee suggested that there needs to be further involvement of Trustees and governors when there are Trust Board vacancies.
d)	The People Committee suggest that health and wellbeing should be included as a priority in the MAT Strategic five-year plan.
e)	The People Committee have reviewed the Risk Register and there are three risks which will be transferred to the Learning Committee.

15. **Welcome and Format of Meeting**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

16. **Declaration of Business or Pecuniary Interest and Academy-related parties - update on any changes since completion of written declaration**

None.

17. **Apologies**

- a) Mrs Lawson continues with her maternity leave. The Clerk advised that it was expected that Mrs Lawson will be on maternity leave for six months and it was hoped that she would return by the next meeting.
- b) **A Trustee queried the resignation of Mr Marshall and asked if this has been communicated with the Trust Board and asked if this has been reflected in a meeting minutes.** A Trustee added that there has been a change in committee membership at the start of the academic year and the resignation of Mr Marshall was discussed at length. It was suggested that Trustee resignations should be communicated more clearly in future and the resignation should also be discussed during Trust Board meetings so that there is minuted records with a standing agenda items “for changes to the Trust Board”.
- c) It was discussed and suggested that perhaps a designated committee could have responsibility

for oversight of the recruitment of Trustees and governors. Mr Buckley to liaise with the Chair of the Trust Board.

Action: D Buckley

18. **Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting held on 15th October 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th October 2020 including the confidential appendix, having been circulated in advance, were agreed as an accurate record and will be signed when social distancing ceases.

19. **Matters Arising**

M5. Matters Arising

M8. Governor application form

d) It was discussed that the majority of the Chairs of Governors have had Safer Recruitment training and all Headteachers. It was recommended that during initial meetings with potential governors, Chairs and Headteachers should ensure they adhere to safer recruitment practices. Trustees requested that a reminder emailed should be sent to the Chairs and Headteachers and any Chairs who are outstanding their Safer Recruitment training should complete as soon as practicable. Mr Stevens will draft the email. Mr Stevens needs to provide the wording for the email and the Clerk will contact him. Mr Stevens will send the email wording to the Clerk. It was noted that recruitment is continuing under COVID measures.

Update: Mr Stevens advised that the email is ready to send and has been emailed to the Clerk who will circulate further and include the Trustees.

Action: Clerk

M7. Performance Management MAT Plan

f) Trustees queried the use of peer on peer appraisal approach and noted that there might be performance issues that need to be addressed through the appraisal system which may not be correctly dealt with if the process is not robust enough. Trustees thought that it would be useful to have further assurance on this process. It was noted that annual feedback from staff would also be useful.

Update: Mr Buckley explained that this has been discussed with the Headteacher at Saltash and additional measures are in place which provide an opportunity to give feedback on the peer on peer appraisal approach. This should close any possible loop holes.

M8. MAT wide training strategy and effectiveness of professional development

e) Feedback to LGCs: The staff training structure will be discussed with governors at the next People Link meeting.

Update: Complete.

M9. Consider MAT approach to staff and student health and wellbeing

b) A Trustee asked if there are any other Health and Wellbeing Trustees that Mrs Lawson can link with in the county. Mr Buckley advised that he is unaware of anyone but he will check with his networks.

Update: Mr Buckley is not aware of any Health and Wellbeing Trustees within his networks at the moment. It is hoped that Mrs Lawson will be at the next meeting and this can be discussed further then.

d) A Trustee asked what is the scope and the focus of the Staff and Student Health and Wellbeing Trustee. Mr Buckley explained that an over view of the role is being provided in the revised SoDA. Mr Buckley advised that he can circulate v27 to Trustees. It was suggested that oversight of admissions would be under the remit of the Learning committee rather than the Staff and Student Health and Wellbeing Trustee.

Update: Complete

20. **Review of the People Committee ToR and Governor Handbook**

a) The Trustees were content to endorse the proposed Terms of Reference (ToR) in the revised SoDA (Scheme of Delegated Authority).

