



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 Wednesday 22nd February 2023 at 6.15 pm.

Present	Yes/No	In Attendance	Yes/No
Mr S Lloyd – Chair	Yes	Mr D Buckley, CEO	Yes
Mrs H Casson	Yes	Mrs K Williams, Clerk	Yes
Mrs L Lawson	Apologies		

17. **Welcome**
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
18. **Declaration of Business or Pecuniary Interest and Academy-related parties - update on any changes since completion of written declaration**
None.
19. **Apologies**
Mrs Lawson had sent apologies just prior to the meeting which were received and accepted by the committee.
20. **Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20th October 2022**
The minutes of the meeting held on 20th October 2022 having been circulated in advance, were agreed as an accurate record and will be signed.
21. **Matters Arising**
M9. CEO update on changes to safeguarding practices for this academic year and Safeguarding Trustee visit to Saltash
d) A Trustee referred to the different approaches to safeguarding training across the Trust and queried if this needs review and who is the lead from the Trust on safeguarding. Mr Buckley advised that this is Steve Green although this is a team effort. A Trustee felt that some approaches should be the same across the Trust and this also applies to the use of recording systems such as CPOMS or My Concern. A Trustee noted that schools were not sure who the safeguarding lead is across the Trust. A Trustee asked what external safeguarding checks are undertaken. Mr Buckley advised that schools have held these but we don't do these systematically. A Trustee noted that there was some confusion over low-level concerns at Saltash and the system does need to be looked at. A Trustee asked if this should be discussed again at the next meeting. Key questions from Trustees are how are low level concerns recorded and are google checks taking place and recorded. Trustees are aware of the issues which Mrs Casson has raised and Mr Buckley will discuss further with her with a follow up discussion on progress at the next meeting.
Update: On this agenda.
22. **Consider the Headteacher's Reports**
Are there any areas which require a deeper delve at future meetings? Documents had been circulated in advance of the meeting. From these:
a) **A Trustee noted that the narratives from each of the Headteacher are different and felt that there is insufficient information on safeguarding in particular numbers of Children on CHiN and Child Protection and also suggested that we need number of those students who are severely absence**

which is a new category from September. A Trustee recommended that there should be data on how many hate crime reports there have been. Mr Buckley explained that the report can be revised to include these as required headings or as part of the narratives.

- b) **A Trustee asked for an update on staff recruitment and retention, sickness and the level of risk to the Trust.** Mr Buckley advised that in terms of long term staff absence, we have been working through a number of cases and making sure we have consistent processes so these are being resolved. The numbers of staff on short term absence are close to national average. The impact of unfilled posts has been a concern in Science at Liskeard but this has now been addressed. We have an issue where we have not been able to recruit to ICT and this is causing issues for these teams.
- c) **A Trustee suggested that OFSTED have appeared not to take the impact of staff vacancies, especially those in ICT, into consideration during inspections.** Mr Buckley advised that we have advertised the Operations Manager post at Looe but we have not managed to recruit to this post and this is negatively impacting the school. Mrs Lumbard is covering elements of this post for the time being.
- d) **A Trustee asked if the COO (Chief Operations Officer) post has been filled.** Mr Buckley advised that the previous structure of a combined Operation Manager at Looe and COO role has been spilt. TOLT (Trust Operational Leadership Team) have agreed the restructure so we are now going through the legal process of this.
- e) **A Trustee queried the management of risk whilst these issues are being resolved.** Mr Buckley advised that in terms of the Operations Manager role at Looe, the admin team has restructured to cover parts of this role. Mr Buckley added that that papers regarding the operations restructure will need to be reviewed by Trust Board. As part of the restructure, there will be Operations Managers in all three secondary schools. Job descriptions have been reviewed and internal staff are aware of what the role will be. The Business Development Plan will need to be reviewed and it is likely that any development will be halted until the restructure is in place.
- f) Mr Buckley advised that small schools do not have capacity to cover specialist staff and this is a risk so we need to build resilience in the small schools. There will be a further staffing restructure of Looe which will also need to be reviewed by the Trust Board. Mr Buckley advised that there have been significant staffing changes at Landulph but we have built the SLT (senior Leadership Team) back up to capacity. At Trewidland we have needed to be flexible on the learning approach which means that this school can accommodate changes in staffing better. Pupil numbers are rapidly increasing at Trewidland as a result. In response to the challenges, collaborative approaches and restructuring is being managed as well as we are able to in the current climate.
- g) **A Trustee suggested that it would be useful for the People Committee to regularly review staff absence and what the trends are across the Trust.** Mr Buckley advised that it is important for the committee to review the strategies and the approaches being used. Reporting on how these are being implemented is really valuable as well as any challenge on this from Trustees.

