



TRUST BOARD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Trust Board of South East Cornwall Multi Academy Regional Trust held at Liskeard School & Community College on 18th July 2024 at 5.30 pm

Present	Yes/No	Present	Yes/No
Mr M Aarts Via Teams	Yes	Mr L Hallam, Chair of the Trust Board	Yes
Ms J Chan-Penney Via Teams	Yes	Mrs L Lawson	Apologies
Mr D Buckley, CEO via Teams	Yes	Mr C Piper	No
Mr J Crisp	Yes	Dr J Traverse	Yes

**In Attendance: Mrs J Lumbard, CFO
Mrs K Williams, Clerk to Trust Board
Mr Neill Toms, Applicant Trustee**

36. **Welcome especially to Mr Toms, Applicant Trustee and evacuation procedure**
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Mr Toms, applicant Trustee. Everyone introduced themselves.
37. **Declaration of Business or Pecuniary Interest and Academy-related parties - update on any changes since completion of written declaration**
There were no changes.
38. **Apologies for Absence**
Mrs Lawson has sent her apologies prior to the meeting and these were received and accepted by the committee. Mr Piper was expected to attend.
39. **Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16th April 2024**
The minutes of the meeting held on 19th April 2024, having been circulated in advance, were agreed as an accurate record.
40. **Progress of action points and matters arising**
M26. CEO summary of HT Reports – focus on Pupil Progress
 f) **A Trustee referred to the number of training opportunities for governors and asked if Trustees are included in this.** It was noted that they are not and that Saltash has not completed any training which Mr Buckley will discuss further.
Update: Mr Buckley advised that the Clerk promotes training. The Clerk explained that we have the expectation that governors complete three pieces of training per year and one of these should be safeguarding. The Chair of Governors at Saltash also encourages training at each meeting.

M27. Consider and review the SEF
 c) **A Trustee noted that there have not been any changes to the Liskeard SEF.** Mr Buckley will follow this up with the Headteacher.
Update: Mr Buckley advised that a tick was missing from the spreadsheet which meant the fact that the school had already completed all these requirements by the deadline was not visible, this has now been corrected.

M28. Risk Register – Review and consider recommendations from committees
 d) **A Trustee asked about missing data on the report for Saltash and Liskeard.** Mr Buckley advised that Liskeard have an issue in the formula which he can correct. This is also the case for Saltash. Mr Buckley advised that he will discuss during the next TSLT meeting.

Update: Mr Buckley advised that this is complete.

41. **Summary of LGC minutes**

- a) The Clerk advised that the minutes will be circulated before the summer holidays.

42. **Reports and Recommendations from Committees¹**

a) People and Learning 17-06-2024

Mr Hallam chaired this meeting. There was a good discussion around staff turnover and recruitment which has been raised as a concern by the Members. As a Trust Board, we have a risk based approach to oversight. We do offer exit interviews for all staff but these are not mandatory. We will be undertaking an annual staff questionnaire. From September we will collect quantifiable data for the People Committee to consider and to see if there are any trends.

- b) Trust attendance was also discussed and Mr Carrington is leading on this and we are seeing improvements. The SENDCo provision has been rationalised and Mr Spencer is leading on this for the primary schools. Mr Hallam summarised the Members' discussions and concerns. Dr Traverse has volunteered to chair the People Committee for the new academic year. Mr Buckley added that using a risk management approach is useful for the Trust Board. Staff turnover is in line with national benchmark.

- c) **A Trustee asked if we catch anything confidential in the performance management reviews.** Mr Buckley advised that we do discuss with Headteachers why staff are leaving. We normally manage to catch any issues before they lead to resignation. Mr Buckley added that we have an annual survey and we have found that staff have not used the anonymous section this so this year we have given the option to have a statement which is removed as soon as it has been submitted. 89% of the staff responses to the survey last year were positive.

d) Audit & Risk 11-07-2024 – Verbal feedback

Mr Aarts advised there was an update from Bishop Fleming on the Annual Audit Plan and there are all standard risks. The EGR (External Governance Review) was discussed and it has been delayed and will now be held in the autumn term. Mr Hallam summarised the EGR; this should be held every 4-5 years and it was also a Saltash RIP (Rapid Improvement Plan) requirement. We chose CST (Confederation of Schools Trust) to undertake this as they are renowned in the sector. The scope is looking at looking at the committee effectiveness by discussing and gaining opinions from all levels of governance, observing and attending meetings at different level and supporting us to make improvements by offering examples of good practice.