- b) The Clerk advised that she has drafted a Governor Handbook which is intended to provide further details on the specific roles for governors. It contains a section for “Strategy, Action, Monitor”.

Governor handbook – People in particular the HR sections

- c) **A Trustee asked for clarification on the strategy “To ensure that an appropriate staffing structure is in place for the school” and how this is included in the remit of HR Governors as the CEO is the line manager of the Headteachers.** Mr Buckley advised that whilst the Headteacher is operationally responsible for the staffing structure of the school, the governors are required to hold the Headteacher to account and need to review the structure from a holistic approach. The CEO is able to challenge the Headteacher on the structure from an organisational perspective to ensure that it is logical and fits within budget. The Trust Board is then able to challenge the CEO.

A Trustees asked for clarification on the strategy “Ensure that processes and procedures relating to the conduct, attendance, discipline and capability of staff at the school are properly

- d) **and fairly carried out and are in line with the HR Policies of the school and the Trust” and queried what policies are held at school level.** Mr Buckley explained that all HR Policies have all been rationalised apart from a small number of minor policies such as Recommend a Colleague Policy at Saltash and Flexibility of Meeting Times Policy both of which have been adopted by individual schools but as these are not legally required policies, they would not be imposed on the other schools.

Dr Brownlow has some suggested changes for the Governor Handbook which she will email to the Clerk.

- e) **Action: S Brownlow**
Mr Buckley advised that we have three documents which are intending to provide information for Trustees and governors and help promote engagement; Terms and conditions part of the
- f) SoDA, the Leadership Ladders, the Governor Handbook and the one-page summary in the SoDA. It is our long term aim to provide one guidance document. We are working towards ensuring that each document reflects each other in the meantime. Using key verbs within the documents will help direct Trustees and governors on the actions required. The Governor Handbook and the Leadership Ladders will be used to inform the other documents.

HR

21. Recruitment under CV-19

- a) Mr Buckley advised that we have been progressing with recruitment despite Covid and there is good developing practice. The Headteacher appointment at Dobwalls continues and will be replicating the normal process but using remote access instead. We have continued to appoint across the Trust online rather than face to face.
- b) **A Trustee asked if there are any difficulties that are worrying Mr Buckley.** Mr Buckley advised that he does not have any concerns at the moment but noted that the Teams environment does not allow for the usual peripheral information regarding personality that can be gleaned informally during interviews so there is nervousness over this element of the Headteacher recruitment process this week. Others have warmed to the Teams remote interview process and have found that the appointments that have been made, have been good ones.

Staff and Student Health and Well-Being

22. Wellbeing across the school community

- a) Mr Buckley advised that we have formally reduced workloads and paused processes wherever we can to give staff space and recognition for the pressures that they are under. Governors have been informed that their role has changed to provide support to staff during the period. Surveys

have been used in all schools and there has been positive feedback.

- b) Mr Buckley presented to support staff and teaching staff during SMART day and feedback following the CEO address has been positive and staff have commented that it is good to be in a Trust who recognises the pressures that staff are under and that measures are in place to ensure staff are being supported. Any concerns regarding the checking in and support offered for staff from lockdown one, have been corrected. Trustees noted exercising informally a degree of flexibility to allow for personal circumstances for staff across the Trust and believed that this is the right approach.
- c) Mr Buckley explained that the MAT Student Council (MSC) is running virtually and the school representatives have been given a set of questions to ask for feedback from their peers in their bubbles. Feedback provided is that the students feel safe, staff are doing a brilliant job and they have not raised any significant issues. They have spoken about distractions from working at home and how they stay motivated to continue with school work. Trustees noted that it is valuable to hear this feedback and it is important to acknowledge that the children feel safe as safeguarding remains as a key priority. It was also identified that safeguarding had not been included on the agenda.
- d) Mr Buckley advised that safeguarding was a key feature of the discussions during the MSC meeting and in the staff surveys which came back positive and the importance of mental health and looking after ourselves has been referenced in both the weekly staff meetings and also in the CEO address during SMART day. Staff have welcomed this approach. Mr Buckley explained that he is proud of the Headteachers who have been able to relieve pressure on staff where possible. Mr Buckley noted that the workloads of staff are our main safeguarding responsibility at present. The safeguarding of staff mental health is making sure that they have self-efficacy, playing a part in decision making that affects them and their workload being managed by a coaching appraiser. All these measures are in place and need to remain a focus. A Trustee noted that there continues to be difficulties around family circumstances for individual staff members and students.

