

CBAT BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the Trustees' meeting held on 4th February 2019 at 6:00pm at Marling School

Present: Nigel Riglar (Chair), Graham Ayre, Debbie Bird (until 7.25pm), Helen Cerullo (by phone), John Gilbert, Emma Gray (Finance Director), Nathan Wolstenholme, Stuart Wilson (Chief Executive Officer).

In Attendance: David Dale (Clerk).

1. Welcome and introductions: There were no additional attendees.

2. Apologies: Ben Eagle.

3. Declarations of Interest: There were no declarations of interest.

4. Minutes of the meeting of 3rd December 2018

It was proposed by JG, seconded by DB, that these be approved and signed, to be published on the Trust's website. This was **agreed** unanimously.

5. Action point checklist

All actions ongoing or completed. There was a discussion about the recruitment and accreditation of School Resource Management Advisors (SRMAs), this is recorded under item 10 below.

6. Matters arising

None.

7. CBAT Finance – training for Trustees

This training session was delivered by the Finance Director (FD) immediately before the Board meeting. The slidepack was circulated to Trustees along with the draft Minutes. The presentation covered:

- The roles of Trust Members and Trustees
- Trustees appoint the Accounting Officer (who has personal responsibility) and Chief Financial Officer/FD
- The CFO/FD is responsible for developing detailed financial policies and procedures to implement all the 'musts' as set out in the Academies Financial Handbook
- Statutory deadlines and returns
- The types of Academy funds – restricted; fixed assets; unrestricted
- The main sources of income and types of expenditure
- Integrated curriculum and financial planning (ICFP) metrics to support efficiency
- The development of 'One Trust' thinking in terms of communications, skills sharing, joint IT, and training.

The FD circulated the SRMA self-assessment tool populated with Marling data, showing some of the principal ICFP metrics under expenditure, reserves, school characteristics, and outcomes. She explained that the tool provides a red/amber/green rating against the threshold for similar schools, so in this example shows Marling in the 'best' category for outcomes and support staff spending, but in the 'worst' category for energy and senior leadership spending, which is a facet of having a sixth form and the development of CBAT. Trustees said that it would be helpful to have the equivalent data and ratings for Berkeley and Cam Woodfield. **Action: FD.**

Trustees asked questions including:

- Ensure that all current Trust policies are available on MarVLE, and check that all relevant current policies are published on the CBAT website. **Action: Clerk.** It was noted that the implementation of Google Drive will provide a simpler common platform for sharing documents with Trustees and academies.
- Budget surpluses and whether these are ring-fenced to a single academy or pooled across the Trust. Trustees said that further discussion would be needed about this, and a range of options considered. It was important that available resources are spent on school improvement in line with an agreed plan, and that LGBs are incentivised to make best use of resources.
- Consistency of premises across the Trust – there should be minimum standards, and a common 'feel' and branding across the academies to promote identity and ambition. Ideally there would be a premises development plan for the whole Trust, but the fact that capital funds are so limited means that this is unrealistic at present.

Trustees thanked the FD for her informative presentation and answers. The training session ended at 6.00pm.

8. Growth opportunities

The CEO updated Trustees on the various growth opportunities for the Trust that were currently being explored. It was a brief report setting out various early opportunities and discussions, but with no firm proposals to bring to Trustees at this stage. He reported that the Board of Trustees may now meet the Diocese threshold for sponsoring Voluntary Controlled schools, subject to the necessary approvals. **Action: GA and DB** to complete the relevant documentation.

National developments included the opening of the Wave 14 bidding round for free schools, and a possible statement on academisation from the Secretary of State.

9. Schools updates

The CEO presented Headteachers' reports from the three academy schools. He explained that these were the alternate intermediate reports, with full reports due to be presented in Term 4.

