



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 16th November 2021 at 5.30 pm.

Present	Yes/No	In Attendance	Yes/No
Mr S Lloyd - Chair	Yes	Mr D Buckley, CEO	Yes
Mr R Newton Chance	Yes	Mrs K Williams, Clerk	Yes
Mr C Stevens	Yes		
Mrs L Lawson	No		

Summary of matters for the Trust Board

- a) The appraisal system remains in place and work on forming training routes for Support Staff continues.
- b) The Committee suggests that the Trust Board consider drafting a letter raising the concerns over the lack of government funding for support services for staff and students.
- c) The Safeguarding Peer Reviews have restarted and are proving to be effective.
- d) The mechanism for reviewing the MAT Strategic Plan and the drafting of the new plan needs to be discussed further at the December Trust Board meeting.
- e) The outcome of the CACE peer review was positive and any recommendations are being actioned.

1. Welcome

The new Chair, Mr Lloyd welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Chair explained that he will be meeting with the CEO and the Headteachers from Liskeard, Looe, Landulph and Dobwalls.

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

There were no declarations.

3. Apologies for Absence

Mrs Lawson is on long term apologies due to Maternity leave. Mr Stevens was due to join the meeting but had been caught in traffic.

Mr Stevens joined the meeting at 17.39.

4. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting held on 23rd February 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 23rd February 2021, having been circulated in advance, were agreed as an accurate record and will be signed.

5. Matters Arising

M17. Apologies

- 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.

Update: Mr Buckley advised that having a designated recruitment committee had been discussed and decided that this was not practical. Mr Buckley advised that we are always looking to recruit Trustees via different avenues. Mr Newton Chance added that he had written a letter to parents to see if there were any potential Trustee applications from the parent body but this has not proved fruitful. Mr Newton Chance advised that any notification of Trustee resignation will be circulated to the Trust Board via the Clerk.

M19. 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. 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. 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.

Update: Complete.

M20. Review of the People Committee ToR and Governor Handbook

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

Update: Complete.

M22. Wellbeing across the school community

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

Update: On this agenda.

M24. Risk Register Review

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 in previous debates, a large scale increase had 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.

Update: It was explained that the size of the Trust Board has been discussed and it was decided to continue with the current structure rather than try to recruit extra Trustees. Complete.

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.

Update: Complete.

j) Risk 15 "Organisational isolation"

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

Update: Complete.

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.

Update: Complete.

M25. 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.

Update: Mr Buckley advised that this has been updated. Complete.

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.

Update: Ongoing for when Mrs Lawson returns.

6. HR - Review the effectiveness of CPD and performance management

a) Mr Buckley advised that a set of questions from the MAT Assurance Framework was circulated to the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) and governors. The outcome of this informed us that the area that was weakest in the Trust was building staff capacity. The CACE peer review was given this as an area of focus. We were pleased with the positive outcome of the review which gave us some recommendations but there were no concerns raised.

b) Mr Buckley advised that support staff need to be on an equal footing to the teachers and so to move this forward, we have brought together a CPD committee and also worked on the appraisal system for this group of staff. The expected standards for support staff are now also aligned to teachers. Work has been undertaken for SMART day to raise the profile of support staff.

c) Our latest strategy is to form a committee to take over the work in setting training routes for support staff and this will be led by Rachel Yelland, Mr Buckley's PA. We are updating the websites across the Trust which will all have a calendar for staff training. The CDP group have suggested a strategy for training across the Trust which is a new innovation.

d) **A Trustee asked to what degree is the variation in uptake and offers in training across the schools in the Trust.** Mr Buckley explained the appraisal system is the same the opportunities in leadership development is robust across and the attendance and contribution in SMART day is the same across all the schools. Subject teachers are working together collectively and the principles that they work by, are the same across all the schools. The MSLT (MAT Senior Leadership Team) are making requests to have Trust Wide initiatives and there is now a much wider held perception that we are one Trust rather than 6 individual schools.

e) A Trustee noted that the Trust should praise themselves on their pioneering work for the development of support staff which is not in place in other Trusts in the Southwest. It was also acknowledged by Trustees that it is powerful that we are now working as one Trust.

f) **A Trustee asked how CPD and performance management fit together and is there a direct link between these areas for teachers and support staff.** Mr Buckley advised there is only one support staff member who is on performance related pay and most teachers are similarly at the

top of their scales so we have made the focus of appraisal more positive. Appraisals are the guarantee to ensure development and we assume that everyone is looking to develop. We have identified three areas of focus within the appraisal system; reflection on own practice, professional curiosity which is captured in STAR projects and leadership capacity which is core to what we do. Leadership Ladders have been reviewed and are well understood by staff. We have reduced the number of staff who are on the minimum standard and all of these staff members have measures in place to address the issues. We can also decide to stop the appraisal process for these staff members if needed. Teachers not at the top of their scale still need to pass appraisal to increment pay and UPS (Upper Pay Scale) teachers need to pass two appraisals to increment.