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

- *Aim 2 Continuous progress of all staff*
- *Aim 3 Develop leadership at all levels*
- *Aim 4 Excellence in governance*

A document had been circulated in advance of the meeting. From this:

a) Aim 2 Continuous progress of all staff

Mr Buckley advised that we were looking at implementing a no blame culture across the Trust. We are just about to get the review back from SMART day and it is expected to be positive. Mr Buckley advised that he has had contact from staff giving examples of the no blame culture in their school which is really positive.

- b) The post appraisal survey is expected to show further impact of this work. Mr Buckley added that we have developed the Headteacher role and senior leadership teams are more open and honest about their position so we have been able to get support in place quickly if it is needed.
- c) **A Trustee asked who is providing support for the Headteachers and noted concern about this all falling to Mr Buckley and the impact of this on him.** Mr Buckley advised that he provides support but Headteachers are also developing networks of support through groups such as CASH. Headteachers are also supporting each other. Mr Buckley advised that we have support from CELT and we have also met with a DfE attendance adviser although this has not provided any suggestions which are not already in place. Mr Buckley advised that we will be having the normal annual meeting with the RSC (Regional Schools Commissioner) in May.
- d) Aim 3 Develop leadership at all levels
Mr Buckley explained that we have a record number of NPQs this year. We have data for staff leaving us and more staff have left for promotion than for any other reason. Mr Buckley meets with all new staff and explains to them that staff should feel comfortable at work and have opportunities to professionally develop throughout the year. Mr Buckley explained that we have reviewed Leadership Ladders and these are working well.
- e) Aim 4 Excellence in governance
Mr Buckley explained that it is apparent that we need to rethink appraisals for governors as this has not been met with positivity. We need to have a supportive structure for them instead which may include an informal buddy system. The Knowledge Organisers created by the Clerk and the bank of challenging questions has been valuable for governors. It was discussed that we have a good number of governors in place which is positive and it was acknowledged that some Trusts have chosen to remove LGCs (Local Governing Committees) and adopt a hub model..
- f) Mr Buckley advised that where we need to do better is in developing a faster model for school improvement but there is no really good school improvement manual widely available so Mr Buckley is working on improving our own methodology for this. The use of hub models for governance was discussed at length. Mr Buckley noted that triangulation of information that is provided in reports from senior leaders is important for governors and Trustees.
- g) **A Trustee felt that it is crucial for schools to have their own governors and a local voice. It was suggested by the committee that a hub model may work in very large Trusts but it was felt that the local knowledge of Local Governors works better in Trusts like SMART within localities such as South East Cornwall.** It was noted that Link meetings are interesting for Trustees and they provide opportunities for governors to share what is going on within their schools. Trustees have data to consider and if governors are not delving as deeply as committees would like, there are other mechanisms Trustees can use.

24. **Review and consider updated Governor Handbook**

A document had been circulated in advance of the meeting. From this:

- a) The Clerk advised she has revised the Governor Handbook. She has consulted the Chairs and Vice Chairs of Governors on what changes were required. There were a couple of suggestions so she has made changes to reflect this. The Handbook is being circulated to the committee for any final comments before being finalised and circulated to governors.
- b) **A Trustee complemented the Clerk on what was felt to be an excellent, high quality document.** It was noted that the Knowledge Organisers for governors sit alongside of this to provide a further level of information. It was suggested by Trustee that this handbook is in a format which is easy to read and we should be proud of this document as a Trust.

