



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 19th July 2023 at 5.30 pm.

Present	Yes/No	Present	Yes/No
Mr M Aarts	Yes	Mr L Hallam	Yes
Ms R Brooks	Resigned	Mrs L Lawson	Apologies
Mr D Buckley, CEO	Yes	Mr S Lloyd	Apologies
Mrs H Casson	Yes	Mr C Piper	Yes
Mr J Crisp	Yes		

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

32. **Welcome and Evacuation Procedure**
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The evacuation procedure was explained.
33. **Declaration of Business or Pecuniary Interest and Academy-related parties - update on any changes since completion of written declaration**
No update to declarations. The new related parties forms have been circulated and need to be completed.
Action: All
34. **Apologies for Absence**
Mrs Lawson and Mr Lloyd had sent their apologies in advance of the meeting and these were received and accepted by the committee. Ms Brooks has resigned from her role as Trustee.
35. **Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting held on 29th March 2023**
The minutes of the meeting held on 29th March 2023 having been circulated in advance, were agreed as an accurate record and were signed.
36. **Progress of action points and matters arising**
M23. Restructures at Looe and TOLT – consider and agree
d) A Trustee had concerns about the Looe proposal. Mr Buckley suggested that he will discuss this with them further.
Update: Complete.
37. **Reports and Recommendations from Committees¹**
Documents had been circulated in advance of the meeting. From these:
- a) People
The minutes from the meeting had been circulated. Mr Buckley advised that during the meeting the Risk Register had been reviewed and complaints at Liskeard had been discussed. The Staff Attendance and Safeguarding Policies had been considered and are ready for Trust Board approval.
- b) Learning – Mr Crisp
Mr Crisp advised that Strategic Risk Register was discussed along with EHE (Elected Home Educated) and the implications of this going forwards which may warrant further conversations.

¹ To include items raised for TB consideration by LGCs

Data around the quality of teaching for governors and Trustees had been queried. The Chair noted that this was also discussed at the recent informal Trustee meeting and Trustees feel they are overly reliant on the Trustees who are educationalists. **A Trustees suggested that they need more timely information.** The Chair and the Clerk have discussed ideas on how to hold central information on arising issues from across the Trust and LGCs. Mr Buckley noted that challenge is really important and we need to have the data in the right format for Trustees to be able to use and question.

- c) It was discussed at length that OFSTED outcomes are unpredictable. Mr Buckley advised that in terms of progress at Saltash, which is now has a progress 8 score of -0.27 and is the seventh most improved school in Cornwall in terms of Progress 8 improvement but OFSTED believe that we have not made rapid enough improvement.
- d) See confidential appendix.
- e) The Chair felt that we need to decide how the Trust Board gets assurance moving forwards. The Chair and the Clerk will meet to discuss and explore wider with Trustees in the new academic year.

Action: L Hallam/The Clerk

- f) **A Trustee noted the cost of Alternative Provision and asked if this is sustainable.** Mrs Lumbard advised that this is being discussed as a matter of urgency as this is not sustainable. Mr Buckley added that the LA are looking at using case studies of those students who have been moved to another school rather than being excluded but this does not address fundamental issues.
- g) The Chair noted that in future, this agenda item needs more time than five minutes per committee. The Clerk to revise template agenda.

Action: The Clerk

h) Audit & Risk – Mr Piper

Mr Piper advised the Audit & Risk committee are strong in terms of financial risk and there was a presentation by Bishop Fleming on the internal audit plan. Trustees had agreed that there is a need to broadened the scope of the committee including its membership to ensure we are looking at wider risks. The Chair noted that the Resources and Audit & Risk committee meetings are held back to back so the agendas do tend to merge. He added that the Trust Board needs to consider having an external governance review and this is timely with a new chair in post.

- i) Mr Piper added that we are a Trustee down in the committee so we need to look at the skills set which we need to attract. It was discussed that the Trust Board needs to recruit three Trustees next year.

j) Resources – Mr Aarts

Mr Aarts noted that the committee considered the draft budgets and recommend them for approval although the DfE announced 24 hours later the teacher pay awards. The unrestricted funds have moved centrally and a School Improvement Lead (SIL) is being discussed as part of this. The catering and cleaning contracts are due for renewal next year.