- e) Mr Aarts advised the intake numbers for September. Mr Buckley advised that small primary schools are dependant on numbers and we are working to ensure that pupil numbers remain stable. The number for Saltash's Year 7 intake is less than originally expected but overall pupil numbers are stable. Mr Hallam added that the auditors have been reappointed by the Members. We will have a new audit partner for the new academic year and the contract is in place for the next 5 years. Mr Aarts explained that there were minimal changes to the BCPs (Business Continuity Plans) and there is a governor in Saltash who is willing to support testing of the plans moving forwards.

f) Resources 11-07-2024 – Verbal feedback

Mr Aarts advised that the committee have reviewed the budgets for the new year and recommend them for approval by the Trust Board. He added that the usual caveats apply as we are still waiting for information on Teachers and Support Staff pay. The Trewidland pupil numbers could be a risk for the budgets if they were to drop. Mrs Lumbard advised that we have a small surplus for 2024/25 but this is a good result for the Trust and budgets are being based on assumptions being used which are common assumptions for the sector. We will go into 2024/25

¹ To include items raised for TB consideration by LGCs

with a 5.2% reserve but we are still waiting for up-to-date information from the government for future years.

- g) Trustees noted that having a balanced budget in the sector is become really rare and should be considered as an accomplishment for the Trust. Mrs Lumbard explained the dynamic decisions and discussions which the finance team are having to make during the year. Mr Aarts advised the catering and cleaning contracts have been approved by email. A new Head of Estates and Head of Finance have been appointed and this creates extra capacity in the Trust. Mrs Lumbard advised that there is still an IT vacancy which is disappointing due what was believed to be a recent successful recruitment process.
- h) **A Trustee felt that we are having issues with recruitment to these posts due to the pay structure in IT.** Mrs Lumbard added that we are struggling to recruit to estates as well. **A Trustee asked about the use of apprenticeships.** Mrs Lumbard advised we have recently appointed an apprentice at Saltash and we are hoping to have apprenticeships in estates as well. Mr Aarts advised that the committee also discussed the EWO (Education and Welfare Officer) team and this is being outsourced to other schools in the area and we want to have other services which we can offered as an SLA (Service Led Agreement).

43. **Approval of draft 2024/25 budgets following recommendation provided by the Resources Committee**

A document was circulated in advance of the meeting, from this:

- a) Mrs Lumbard summarised the budget drafting and approval process. Mrs Lumbard advised that this needs to be returned to the DfE by the end of July.
- b) Trustees were content to approve the budget for 2024/25 as presented.

44. **Discuss Trauma Informed School Approaches**

- a) Dr Traverse noted that all six schools are TIS (Trauma Informed Schools) trained and all schools have reported that they are all doing well with TIS. Mr Buckley added that schools are proud to be TIS and they understand the deep significance that trauma has and that it needs to be taken into account. Dr Traverse noted that much of the attendance issues are linked to trauma and complex behaviour in the schools is increasing. Dr Traverse noted that Progress 8 scores need to improve in Saltash and Looe and TIS may support this. Mr Buckley advised that there is an overlap with those students with trauma and being suspended and excluded but this is not always the case.
- b) **A Trustee noted there can be an unknown background for some students which is a challenge.** Dr Traverse noted that the TIS approach is helpful for neurodiversity and mental health issues as it aims to improve relationships between students and teachers. If we used TIS more we would be more likely to make a difference. **A Trustee asked if the Trust Board should give TIS more priority and perhaps we could include TIS as part of the Trust health check. He asked if this is something that we should take forward in the next 12 months.**
- c) **A Trustee asked where does the ownership lie when using a TIS approach, with the students, teaching team or both.** Dr Traverse advised that this lies with the adults.
- d) Mr Buckley advised that our behaviour policy reflects all of the TIS approaches as it includes the use of advocates, de-escalation and a no blame culture. This is not a priority for change as this is an area of strength. The health check would be designed to look at the elements of being a TIS school and we check that that this is embedded in the school. We normally undertake health checks where we believe there is a problem. **A Trustee felt that he was not informed well enough to make a decision on this and felt uncertainty on how well this is embedded in the schools and suggested that is a strength in the schools but could it be a better strength in the schools.**

