



TRUST BOARD

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Trust Board of South East Cornwall Multi Academy Regional Trust held on Thursday 7th April 2022 at 5.30 pm.

Present	Yes/No	Present	Yes/No
Ms R Brooks	Yes	Mrs L Lawson	Apologies
Mr D Buckley, CEO	Yes	Mr S Lloyd	Yes
Mrs H Casson	Yes	Mr Newton Chance, Chair	Yes
Mr J Crisp	Yes	Mr C Piper	No
Mr L Hallam	Yes	Mr C Stevens, Vice Chair	Apologies

**In Attendance: Mrs J Lumbard, CFO
Mrs K Williams, Clerk to Trust Board**

16. **Welcome**
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted it was a shame to have to revert to a virtual meeting.
17. **Declaration of Business or Pecuniary Interest and Academy-related parties - update on any changes since completion of written declaration**
None.
18. **Apologies for Absence**
Mrs Lawson and Mr Stevens had sent their apologies which were received and accepted by the committee. It was expected that Mr Hallam and Mr Piper would be joining the meeting.
19. **Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting held on 9th December 2021**
The minutes of the meeting held on 9th December 2021, having been circulated in advance, were agreed as an accurate record and will be signed.
20. **Progress of action points and matters arising**
 - M6. Reports and Recommendations from Committees**
 - b) People (S Lloyd)
Mr Lloyd advised that there were four key points from the People Committee meeting. The committee was pleased with the appraisal system for support staff which is progressing well. The committee had raised a point about possibly drafting a letter from the Trust Board about their concerns of diminishing external agencies for young people and staff for mental health. Trustees thought that sending a letter would be a good idea and timely. Mr Buckley summarised the issues with the LA (Local Authority) budget cuts and the sparsity in the area of SEN (Special Education Needs). Mr Lloyd was happy to draft a letter to the local MP.
Update: It was discussed that the letter needs to be accurate in light of recent announcements about funding from the Government and Mr Lloyd is working on this.
 - e) A Trustee asked who is the Trust safeguarding lead. Mr Buckley advised that in the business management services contract this is allocated to Mr Green but Mr Buckley advised he has been leading this area. Mr Buckley advised that someone from the schools' DSLs could be the nominated person in future. Trustees queried the need for a strategic lead for safeguarding for SMART. It was suggested that this would be best practice but not a statutory requirement. Mr Green was considered to be a lead in this area in terms of policy. It was agreed that this would be added to the next People Committee meeting.

*Update: Mr Buckley advised that we have a group of DSL (Designated Safeguarding Leads) and DDLs (Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads) and we are going to meet as a whole group as a starting point. Steve Green is the lead in terms of policy but someone who is a practicing DSL should lead this group as Mr Buckley advised that a peer led structure is stronger. Any issues beyond the schools comes to Mr Buckley and Mr Green leads policy. **A Trustee asked in which Trust Board Committee safeguarding is discussed.** Mr Lloyd explained that safeguarding is actively discussed in the People Committee.*

21. Election of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Trust Board

a) Nomination and support of Richard Newton Chance as Chair

Mr Newton Chance was nominated for Chair which as the only nomination, he accepted. Trustees were in unanimous agreement to Mr Newton Chances nomination.

Mr Hallam joined the meeting at 5.41pm.

c) Nominations for Vice Chair

The Chair advised that Mr Stevens is leaving in November as he has a heavy workload in his new post. The Chair advised that he is staying in the role of Chair for one more year and noted that succession planning is important. A Trustee asked about the role of Vice Chair. The Chair explained that Vice Chair is the nominated person if the Chair is unavailable. There is the notion that the Vice Chair is preparing to step into Chair but in terms of additional work, there is not any really. Vice Chairs are able to support the Chair. Mr Hallam nominated himself for the role and the Trustees were in unanimous agreement to the nomination.

22. Reports and Recommendations from Committees

Documents has been circulated in advance of the meeting. From these:

a) People 01-03-2022

Mr Lloyd advised that the department focus reports leading from the Headteacher Reports will give an opportunity for further discussions. The committee discussed the Risk Register and how it relates to the five-year plan.

b) Remuneration 01-03-2022

The committee was largely looking at the benchmarking for roles and Trustees were content that the Trust is in line with benchmarks.

c) Audit & Risk 28-03-2022

Mr Hallam advised that the biggest risk to the Trust is staffing. The committee will be discussing the coverage and scope of the Audit & Risk Committee further. Work on forming the new strategic Risk Register will continue. We are within benchmarks for similar sized Trusts. More work needs to be done on clarifying the division of issues between Audit and Risk and the Resources committee

d) Resources 28-03-2022

The Chair advised that the leaking roofs at Liskeard with be resolved with PFI. Recovery Premium Funding has been extended for two years. Benchmarking has been reviewed and we are in line. The committee recommends the Finance policies for full Trust Board approval.

e) Learning 02-03-2022

Mr Crisp explained that the Community Relations Trustee is visiting schools and subject snap shots are being developed. The MAT student Council work is exemplary. Headteacher Reports were discussed to see if they are now fit for purpose and the RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rating on them. Deep dives in subject areas was discussed and it was noted that they are useful but take a lot of time and resources.