25. **HR - Review of mechanisms in place to allow Trust board to confidently oversee staff capability and coaching interventions**

Staff and Student Health and Well-Being - Review Behaviour Policies and the mechanisms and strategies underpinning interventions

Safeguarding - Review of the current mechanism used by LGCs to monitor the S175 audit form process and safeguarding peer reviews

- a) There had been some query on how Trustees fulfil their responsibilities for the committee prior to the meeting, so Mr Buckley asked what Trustees need to enable them to have oversight of the three listed agenda items. It was suggested by Trustees that they need to have a discussion on the areas of oversight on a periodic basis.
- b) Mr Buckley advised that previously in Peer Reviews, senior leaders had taken more of a best fit model rather than a model that identified every individual item seen in a way that Heads could follow up anything that fell 'less than good'. We are now trying to identify a way to address issues such as this differently and more immediately.
- c) **A Trustee suggested that the committee may have too much information and ultimately, they do not know who are the schools that are a concern and how do they know that safeguarding mechanisms are robust from the information that they have.** In terms of safeguarding, Mr Buckley is confident that any OFSTED inspection would not find any safeguarding issues. Mr Buckley advised that DSLs (Designated Safeguarding Leads) undertake Safeguarding Peer Reviews in all the schools. The way in which safeguarding mechanisms and how Trustees can be satisfied that these are robust was discussed at length.
- d) It was suggested that Safeguarding Peer Review reports should be sent to the Safeguarding Trustee. It was queried if the Clerk should add safeguarding as a standing item to Trust Board agenda and this was discussed at length. Mr Buckley suggested some indicators for Trustees to use such as the number of LGC safeguarding visits each term, how are safeguarding governors are being trained, was a review completed for OFSTED, was a report conducted by a DSL and are these mechanisms regularly happening.
- e) It was suggested that risk management which includes safeguarding should be a full Trust Board responsibility. The key risks should be managed in each committee meeting and there should be separate policy discussions from those surrounding risk management. If the committee identify key risks such as severe staff shortage, this would be highlighted to the Trust Board
- f) **A Trustee suggested that the committee should have opportunities during the meetings to hear what is going well and what might be risks in the future and how these are being managed in a way to give Trustees confidence that policies are being implemented.** A Trustee recommended that policies can then be reviewed. The three listed agenda items need to be scheduled for discussion and Mr Buckley needs to provide an operational report on how these are being managed so that Trustees can consider. Mr Buckley could then advise Trustees what risks there are and how they are being managed within policy.

26. **Review of Policies**

- a) None.

27. **Guidance/instructions to LGCs**

- a) Governors should use the Headteacher Reports to allow them to consider staff absence and the impact that this may have on the running of the school. This is a risk the People Committee are monitoring.
- b) Safeguarding should be a standing item on LGC meeting agendas and policies should be followed through to minimise the risk to staff and students.

28. **LGC minutes**

- a) The LGC meeting minutes will be circulated to Trustees when ready.

29. **Summary Matters for the Trust Board – Agree key points from meeting**
- a) Trustees are monitoring safeguarding at each committee meeting and have recommended some additional information needs to be added to the Headteacher Reports. The Safeguarding Trustee will receive the Safeguarding Peer Review reports for consideration.
 - b) The committee has received an update on the progress towards the three aims assigned to them on the Strategic Plan; Aim 2 Continuous progress of all staff, aim 3 Develop leadership at all levels and aim 4 Excellence in governance.
 - c) The Committee has reviewed the Governor Handbook which has been revised. There were no further changes needed and the committee felt this was an excellent document for the governors to use alongside the Knowledge Organisers.
30. **Agreements made by email**
- a) None.
31. **Date of next meetings:**
Wednesday 21st June 2023.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending, the CEO for his input and the Clerk for her support. The meeting closed at 7.22pm.