- e) **A Trustee asked how can we demonstrate how well TIS is embedded.** Mr Buckley advised that we can devise a health check which would have minimal standards and aspirational standards and report back to the Trust Board. Mr Buckley advised that ReSet rooms are working well in Liskeard and Saltash and now Looe. We have run health checks on these to confirm that they are working as intended. TIS is a tool that schools should have access to but this is not a priority for the Trust.
- f) **The Trustees wanted assurance of effectiveness and how it can be improved. A Trustee noted that this is a current strength of the schools and in terms of Trust priorities then perhaps we should be spending more time on areas of weakness including the red areas on the Risk Register. A Trustee added that attendance, behaviour and academic outcome are all areas of priority nationally as well as in the Trust. TIS a technique which is present in the schools but could be done better and this would improve attendance, behaviour and outcomes.** Mr Buckley advised that within the overarching strategic five year plan of the Trust, the schools have the autonomy to decide what are their key priorities and what tools they use to meet their priorities which we then hold them to account for.
- g) **A Trustee suggested that the People Committee could review the outcomes of the health checks.** Mr Buckley advised we can provide this data back to the Trust Board.

Action: D Buckley

45. **Update on feedback from meeting with the Regional Group - Confidential**

- a) Confidential appendix.

46. **Governance arrangements at Trewidland**

Agree governance arrangements at Trewidland

- a) Mr Buckley advised that we have decided with the Ex head role that we continue to have an LGC (Local Governing Committee) at Trewidland but the LGCs could be merged. **A Trustee felt that a local identity should not be lost and perhaps this would be too much change right now.**
- b) Trustees were in agreement to retain an LGC at Trewidland.

47. **Agreement of change in Trust Board meetings and Trustee links and Committee Membership**

Consider if we should move to a meeting model of 6 full Trust Board meetings, AGM, Remuneration, Admissions, Resources and A&R committees. Agree membership, chairs and primary and secondary links for 2024/25

- a) Mr Buckley suggested we need to have two forms of model for the Trust Board to ensure that we are quorate for committee meetings. The national model has 6 full Trust Board meetings and also committees.
- b) **A Trustee asked what model are we currently using.** The recent committee meetings have been at risk of not being quorate and we need to have meetings that are quorate as we hold less than the national model. When committees are at near miss, this should be the trigger point and we need to revert to the 6 full Trust Board model. Mr Hallam noted this can be raised with the ERG. **A Trustee noted that we need to continue to recruit more Trustees.**
- c) Membership of the committees
People committee – Dr Traverse to chair and this committee will be merged with the Learning Committee as Mr Crisp is having a challenge with work commitments. Mr Hallam will be joining the committee along with Mrs Lawson, Dr Traverse and Mr Crisp.
- d) A&R Committee – A New chair needed. It was noted that we need to hold a separate A&R committee. It was noted that Mr Toms may take on the H&S and Premises role and could take on the chair role at a point in the future and this would be discussed further. Mr Aarts agreed to temporarily chair the A&R committee.
- e) Resources Committee – Mr Aarts as Chair.