Trustees raise the following issues and questions:

- Ensure that all the minutes of the full LGB meetings are available on MarVLE for Trustees to read, and have a standing item on Board agendas for Trustees to challenge any matters arising from them. **Action: Clerk** to upload all LGB minutes for 2018-19, and add item to future Board agendas.
- Marling 6th form – the likely ratio of boys to girls, the provision of appropriate facilities for girls (including PE and pastoral care), and the estimated number of boys applying to Stroud High School 6th form. The CEO updated Trustees on these matters.
- Marling intake – the Chair noted that with girls entering the 6th form in September

2019, Trustees would need to consider whether Marling should remain as a boys school 11-16.

- Cam Woodfield Junior School – has the teaching staff stabilised following a period of high turnover. The CEO said that yes this was the case.
- Berkeley Primary School – the CEO reported on ongoing support for the new Headteacher from our Lead Primary Headteacher to help keep the school moving forward quickly. He had proposed to the LGB that the cost of this school improvement support be met jointly by the school and the Trust, he is due to discuss this with the LGB this week and will report back. **Action: CEO to update Trustees and advise on next steps.** Trustees noted that this would be a good test of the level of support that the Trust might provide to other new Headteachers in future.

10. School Resource Management Advisers update

Trustees had previously asked the FD to write to successful candidates and their employing schools, this was raised under item 5 above (action point CBAT 095).

The FD updated Trustees on the recruitment, accreditation and deployment of SRMAs. She reported that the operation of the accreditation process was different than had been anticipated. This had delayed the accreditation of SRMAs other than the FD personally who had now been deployed on her first assignment and is due to meet the school and the DfE this week to agree follow up actions. The general learning points from this early experience will be shared with the Trust and with other SRMAs as they are accredited.

11. Health and safety

It was reported that Marling and Berkeley schools had been closed on 1st February due to snow. Cam Woodfield had opened initially but closed later for safety reasons. The position there is complicated with the Infants school on site not being part of the Trust. Trustees asked a number of questions about site responsibilities at Cam Woodfield, access, and advice, including the role of the Caretaker. **Action: The FD to report back to Trustees on future plans for site safety responsibilities at Cam Woodfield.**

12. Finance

The FD reported on revenue forecasts and actual expenditure to the end of December 2018, and noted that the budget is on course. Trustees queried whether expenditure on supply staff was likely to exceed the budget due to sickness absence in the winter months, the FD said this is a possibility and will be monitored.

The item about the cost of support for schools was addressed under item 9 above (5th bullet point).

13. LGB Reports – update on issues and actions

None to report.

14. LGB recommendations in line with Scheme of Delegation

None to report.

15. Revised scheme of delegation

The CEO reported back to Trustees on the meeting with Chairs of LGBs and Headteachers on 28th January, which had been an informal opportunity to reflect on governance structures and the Trust's Scheme of Delegation (SoD) in the light of experience to date, and to try to make any

changes and improvements that might be needed now before the Trust grows larger. The CEO presented the slidepack that he had used to brief Chairs and Heads (circulated to Trustees), and outlined the proposals included in it:

- to change to a RASCI (responsible, accountable, support, consulted, informed) model scheme of delegation, and seek Trustees' approval to starting a formal consultation process on a revised scheme,
- to update the finance handbook to clarify financial accountability and to describe the role of Finance & Resources Committees accurately,
- to change the LGB name to School Improvement Board (SIB) to provide clarity of role, and
- to review the appropriateness of committee structures to determine whether all academy school business could go to a single SIB.

The CEO reported that there had been a constructive discussion with Chairs and Heads, a broad agreement that a review is needed to clarify accountabilities and ensure that the SoD is fit for purpose. There had been a robust discussion about whether academy school budget surpluses should be pooled across the Trust, and the CEO explained that there are currently no plans to do so.