It was agreed that Safeguarding needs to be included on the next agenda.

e)

Action: Clerk

23. Asymptomatic CV-19 testing for pupils and staff

- a) Mr Buckley explained that vulnerable students who are in school are being tested regularly on site since the start of term. All staff who have consented have been tested on site in secondary schools and at home in primary schools. Liskeard have made the move to change to home testing for school staff and the government have moved to this position as well. Mr Buckley summarised the small number of asymptomatic cases which have been identified across the Trust.

Mr Buckley advised that the “test yourself at home” model is being applied by the government.

- b) There are some questions for transition to this from onsite testing which are worth bringing to the attention of Trustees. There are no issues for staff as the primary staff have been testing at home twice a week and the secondary staff are moving towards this and kits are arriving soon. For secondary pupils, the government have suggested that pupils cannot return to school until they have had three clear tests on site but it is not physically possible for schools to continue to operate and conduct three tests, three days apart. We are in a position where the government has provided a strong statement which we are trying to work with and need to find a compromised position.

- c) Mr Buckley is working with the Headteachers to come up with a compromise and has provided 5 possible solutions. Communications to parents is in process to ensure that they remain confident in the safety of returning to school. Five models for testing and the safe return to school are being discussed. The two favoured models have been shared with CASE and there is one

predominate model but it does not follow current government advice and include sending children home with tests to undertake at home. Mr Buckley advised that the suggested model includes video instruction to follow for testing at home and discussed the benefits of doing this. Mr Buckley is still waiting for the outcome of discussions with Headteachers.

d) **A Trustee queried the accuracy of children being tested at home but thought that this would be the best way forward due to the capacity of school staff and the known accuracy issues with the Lateral Flow tests. A Trustees also asked how the year groups would come back to school.** Mr Buckley explained that one model uses a parent evening approach (Liskeard) where the school is suspended for two days or a year group at a time (Saltash) and provide the children the kits. Looe like both models but are waiting for feedback from staff before deciding which one to use. Both suggested models mean that there would be a staggered return to school stretching over either two days or five days depending on the emphasise of the training element of each model.

e) **A Trustee queried the use of free recording training sessions on Zoom.** Mr Buckley advised that there are several really useful training videos available which have been circulated to the schools and it was noted that Sheffield University having a training video which is very clear and easy to follow. Students have advised that training videos are more useful than face to face training provided by school staff as they can watch is several times at their leisure.

f) Mr Buckley advised that nationally 8% of secondary schools have not engaged with testing so we will not be alone if we use a modified form of guidance and this is the stance which many Trusts are taking.

g) **A Trustee queried that test results are provided at home and asked if we are reliant on parents being honest about the results and what are the implications if they choose not to self-isolate following a positive result.** Mr Buckley advised that in communities where testing has been imposed and there are high numbers of self-employment, the level of uptake is around 10%. In Cornwall in general, the level of uptake is around 30%. In our particular case, we are not requiring this information to be recorded on a database and should a child test positive, parents need to advise the school and it is likely that using this model, we hope to have a 50% uptake in testing. Testing is an additional measure and it gives parents access to testing and they need to make the decision to send the child to school. This is the best case scenario as imposing testing is likely to reduce the amount of uptake and so our model is dependent on parents telling us their child feels ill. It was noted that there have not been many cases of children being sent into school if they are ill and the vast majority of parents will advise if there has been a positive test.

h) It was noted by Trustees that there is much value in the children returning to school. Trustees wanted to thank the CEO and staff again for their hard work and care for the children. Mr Buckley added that he has passed this message to staff during SMART Day.