23. CEO summary of HT Reports – focus on Pupil Progress

Documents had been circulated in advance of the meeting. From these:

- a) Mr Buckley advised that the latest version of the Headteacher Reports has been circulated. They are now all consistent and the formula is completed in a live document. Under the Trust tab, you can see all the schools for the first time. Mr Buckley advised that the web-based version is having issues with one of the formulas used to calculate the RAG ratings so please view this document in the desktop version of EXCEL in order to see the colours correctly. Mr Buckley will further investigate if the formula can be replaced with something that works in the web version of EXCEL.
- b) Headteachers Reports will now be presented in this form. There were a number of lines which have been revised as requested. Any further comments are still useful.
- c) **A Trustee felt this was a great step forward and asked about the benchmarks and if they are based on pre Covid data.** It was noted that benchmarks remain pre-Covid but there is some context needed due to the ongoing issues with attendance because of Covid. Mr Buckley advised that the MSLT (MAT Senior Leadership Team) debated this and it was decided to stay with national benchmarks. **A Trustee noted that whilst this contains complex data, the format it is being presented in is still highly simple and easy to read and allows Trustees to focus on particular areas and work on this should be applauded. Trustees felt that having a Trust overview is really powerful.**
- d) In terms of the Subject Reports, we have a first draft and we have decided to go with all subjects. We have a scale agreed and all departments working to this. We are using the Ofsted criteria of implementation, impact and intent and national benchmarks to assess progress. **A Trustee noted the conversations that are taking place with staff about how we make those objective and subjective calls are a valuable developmental activity.**
- e) **A Trustee asked when we will have an idea about pupil progress.** Mr Buckley advised that there are assessment processes in place, some are national tests and some are internal tests. We know that children have been significantly impacted by Covid but we cannot realistically RAG rate them against national benchmarks. **A Trustee asked if we will not have comparison data until the autumn** and Mr Buckley advised that this is the case but we do have other systems in place but they are not comparable to national data.

24. **MAT Strategic Plan verbal update**

- a) **A Trustee referred to the recent NFER paper The Skills Imperative 2035 and the need for children to have wider skills for employability and noted the work of the Trust in SECRET Skills** and Mr Buckley advised that in the last three peer reviews, children had mentioned SECRET Skills so although this is happening slowly there is some progress to report.
- b) The strategies to be used to meet the aims of the five-year plan have been discussed by the SLTF. 18 Senior Leaders gave high quality presentations on each of the strategies which they felt passionate about and staff voted on what they had heard. The five-year plan is genuinely bought into by staff. A further draft of the plan is being worked on over Easter and the strategies chosen are believed to deliver for the children. There is a new emerging passion in staff who want to create an environment for supporting other staff and a new focus on how we create capacity as a leader and practitioner at all levels and in all roles. Student leadership and SECRET Skills was brought up several times during discussions.
- c) **Trustees noted that staff are actively engaged in the development of the Strategic Plan rather than having a top down approach so we have better buy in from staff and this is a major achievement.**
- d) The Chair noted that the aims in the Strategic Plan can be allocated to each committee for monitoring purposes as follows:
Resources: Aims 7 and 8
Learning: Aims 1, 5 and 6
People: Aims 2, 3 and 4

25. **Dobwalls Nursery verbal Update**

- a) Mr Buckley advised that the building work is all but complete and the building is looking great. The deliveries for equipment are happening and should be completed by 6th May. The main issue is the Ofsted registration which is taking time. The Regional Schools Commissioner and the Local Authority have been involved and have been helping us navigate this. We are hoping to be able to offer visits to parents after Easter.
- b) Temporarily Dobwalls Nursery will be a Trust led nursery whose OFSTED registration will be as part of the existing Dobwalls Primary School registration. In parallel to this temporary registration we have an application process taking place that will enable Dobwalls Nursery to still be a Trust Led Nursery but with its own separate OFSTED registration. It will then be registered in its own right and we can then move the Liskeard nursery to this structure and it will become SMART nurseries. Once there is the full registration for Dobwalls, we will adopt Liskeard nursery into it.
- c) We have been able to deal with any staffing issues; the nursery staff have completed training and we have a good strong team of staff. **A Trustee asked if the nurseries are being set up as separate legal entity.** Mr Buckley advised that it is not a separate legal entity as it will still be within the Trust but will be set up as our 7th Ofsted registered location. This will be beneficial should we decide to set up a Landulph nursery as this allows us one model which can work on all sites.