- f) Trustee links
Primary – Mr Aarts, Mr Crisp and Mrs Lawson
Secondary – Ms Chan-Penney, Dr Traverse and Mr Toms

48. **Formal agreement of nursery adoption into SMART Trust Nurseries and Agree committee arrangements for nurseries**

Consider if they are a subcommittee of the Trust Board

- a) Mr Buckley advised that the nurseries have been adopted by the Trust. The old nursery committee has dwindled to a small number so we now need to formally adopt the nurseries by the Trust Board. The Dobwalls LGC will have oversight of the nursery committee.
- b) **A Trustee asked about risk.** Mr Buckley did not feel that this was a risk but we do need to formally adopt it. Trustees agreed to formally adopt the nursery committee as proposed.
- c) We don't currently track the nurseries on the Risk Register and the SEF (Self-Evaluation Form) and Mr Buckley proposed that there should be a separate tab for the nurseries. Trustees were content to agree with the proposal.

49. **Safeguarding update**

- a) Mr Buckley advised that since the last meeting we have a new method of peer review and all schools have undergone this process. All schools have been compliant and no action has been required. The S175 have been submitted and there are no significant actions. We have Mr Carrington who is leading safeguarding in the Trust and he has signed off the S175 forms.
- b) Dr Traverse is the Safeguarding Trustee and he is comfortable that he can cover the brief but not sure how he goes about this. Mr Buckley advised that that the Trust Board is here to verify the Trust systems. Mr Carrington can meet with Dr Traverse so that he can be reassured that the systems in place are robust. Dr Traverse has met with Mr Carrington already.

50. **Risk Register and SEF – Review and consider**

Discuss and agree if nurseries should be separate or one organisation. Should Trewidland be a separate or combined with Dobwalls

- a) **A Trustee noted that we have two red risks and the descriptor of "tolerable" and suggested that there may be the need for a discussion around risk appetite the A&R committee.**
Action: The Clerk
- b) Mr Buckley advised that in terms of expectations, we have summaries and packages to look at exam predictions. Primaries are fine but at secondary levels, the results for Saltash are at the boundary. We believe that exam results will be better at Saltash this year. Looe results are still below average and there is potential that both schools may not be at average again this year but they are closer towards national average. **A Trustee asked about Liskeard.** Liskeard narrowly missed national last year and we are predicting it will be at average this year.
- c) **A Trustee referred to the five year plan and asked when do we review the strategic goals and do we look at the development of leadership at all levels and the succession planning for staff being more formalised.** Mr Buckley advised that we ask for an assessment of leadership in every role and there is a marked increase in leadership in Saltash. We have built capacity but our readiness to take action on low performance needs to be faster.
- d) **A Trustee asked about the strategic goals being transparent and visible for all staff.** Mr Buckley explained that we do not impose targets across all the schools but they have numerical goals which the LGCs have agreed which they will be holding the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) to account for. Mr Buckley advised that the appraisal system is used as the main measure for developing leadership and this is moderated in October each year. In terms of improving exam success, we have recruited a Director of Education to support the schools. The P8 scores will be removed for the next couple of years and so it will not be useful to change our priorities to this but we will be moving to a ranking system for this time next year and we have needed to align

curriculum across the Trust.

- e) **A Trustee asked how we identify the blockers.** Mr Buckley advised that if we have staff that have failed two consecutive appraisals, we are looking at this as the trigger and this is in the appraisal policy. We also have not moved towards action for staff who are absent for over 6 months and we are currently unique in not taking action at this point.
- f) **A Trustee noted that the Trust is slow at taking action and perhaps we need to identify where we need to take action quicker. A Trustee asked if within the strategic goals, can we have opportunities to build capacity.** It was suggested that this should be an agenda item and that we are missing granular information on progress towards the aims. It should be a Trust Board discussion on tracking strategic direction. The Clerk to add to the next meeting agenda for 30-40 minutes.