- g) Trustees acknowledged there is a direct link between appraisal and CDP opportunities. Mr Buckley advised there is a direct link to Leadership ladders and a clear link to STAR projects and SMART day but there is still work to do on training opportunities for support staff.
- h) **A Trustee asked if there is any scope in the apprenticeship levy.** Mr Buckley advised that we have tied this into leadership courses but these courses are now free. The demands on staff for these courses have been too great and even though the courses were being paid for.

7. **Staff and Student Health and Well-Being - Review staff and pupil health and well-being across the Trust's schools**

- a) Mr Buckley advised that we set up Health Champions and this has worked well in some schools. We have highlighted the use of Zurich insurance helpline to staff and their immediate family and we have bought in services from Ed Psych. We have been able to use some investment into Psychology Associates but there is an increase in demand. Mental Health Services promised in Cornwall are not materialising.
- b) The TAS (Team Around the School) meetings have highlighted that charities working in the area are overloaded and the demand on them is high. There is an increasing gap between need and provision and the impact on the schools is significant. Longer term, we were looking at having self-efficacy for staff to reduce workplace stress and so we have introduced the Hart's Ladders for staff consultation.
- c) Mr Buckley explained that we have taken steps to ensure that staff remain professional at all times and have provided training to stop any issues with this being a long-term strategy.
- d) Mr Buckley advised that we have had trials on how to help manage staff workload. The surveys from the last OFSTED visits show that staff are not unhappy with their workloads but we continue to try and protect staff. Trustees acknowledged that the Trust is mindful of staff workloads.
- e) **A Trustee asked if the Trust have initiatives such as staff buddies in place.** Mr Buckley advised that there has been training for appraisees and the mentors for the Early Career Teachers. We have also added to the Leadership Ladders that there is an explicit requirement for coaching in Middle Leaders. The appraisal tree has also been used for contacting employees during lockdowns. We have wanted to look at a mentoring model and we have researched changing our current systems but it was found to be too expensive to convert. Mr Buckley added that we have tried an experimental idea of having mentors who are based in a different department from those being mentored and this has worked well.
- f) **Trustees queried if the Trust Board should write a letter to the government about their concern in the lack of funding to provide support services for staff and students.** Mr Buckley advised the content of discussions in the TAS meetings. It was agreed that this should be discussed further at the next Trust Board meeting.

Action: Mr Newton Chance/Clerk

- g) Mr Buckley summarised the current issues with EHCP applications and the negative impact on the schools and children. Trustees noted concern at the situation and recognised the detrimental

impact on staff and students.

8. **Safeguarding - Review of the effectiveness of safeguarding procedures**

- a) Mr Buckley advised that we have a safeguarding peer review system in place although this was paused during Covid but this has now restarted. This process gives a clear indication that safeguarding processes are robust and provides support to the DSLs (Designated Safeguarding Leads) and DDSLs (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads) network in the Trust.
- b) **A Trustee asked if the DSLs and DDSLs meet regularly.** Mr Buckley advised that they do not although this was trialled. They have however all met and know each other. Mr Buckley added that they are working well with each other as they are visiting other schools and evaluating the safeguarding processes and this is working better than having meetings.
- c) Mr Buckley advised that a summary of the LA (Local Authority) S175 safeguarding audit has been put together as a RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rated checklist. This provides a checklist which governors, and DSLs can sample areas during a safeguarding visit. If there are any red areas, this is the focus of the next safeguarding peer review. Governors have found the checklist useful as they know what questions should be asked. The LA S175 audit was reviewed last year and the new form is more general which governors have found harder to use. We may need to do our own audit list or interpret the current S175 into questions but this has yet to be decided. Mr Buckley advised we are mandated to complete the S175 but we may have to expand the audit form and provide our own questions or guidance for governors.
- d) A Trustee noted that the peer review system and safeguarding checklist is really positive. Trustees were content with safeguarding procedures. Once again this was highlighted as a SMART innovation that is not in place in other Trusts. One Trustee with connections to another Trust had been so impressed as to try and influence its adoption there too.