38. Approval of draft 2023/24 budgets following recommendation provided by the Resources Committee

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

- a) Mrs Lumbard advised that documents which have been circulated to the Trust Board have been discussed by the Resources Committee. The key area to highlight is that there is a small surplus for 2023/24 which is positive. All schools have managed to balance their budgets or have a slight surplus. The TSS (Trust Shared Services) have a small deficit due to planning for a SIL in September. In the future, we are strategically moving the unrestricted funds centrally to help the fund the SIL and all schools will benefit from this.
- b) Teachers pay has been awarded and the Trust will be better off following the updates from the

government but the support staff pay award is still a risk. The teachers' pay award is now in a 10 week consultation with unions which ends on the 21st September. We can pay staff once this has been fully agreed. We have maintained a healthy reserve of 7.9% but this drops in future years due to the dropping off of supplementary grants although this is based on what we know at this time.

- c) **A Trustee asked how much of the budget is lag funded.** Mrs Lumbard advised that all pupil funding is lagged by 12 months.
- d) Trustees noted a well done to the finance teams. Mrs Lumbard would pass this onto the finance teams and noted that we have procedures to ensure that Trustees, governors and Headteachers are seeing up to date financial information.
- f) Trustees were in unanimous agreement to approve the budgets for 2023/24.

39. **CEO update**

- a) Family Friendly initiatives
Mr Buckley advised that this has been shared with Trustees for information.
- b) Update on TOLT and the Looe Restructure
Mrs Lumbard advised we decided to take the strategic elements from the COO (Chief Operating Officer) role to have two higher level central posts and then back fill with two lower grade Operations Manager posts. Mr Foy will be joining the central team from September.
- c) **A Trustee asked how long we can sustain additional work pressures without two appointments being in place.** Mrs Lumbard advised that we are interviewing for the Operations Managers tomorrow and they should be in place for September. We have a new HR officer starting in September and this role will also be more strategic.
- d) **A Trustee referred to LinkedIn and asked if we are getting interest for interviews via this.** Mr Buckley advised that this is varied. Recruitment to ICT posts is still an issue. We have also appointed a central EWO (Education and Welfare Officer) today.
- e) Mr Buckley advised that the restructure at Looe has been completed. There has been issues with recruiting Heads of Science and Technology so we have temporary arrangements where we will provide focused support and advertise again in the new year. This is a reflection of a national shortage in Science and Technology.
- f) Arising risks to the Trust including outcome of RG discussions
Confidential appendix.
- g) Pooling of funds for school improvement
Mr Buckley advised that we have needed to look at pooling of funds across the Trust and the majority of staff now believe we are working as a Trust.
- h) Succession planning ideas
Mr Buckley advised that the Cabot Learning Trust uses succession planning at every level and any gaps in staffing are challenged. The TED WRAG Trust uses a set of indicators to show where there is noncompliance on meeting agreed deadlines which shows how efficiently the school is operating.
- i) **A Trustee felt that succession planning is important especially for the CEO and CFO which would be a real risk to the Trust. A Trustee asked if we are intending on setting deadlines and the impact of this on staff.** Mr Buckley advised that there can be a dependency culture which is unhelpful so we need schools to have a paper trail on what has not been met. Mr Buckley will be looking at a suitable model to bring back to the Trust Board for discussion and agreement on the

level of information required.

Action: D Buckley

40. **Discuss DfE Confirmation of Compliance and Liskeard Safeguarding Report**

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

- a) **A Trustee suggested that an external review would be beneficial to ensure that internal reviews are robust and asked if we can commission an external review.** Mr Buckley advised that OFSTED visits are a safeguarding review and no reviews have found safeguarding to be less than effective but it is of benefit for the LA to return in September. Mrs Casson asked if she could complete a Safeguarding visit. It was suggested that Looe would be the obvious choice for a visit. Mr Buckley suggested this could be completed by both Mrs Casson and himself and this was agreed and can be scheduled for the Autumn term. Mr Oakes is the Safeguarding lead across the Trust. All schools have been visited by OFSTED over the last 5 years.

Action: H Casson/D Buckley

- b) See confidential appendix.

41. **Items from Chair**

- a) Summary of discussions from informal meetings with Trustees and Chairs of Governors

The Chair explained that informal meetings were held and he posed questions to CoGs (Chairs of Governors). They discussed how we provide mutual assurance, new ways of working and the Chair visiting schools in the new academic year which is open to others to attend. The general feeling is that the CoGs don't see the Trust Board enough, they don't always feel information is disseminated to LGCs and it was agreed that meeting again informally once a year is useful. The Chair felt it would be useful for CoGs to attend Trust Board meetings for 10 minutes to create a better connection and it was suggested that this could be built into agendas. The CoGs would give an update on their schools.

Action: The Clerk

- b) The Chair discussed with Trustees during their informal meeting if we have the right data, the right sub committees and are they looking at the right things and it was suggested that a governance review may help with this. They also discussed if the Trust Board deep dives enough into each school and perhaps having CoG join the TB meetings would be helpful. It was also discussed if the Link meetings are working, do we have the right skill mix or we are missing an educationalist on the board and what is needed in terms of audit & risk skill set. The informal meeting was really useful and will be held again.