24. Risk Register Review

a) Mr Buckley explained that the Risk Register does need to be reviewed by each committee so that they can agree each assigned risk and the date of review can be updated. He also asked if the Trustees formally accept the risks and their measures as detailed.

b) Column C contains the risk; column I contains the control measures and column BF contains the additional measures for the Trust Board. These need to be updated annually.

c) Risk 2 "A culture of low expectations"
Mr Buckley advised that an additional action required was required for Liskeard which has been put into place and reviewed. This can now be removed. **A Trustee asked if we are completing**

lessons observations. Mr Buckley advised that Headteachers and line managers have been completing lesson observations during Covid when there have been low enough levels of risk. There has been some experimenting with lesson observations during remote learning but this has not been popular. Feedback from parents and teachers on the quality of lessons has been sought and quality is considered to be high overall. Trustees were content to accept.

- d) Risk 3 “Pupils or staff put at risk”

A Trustee asked if Dobwalls need to “act” and Mr Buckley advised that if the Headteacher has added something has been to the action plan, it automatically defaults to “act”. Trustees were content to accept and the date can be updated.

- e) Risk 8 “Decreasing leadership capacity”

Mr Buckley advised that we have not been able to take a formal measure due to Covid but all indications lead us to believe that this is going in the correct direction compared to the two previous measures that were taken and actions in developing leadership are working. Trustees were content to accept.

- f) Risk 9 “Failure to attract, train and retain governors and trustees”

There is an action for the two Trust Board vacancies. There have not been any particular issues with recruiting governors but noted that this is always more difficult for small schools. There remains to be vacancies on the Trust Board. It was discussed that there needs to be better communication about Trust Board vacancies and this can also be added to the Risk Register as an action. Trustees voiced concern about the small number of Trustees on committees and significant role that they play in oversight. Mr Buckley noted that we have come close to being not quorate on a number of occasions. Mr Buckley suggested that having three to four Trustees per committee would be useful but a large scale increase would not be supported. **A Trustee asked about having associate members on the committee** but it was explained that only Trustees can be included in the quorum. Governors visiting Trust Board committees was discussed at length. The action to be added to the Risk Register is to initiate a discussion with the Trust Board.

Action: D Buckley

- g) Risk 10 “De-skilling of teachers”

The School Development Plans (SDP) are now longer term and are moving towards 5 year plans. Trustees reviewed this risk and were content to accept this risk.

- h) Risk 11 “Failure to maintain constructive employment relations”

JCNC have been very active and for the first time, we have had no union involvement in policy changes in the last two JCNC meetings. **A Trustee queried the position at Saltash.** Mr Buckley explained that Saltash have had to encourage involvement of staff and changes to working practices. Trustees reviewed and were content to accept this risk.

- i) Risk 14 “Adverse media attention”

This is being addressed by being more transparent. It was agreed that this should now come under the remit of the Learning Committee and the Community Trustee.

Action: Clerk

- j) Risk 15 “Organisational isolation”

It was agreed that this should now come under the remit of the Learning Committee and the Community Trustee.

Action: Clerk

- k) **A Trustee queried if there is a risk on the Risk Register which relates to health and wellbeing.**

Mr Buckley advised that there is not specifically and the risks are formed around the Trust’s strategic goals. Mr Buckley will review and suggested that this is included in reducing leadership capacity but this could be rephrased.

Action: D Buckley

25. **Review of Policies**

- a) Statement of Health and Wellbeing Policy – Updated policy

A Trustee asked for clarification on the Client Managers. Mr Buckley explained that Client Managers are included in the Business Services Management Contract which details what the school is responsible for, what services can be bought from the CBU (Central Business Unit) and also the Client Manager who is a CBU member of staff with a specific role and who is the school's point of contact. **A Trustee asked if the reference to Client Managers needs to be clarified in the policy.** Mr Buckley advised that a link to the Business Services Management Contract can be added or perhaps the use brackets or a footnote.