9. **Monitoring of the MAT Strategic Plan towards the Trust's objectives**

- a) Mr Buckley advised that the aims within the MAT Strategic Plan have been allocated to each committee and the new 5-year plan is currently being written. Mr Buckley suggested that the approach we should take next, is to take the MAT Strategic Plan and review each aim for the new plan. Mr Buckley advised that we would take the current plan and evaluate each aim as the starting process. He is currently writing a paper in preparation for the next Trust Board meeting. It was noted in the current plan, there does not seem to be an evaluation on current aims.
- b) The Trustees agreed that the new plan needs to identify which committee has responsibility for each aim.
- c) **A Trustee asked where governance sits within the Strategic Plan.** Mr Buckley advised that governance comes under leadership as suggested by the OFSTED framework.
- d) **A Trustee asked about evaluation of the existing plan and noted that this is necessary as we need to sign off the assessment of the current plan to form where we are going in the new plan.** Mr Buckley advised that he has completed a RAG rated version each year which has been circulated to the MSLT but this needs to be more in depth for this particular process.
- e) **A Trustee noted that we need to have discussions at Trust Board level about the amount of progress towards aims.** Mr Buckley advised that he would prefer to have an overview document to suggest the process and the mechanism of how this has been formed and this can then be discussed at the next round of committee meetings.
- f) **A Trustee noted that there needs to be sufficient time for Trustees to read and digest the papers in preparation for discussions at Trust Board level.** It was suggested that this needs to be discussed at the December Trust Board meeting and the papers for this need to be headlined on the agenda to ensure that Trustees give it the attention that it requires. A deadline of December

1st was accepted as reasonable for the circulation of this paper.

Action: D Buckley/Clerk

10. **Consider the CACE Peer Review recommendations**

- a) Mr Buckley referred to the earlier discussion on the CACE peer review and advised that Human Resources was an area of concern for the Trust. The outcome of the CACE review has been circulated to Trustees prior to Mr Lloyd joining the board.
- b) Mr Buckley advised that there is a group called CACE which brings together all the CEOs in Cornwall. Mr Buckley advised that one of the aims of this group is to improve collaboration with Trusts and peer reviews have been undertaken. Two CEOs visited SMART and they reviewed our weakest area. The recommendations are reasonable and we have already actioned. This can be discussed further when Mr Lloyd meets with Mr Buckley.

11. **Review of Policies**

- a) There were no policies for discussion at this meeting.
- b) **A Trustee suggested that maybe a review of policies for in terms of flexible working which has arisen from the Covid situation might be useful.** Mr Buckley explained the policy review cycle and policies can have an accelerated review if needed. Mr Buckley advised that any suggested changes can be given to Mrs Callard, SMART Senior HR Officer and if there is a substantive change, we can then change the review date. A Trustee noted that we have a proactive to reviewing and updating policies.

12. **Guidance/instructions to LGCs**

- a) None.

13. **Summary of matters for the Trust Board**

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- c) The Safeguarding Peer Reviews have restarted and are proving to be effective.
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- e) The outcome of the CACE peer review was positive and any recommendations are being actioned.

Documents circulated for information:

14. **Trewidland Safeguarding Peer Review**

- a) Trustees acknowledged and congratulated the process and outcome at Trewidland.

15. **Summary points from LGCs**

- a) Trustees acknowledged all points raised by Local Governing Committees.

16. **Agreements made by email**

- a) None.

17. **Date of next meetings:**

01-03-2022 and 26-05-2022 at 5.30pm.

The meeting closed at 6.52

Action Summary	
<p>M7. Staff and Student Health and Well-Being - Review staff and pupil health and well-being across the Trust's schools</p> <p>f) Trustees queried if the Trust Board should write a letter to the government about their concern in the lack of funding to provide support services for staff and students. Mr Buckley advised the content of discussions in the TAS meetings. It was agreed that this should be discussed further at the next Trust Board meeting.</p>	<p>Action: Mr Newton Chance/Clerk</p>
<p>M9. Monitoring of the MAT Strategic Plan towards the Trust's objectives</p> <p>f) A Trustee noted that there needs to be sufficient time for Trustees to read and digest the papers in preparation for discussions at Trust Board level. It was suggested that this needs to be discussed at the December Trust Board meeting and the papers for this need to be headlined on the agenda to ensure that Trustees give it the attention that it requires. A deadline of December 1st was accepted as reasonable for the circulation of this paper.</p>	<p>Action: D Buckley/Clerk</p>