- c) Members meeting feedback

The Chair noted that the AGM (Annual General Meeting) has been discussed as well as the need to recruit a new member and it was suggested that perhaps a previous Trustee may be interested in the role.

- d) **A Trustee asked about staff governors and how we work with them.** Mr Buckley advised that we have a culture where staff are able to come forward but capacity for staff is a challenge. Mr Buckley suggested that staff could present to Trustees in meetings. The Chair felt that Members were assured about the effectiveness of the Trust Board from the discussions during the meeting. We need to look at more diversity of the Members. The Clerk advised that vacancies are advertised on Inspiring Governance but this has not proved fruitful.

- e) **A Trustee suggested recruiting a headteacher from another Trust.** It was discussed that this would be useful. It was suggested that Trustees could use their local networks to recruit new Trustees. We could also look the BAME networks. The Clerk will contact recent Trustees to see if they would consider joining the Members. **A Trustee asked about potential for recruiting from LGCs.** The Clerk advised that recruitment of governors is challenging and given the work they are involved with such as panels, it would not be ideal to recruit governors at this time as it may not be possible to fill the gaps left.

Action: The Clerk

42. **Adoption of Policies**

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

- a) Safeguarding Policy
A Trustee felt that the new requirements around lettings is missing in the policy. The Clerk will arrange for the omissions to be added. On the basis of the suggested changes, Trustees approved the policy.
- b) Staff Attendance Policy
 Trustees approved the policy as presented.

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

- a) The budgets for 2023/24 have been approved by the Trust Board.
- b) Family friendly information has been published on the Trust website.
- c) Mr Ian Foy has been appointed Trust Senior Operations Officer as part of the TOLT restructure. His new post starts from September 2023.
- d) The Trust Board will be looking at the Trust Board structure including Link Trustees and Link meetings in the new academic year.
- e) The Staff Attendance and Safeguarding Policy have been approved and will be published for the new academic year.

44. **Agreements made by email**

- a) Complaints Policy approved June 2023.
- b) 16-19 Bursary approved in July 2023 by Resources Committee.

45. **Date of next meetings**

07-12-2023, AGM 13-12-2023, 25-03-2024 and 18-07-2023 all starting at 5.30pm.

Allocation and agreement of school links for new academic year

The Chair queried that this model is not working well and the feedback from CoGs is not positive. We need to look at ways for better engagement and this should be discussed at the next meeting. It is valuable for new Trustees to visit all the schools and then Trustees visit again periodically. The Link Trustees are not bringing value. **A Trustee asked if they could liaise directly with Headteacher to arrange visits.** Mr Buckley agreed that this would be the best approach.

The meeting closed at 7.42pm.

Action Summary	
M33. Declaration of Business or Pecuniary Interest and Academy-related parties - update on any changes since completion of written declaration No update to declarations. The new related parties forms have been circulated and need to be completed.	Action: All
M37. Reports and Recommendations from Committees i) The Chair felt that we need to decide how the Trust Board gets assurance moving forwards. The Chair and the Clerk will meet to discuss and explore wider with Trustees in the new academic year. k) The Chair noted that in future, this agenda item needs more time than five minutes per committee. The Clerk to revise template agenda.	Action: L Hallam/The Clerk Action: The Clerk
M39. CEO update	Action: D

<p>i) A Trustee felt that succession planning is important especially for the CEO and CFO which would be a real risk to the Trust. A Trustee asked if we are intending on setting deadlines and the impact of this on staff. Mr Buckley advised that there can be a dependency culture which is unhelpful so we need schools to have a paper trail on what has not been met. Mr Buckley will be looking at a suitable model to bring back to the Trust Board for discussion and agreement on the level of information required.</p>	<p>Buckley</p>
<p>M40. Discuss DfE Confirmation of Compliance and Liskeard Safeguarding Report e) A Trustee suggested that an external review would be beneficial to ensure that internal reviews are robust and asked if we can commission an external review. Mr Buckley advised that OFSTED visits are a safeguarding review and no reviews have found safeguarding to be less than effective but it is of benefit for the LA to return in September. Mrs Casson asked if she could complete a Safeguarding visit. It was suggested that Looe would be the obvious choice for a visit. Mr Buckley suggested this could be completed by both Mrs Casson and himself and this was agreed and can be scheduled for the Autumn term. Mr Oakes is the Safeguarding lead across the Trust. All schools have been visited by OFSTED over the last 5 years.</p>	<p>Action: H Casson/D Buckley</p>
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