Action: Clerk

- b) **A Trustee noted an observation that whilst it is a Health and safety and wellbeing policy, has it been updated for wellbeing as it contains predominately health and safety.** Mr Buckley advised that the policy has been through processes to ensure that it is compliant but wellbeing is not a tied down set of circumstances yet. **Trustees felt that we need to have a policy framework for the Health and wellbeing of staff and this needs to be acknowledged.** Mr Buckley advised that we can put aspirations into policies but ideally the MST Strategic five-year plan should reflect this. Welfare is not always linked correctly to work load and the policy reflects currently practice. Practice needs to be in place first and then the policy then follows and reflects this.

- c) **A Trustee asked if there is anything we can do to acknowledge the health and wellbeing gap.** Mr Buckley noted that the Trust Board can make recommendations to progress this area in terms of development of staff welfare. We have started this development with the appointment of Mrs Lawson as Health and Wellbeing Trustee and this needs to be continued by being added to the Strategic Plan which will then feed the School Development Plans (SDP) and this will then realistically affect policy. **Trustees asked for Mr Buckley to review this and thought that it was an important area to focus on to ensure that the Trust aims to go beyond compliance and be an employer of choice.** The Strategic Plan needs to consider this as a main driver and the Trust Board will need to challenge this to develop this work. Mr Buckley advised that the processes and practices described within the policy are compliant. We do wish to excel on minimum compliance so the most effective way is to look at our priorities for next year and ensure that we set clear priorities for health and wellbeing and the schools will then need to add this to their SDPs and it will then be required to be added to policies.

- d) **A Trustee queried if it would be possible to amend the introduction text in the policy and include the Trust's aspirations for health and wellbeing.** Mr Buckley advised that unions have objected to aspirations being included in policies and should really be included in planning but Mr Buckley was content to include this should Trustees request this. Did we agree it? I think we may have done but memory might have failed. If we did, it should be logged as an action. Trustees discussed policies and working practices at length. Discussion focused on wellbeing linked to staff efficacy, collaboration and workload. It was agreed that this would be added to a future committee agenda when the Health and Wellbeing Trustee returns.

Action: D Buckley

- e) **A Trustee asked if school based policies are aligned to Trust Board policies** and Mr Buckley advised that they are.

26. **Guidance/instructions to LGCs**

- a) Asymptomatic testing update will be provided by Headteachers at the next LGC meetings.
- b) The Clerk is working on drafting a Governor Handbook and the Committee have reviewed the People sections of this document and it is hoped that it will be available soon.
- c) The Trustees wanted to pass their thanks on to Local Governors and the staff in school for their hard work during challenging times.
- d) Trustees wanted to pass on the feedback from the MAT Student Council that students feel safe.

The Clerk added that she has collected questions from the LGCs to pose to the MSC at their next meeting.

27. **For Information**

- a) Headteacher's summary documents and LGC minutes had been circulated to Trustees for information.

28. **Agreements made by email**

- a) None.

29. **Summary matters for the Trust Board**

- a) The People Committee suggest that Trustee resignations are clearly communicated to the Trust Board and are included in discussions during Trust Board meetings to ensure it is minuted.
- b) The People Committee suggest that the Trust Board should recruit additional Trustees to allow the committees to be larger and also recommend that local governors could be invited to attend Trust Board Committee meetings.
- c) The People Committee suggested that there needs to be further involvement of Trustees and governors when there are Trust Board vacancies.
- d) The People Committee suggest that health and wellbeing should be included as a priority in the MAT Strategic five-year plan.
- e) The People Committee have reviewed the Risk Register and there are three risks which will be transferred to the Learning Committee.

30. **Date of next meetings:**

08-06-2021 at 5.30 pm.

The meeting closed at 19.46.