Trustees raised the following questions and issues:

- What would be the implications for sharing the cost of school improvement support (item 9 above)? This would depend on what changes were made to the SoD. It might be possible for schools to bid for funds from the Trust to deliver a local improvement plan.
- The need for more strategic budget management across the Trust, linked to a different process for setting individual school budgets.
- The need to clarify exactly what is meant by the term 'consulting' with LGBs in the SoD before the Trust makes a decision – does this mean a meeting of the LGB, can it be done remotely via email, and is it just seeking views or voting on a proposal? The revised SoD will need to identify which issues need a quick decision rather than discussion at the next LGB meeting.

Trustees agreed that they would like some further involvement in developing the revised proposals before embarking on a formal consultation. JG and NW volunteered to work with the CEO and FD to undertake a detailed review of the scheme of delegation, and to bring updated proposals back to Trustees at the next Board meeting. Subject to approval then, formal consultation would follow and final proposals brought back to Trustees in July, in time for implementation on 1st September 2019. **Action: CEO and FD to meet with JG and NW to take forward.**

16. Terms of reference

The CEO noted that the terms of reference document would need updating in due course to reflect the revised scheme of delegation. Although preliminary work has started on this, there are no proposals to bring to the Board at this stage. Trustees noted this information.

17. Trust policies

Trustees considered the draft Performance Appraisal Policy for Teachers. It was proposed by JG and seconded by GA that this draft policy be approved to go out to consultation with staff and trade unions. This was **agreed** unanimously.

The FD reported that three other policies had been consulted on with staff at Marling and Berkeley schools and were now recommended to Trustees for final approval. These are:

- Management of sickness absence
- Discretionary leave of absence
- Support staff probation procedure

The FD drew Trustees' attention to some minor amendments proposed as a result of comments received. Trustees raised a number of questions and comments:

- Is the Trust's HR adviser (EPM) satisfied that the policies meet appropriate requirements and standards? Yes.
- Management of sickness absence policy – amend the wording of 17.4 (3rd bullet point) to read “medical advice received from Occupational Health and/or GP; and ...”
- Ensure up to date and consistent format for dates, headers, footers, etc. across all policies.

The CEO explained that because the consultation period preceded Cam Woodfield Junior School joining the Trust, staff there had not been included and therefore these policies would not apply there.

It was proposed by JG and seconded by GA that the three policies listed above be approved and implemented immediately at Marling and Berkeley schools. This was **agreed** unanimously.

Action: Clerk to inform the Headteachers and the staff, and the agreed policies to be made available to all staff.

18. Trustees' decisions under Scheme of Delegation taken since last meeting

None.

19. Any other business

Support staff pay scales – FD to discuss with JG. **Action:** FD to arrange meeting.

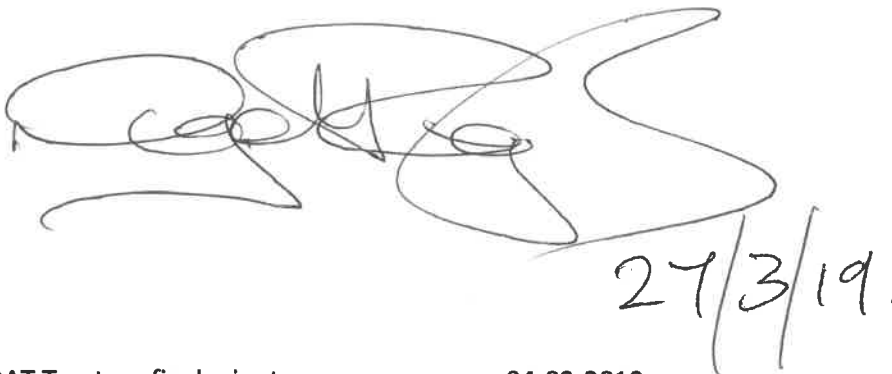
20. Risk register

The FD ran through the latest risk register, Trustees did not identify any further risks to be added from this meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.52pm

Date of the next meeting:

Week commencing 25th March. Confirmed subsequently – **Wednesday 27th March at 6.00pm.**



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