Action: The Clerk
- g) Confidential appendix.
- h) **A Trustee noted that the SEF and Risk Register are critical documents and have taken lots of hard work to get to this stage. A Trustee felt that some pivot tables would be useful.**

51. **Items from Chair**

Resignation of S Lloyd as a Trustee, appointment of N Toms, Resignation of L Hallam as a Member, update from Members meeting and appointment of Vice Chair of the Trust Board

- a) Resignation of Mr Lloyd as a Trustee and the chair of the People Committee. Mr Hallam has resigned as a Member. The Members meeting was held last week.
- b) Mr Hallam advised that the Trust Board has moved to a risk based approach and we don't look at every single data set so we use the Risk Register and audit to focus our discussions. We do monitor recruitment and retention. The Members have a new Member starting in the autumn term. We need to have an AGM (Annual General Meeting) in December and we will only cover mandatory requirements and hold it online. We can take questions via Chat. **A Trustee asked what does an AGM entail.** Mr Hallam advised that it is primarily the presentation of the annual accounts.
- c) **A Trustee asked how we make an AGM valuable.** Mr Hallam felt that there is not the capacity to do this this year and we can consider what we do going forwards. Mr Hallam noted that Members want to have the opportunity to meet with the chairs of the committees after the AGM and we will have a look at details at a later date. **A Trustee asked who is the audience for the AGM.** Mr Hallam noted that it is a stakeholder meeting.
- d) The Trustees were in agreement to appoint Mr Toms as a Trustee. He was formally welcomed.
- e) Vice Chair – can all Trustees consider the Vice Chair role for agreement at the next meeting.

Action: The Clerk/All

52. **Discuss possible sponsorship for competing member of staff**

- a) Mr Buckley advised that we have a member of staff who has been accepted to represent the UK in the world championships for swimming in Italy next year. The LOA (Leave of Absence) policy doesn't allow for this being paid leave but could they be sponsored and paid if agreed by the Trust Board.
- b) Trustees were agreement to approve this being paid leave.

53. **Adoption of Policies**

- a) Flexible working
Maternity, Paternity, Adoption
Leave of Absence
Staff Attendance

Trustees were content to approve all the policies as presented.

54. Items from this meeting for report back to LGCs

- a) Mr Carrington is leading on attendance and we are seeing improvements. The SENDCo provision has been rationalised and Mr Spencer is leading on this for the primary schools.
- b) Trustees noted that having a balanced budget in the sector is becoming really rare and should be considered as an accomplishment for the Trust. Trustees were content to approve the budget for 2024/25 as presented.
- c) Trustees were in agreement to retain an LGC at Trewidland.
- d) Trustee links
Primary – Mr Aarts, Mr Crisp and Mrs Lawson
Secondary – Ms Chan-Penney, Dr Traverse and Mr Toms
- e) Flexible working
Maternity, Paternity, Adoption
Leave of Absence
Staff Attendance
Trustees were content to approve all the policies as presented.

55. Agreements made by email

- a) *Extension of review dates for Compliance policies – June 2024*
Extension of review dates for HR policies – July 2024

56. Date of next meetings

Mr Aarts advised that Thursday meetings are a challenge. The Clerk will do a poll for Trustees to see what days are most suitable. Mr Crisp noted that he has found the role a challenge due to work commitments and would step back if the committee felt that this was appropriate. Mr Hallam felt that we should see how this works next year.

The meeting closed at 7.52pm.

Action Summary	
M44. Discuss Trauma Informed School Approaches g) A Trustee suggested that the People Committee could review the outcomes of the health checks. Mr Buckley advised we can provide this data back to the Trust Board.	Action: D Buckley
M50. Risk Register and SEF – Review and consider a) A Trustee noted that we have two red risks and the descriptor of “tolerable” and suggested that there may be the need for a discussion around risk appetite the A&R committee. f) A Trustee noted that the Trust is slow at taking action and perhaps we need to identify where we need to take action quicker. A Trustee asked if within the strategic goals, can we have opportunities to build capacity. it was suggested that this should be an agenda item and that we are missing granular information on progress towards the aims. It should be a Trust Board discussion on tracking strategic direction. The Clerk to add to the next meeting agenda for 30-40 minutes.	Action: The Clerk Action: The Clerk
M51. Items from Chair e) Vice Chair – can all Trustees consider the Vice Chair role for agreement at the next meeting.	Action: The Clerk/All