Action Summary	
<p>M17. Apologies</p> <p>c) It was discussed and suggested that perhaps a designated committee could have responsibility for oversight of the recruitment of Trustees and governors. Mr Buckley to liaise with the Chair of the Trust Board.</p>	<p>Action: D Buckley</p>
<p>M19. Matters Arising</p> <p>M8. Governor application form</p> <p>d) It was discussed that the majority of the Chairs of Governors have had Safer Recruitment training and all Headteachers. Mr Stevens will draft the email. Mr Stevens needs to provide the wording for the email and the Clerk will contact him. Mr Stevens will send the email wording to the Clerk. It was noted that recruitment is continuing under COVID measures. <i>Update: Mr Stevens advised that the email is ready to send and has been emailed to the Clerk who will circulate further and include the Trustees.</i></p>	<p>Action: Clerk</p>
<p>M20. Review of the People Committee ToR and Governor Handbook</p> <p>e) Dr Brownlow has some suggested changes for the Governor Handbook which she will email to the Clerk.</p>	<p>Action: S Brownlow</p>
<p>M22. Wellbeing across the school community</p> <p>e) It was agreed that Safeguarding needs to be included on the next agenda.</p>	<p>Action: Clerk</p>
<p>M24. Risk Register Review</p> <p>f) Risk 9 "Failure to attract, train and retain governors and trustees" There is an action for the two Trust Board vacancies. There have not been any particular issues with recruiting governors but noted that this is always more difficult for small schools.</p>	<p>Action: D Buckley</p>

<p>There remains to be vacancies on the Trust Board. It was discussed that there needs to be better communication about Trust Board vacancies and this can also be added to the Risk Register as an action. Trustees voiced concern about the small number of Trustees on committees and significant role that they play in oversight. Mr Buckley noted that we have come close to being not quorate on a number of occasions. Mr Buckley suggested that having three to four Trustees per committee would be useful but a large scale increase would not be supported. A Trustee asked about having associate members on the committee but it was explained that only Trustees can be included in the quorum. Governors visiting Trust Board committees was discussed at length. The action to be added to the Risk Register is to initiate a discussion with the Trust Board.</p> <p>i) Risk 14 “Adverse media attention” This is being addressed by being more transparent. It was agreed that this should now come under the remit of the Learning Committee and the Community Trustee.</p> <p>j) Risk 15 “Organisational isolation” It was agreed that this should now come under the remit of the Learning Committee and the Community Trustee.</p> <p>k) A Trustee queried if there is a risk on the Risk Register which relates to health and wellbeing. Mr Buckley advised that there is not specifically and the risks are formed around the Trust’s strategic goals. Mr Buckley will review and suggested that this is included in reducing leadership capacity but this could be rephrased.</p>	<p>Action: Clerk</p> <p>Action: Clerk</p> <p>Action: D Buckley</p>
<p>M25. Review of Policies</p> <p>a) Statement of Health and Wellbeing Policy – Updated policy A Trustee asked for clarification on the Client Managers. Mr Buckley explained that Client Managers are included in the Business Services Management Contract which details what the school is responsible for, what services can be bought from the CBU (Central Business Unit) and also the Client Manager who is a CBU member of staff with a specific role and who is the school’s point of contact. A Trustee asked if the reference to Client Managers needs to be clarified in the policy. Mr Buckley advised that a link to the Business Services Management Contract can be added or perhaps the use brackets or a footnote.</p> <p>d) A Trustee queried if it would be possible to amend the introduction text in the policy and include the Trust’s aspirations for health and wellbeing. Mr Buckley advised that unions have objected to aspirations being included in policies and should really be included in planning but Mr Buckley was content to include this should Trustees request this. Did we agree it? I think we may have done but memory might have failed. If we did, it should be logged as an action. Trustees discussed policies and working practices at length. Discussion focused on wellbeing linked to staff efficacy, collaboration and workload. It was agreed that this would be added to a future committee agenda when the Health and Wellbeing Trustee returns.</p>	<p>Action: Clerk</p> <p>Action: D Buckley</p>