26. **Adoption of Policies**

- a) Finance policies reviewed by the Resources Committee meeting on 28-03-2022
Charging and Remissions policy
A Trustee asked about low-income parents and what is the situation here if the parents don't qualify for benefits. Mrs Lumbard advised we would not want to exclude any child so at this point the class teacher or trip organiser, would approach the appropriate person in the school and we can draw on private funds or in some cases, Pupil Premium funding.
- b) Counter theft, fraud and corruption policy
Reserves & Investment policy
Donations policy and procedure
Financial Regulations procedures and policy
Financial Scheme of Delegation
- c) Trustees agree to approve all the listed policies.

27. **Items from Chair**

- a) Brian Cook, Finance Trustees end of term of office.
The Chair will send a letter of thanks. Mr Newton Chance will chair the Resources Committee until a new Finance Trustee is recruited.
- b) Trustee terms of office
Mrs Casson and Mr Crisp's terms of office end in the autumn and they are both happy to continue and to apply for a further term of office. It was explained that Mr Stevens is leaving in November and we need to find a safeguarding Trustees. Mrs Casson advised that she would be content to take on Safeguarding and or SEND depending on who else we could recruit.
- c) Trustee Links to schools
Liskeard – Ms Brooks
Saltash – Mrs Casson
Looe – Mr Lloyd
Dobwalls – Mr Piper
Trewidland – Mr Hallam
Landulph – Mrs Lawson
It was discussed that Trustees have found it difficult to attend LGC meetings and this was due to

work commitments. They will endeavour to join an LGC meeting in the summer term.

d) Liskeard Headteacher appointment

The Chair advised that he and Ms Brooks were part of the Headteacher interviews. Daniel Wendon has been appointed. We had a good range of applicants and the process was robust. Mr Buckley advised that all staff who were able to be involved had the opportunity to be involved and students were involved in the process as well.

e) Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) letter

This letter had been circulated to the Trustees. The Chair advised that it was a positive meeting between the Chair, the CEO and RSC and they discussed growing the Trust. Mr Buckley advised that he is chairing the newly formed Cornwall Education Partnership as well as CACE. The reorganisation of the DfE and the ESFA was queried by the Chair of the Trust Board during the meeting. The Chair summarised the recent white paper and noted the optimum size of trusts as being 7,500 students and the risk of a further RI Ofsted outcome for Saltash. The SEND green paper was also discussed and Mr Buckley advised that there is still work to do in all the secondary schools in terms of this. SEND provision is going to be a big focus of Ofsted. We are going to have a strategy in place for Saltash and it would be useful to review this in the Learning Committee. The Chair advised that he visits the schools prior to a Peer Review and he noted real progress during his recent visit to Saltash in terms of leadership and governance.

28. **Clerk update on Trust governance**

a) Update on LGCs

Landulph and Saltash are well prepared for their imminent Ofsted visits. Both are utilising their governor monitoring plans so have been monitoring the progress toward the aims in their SDPs (School Development Plans). Trewidland and Dobwalls both have had new Chairs this year and are working well. Trewidland has held their first governor day which worked well. No issues to report at Looe and Liskeard.

b) Development work

As part of the Clerk's Star project, she has been writing Knowledge Organisers for the local governors. There is a need for a governor appraisal like system to allow opportunity for self-reflection and growth of governors.

29. **Items from this meeting for report back to LGCs**

a) Richard Newton Chance remains as Chair of the Trust Board for the next year. Mr Hallam has taken on the role of Vice Chair. Mr Stevens will be leaving the role of Safeguarding Trustee in November. Mr Cook has finished his term of office at Finance Trustee and we are trying to recruit to this vacancy.

b) Trustee Links to schools are:

Liskeard – Ms Brooks

Saltash – Mrs Casson

Looe – Mr Lloyd

Dobwalls – Mr Piper

Trewidland – Mr Hallam

Landulph – Mrs Lawson

c) We had a good review meeting with the RSC's officers who recognised the considerable progress the Trust has made and for the first time discussed the possibilities for growth.

d) Trustees will be monitoring the implications of the Education White Paper and the SEND Green paper closely.

e) Trustees recognised the great value of the new Headteacher's report format and also the hard work that has gone into its development.

30. **Agreements made by email**
- a) *Nursery business case – Autumn 2021*
 - b) *Support staff pay policy – March 2021*
 - c) *LGPS Employer Discretion Policy – December 2021*

31. **Date of next meetings:**
19th July 2022 at 5.30pm.

The meeting closed at 6.52pm.