

CBAT BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the Trustees' meeting held on 6th July 2020 at 4:10pm via videoconference

Present: Nigel Riglar, Chair (joined at 4.20pm), Graham Ayre (left at 5.25pm), Debbie Bird, John Gilbert, Emma Gray (Finance Director), Barbara Green, Ruth Hollier, Stuart Wilson (Chief Executive Officer).

In Attendance: David Dale (Clerk).

1. Welcome and introductions

JG took the chair for the first 10 minutes of the meeting as NR had been detained by other business.

The Chair welcomed BG to her first Board meeting, and everyone introduced themselves.

2. Apologies received and accepted:

None.

3. Declarations of Interest:

There were no new declarations.

4. Minutes of the meetings of 18th May and 9th June 2020

18th May (regular meeting): it was **proposed** by GA, and **seconded** by DB, that these be approved and signed, to be published on the Trust's website. This was **agreed** unanimously.

9th June (extraordinary meeting): it was **proposed** by RH, and **seconded** by GA, that these be approved and signed, to be published on the Trust's website. This was **agreed** unanimously.

5. Action point checklist

Trustees queried outstanding actions in relation to BEST and business planning, it was noted that there had been no further progress but that these should remain on the list for the time being. All other actions were ongoing or completed.

6. Matters arising: **CONFIDENTIAL**

9th June meeting, item 5 (ii): The CEO referred to the long-running complaint at BPS, he reported that ESFA and MASH have now looked at the information provided and both have determined that the complaint was not substantiated. The complainant is still pursuing the matter via the Teacher Regulation Agency.

7. Trustee appointments and resignations

The Clerk reported that BG had been appointed by the Trust's Members on 4th June 2020.

There had been no resignations since the 18th May meeting.

8. CBAT Strategic Plan review

The CEO referred to the versions of the Strategic Plan circulated in advance of the meeting and explained that he had indicated red/amber/green ratings for the objectives in the 2018-20 plan. While good progress had been made in respect of most objectives, the growth of the Trust had been slower than anticipated. Progress toward a centralised IT service had also been limited.

He said that some new objectives had been added to the revised plan to reflect the changed circumstances facing schools during and after the COVID-19 emergency. These are:

- 1.5 Gap analysis of pupils' post COVID-19 learning deficit across the MAT.
- 1.6 Adapt learning, teaching & assessment in light of COVID-19 including incorporating new methods developed through remote learning.
- 1.7 Developing agility in classroom IT to support blended learning.
- 3.4 Establish plans for post COVID-19 stakeholder wellbeing.
- 3.5 COVID-19 Operational adaptations for each school in place following government guidelines.

The CEO gave further information on a number of other objectives, including:

- 1.2 Develop oracy as a fundamental skill from an early age.
- 1.3 Vertical teams for Subject Leaders, School Reviews & Training.
- 4.8 Use expertise within CBAT for a school improvement offer to other schools.

The Chair then prompted a wide-ranging discussion of the revised plan by asking Trustees if they were satisfied that it covers the key issues. Trustees raised a number of questions:

- Learning gaps and pastoral issues to be addressed? SW: we will pick up and expand objective 1.5, to include pastoral and PHSE learning gaps too.
- Need to learn the lessons of lockdown in relation to staff skills and behaviour, share best practice in creative and effective teaching. SW: some staff had faced personal challenges with working through lockdown with their own children needing care and education at home.
- Develop a consistent approach to remote/blended learning, including how to get the best out of all pupils, and get feedback from parents. SW: blended learning is a powerful tool, and expertise in it could be marketable.
- Does the Trust have capacity around the 'agile classroom'? SW: although it is a technical challenge for teachers, there is enough commitment to make this work.
- Does the Trust need to invest in upgrading IT to enable remote/blended learning? SW: yes, initially all that's needed is a webcam and microphone but we may need further investment.

Trustees indicated that they supported the broad principles underlying the updated Strategic Plan. **Action: CEO and FD** to develop further details to underpin the objectives in the Strategic Plan, and report back to the Board in the autumn.

9. Trust growth opportunities

The CEO said that there was still little to report on this subject, there had been no significant engagement with the Regional Schools Commissioner and nothing new from the Diocese. He noted that the funding for the Cotswold Edge Teaching Alliance will cease in 2021 when the DfE implement their model for Teaching School Hubs. We are talking with other local teaching schools about a joint bid for a Gloucestershire-based hub. However, some elements of CETA's work such as CPD for Leadership and our ITT programme will carry on supporting local schools

and we will hope to make them financially self-sustaining.

In a wide-ranging discussion Trustees noted that the challenges of the last 3 months may lead some smaller schools to seek the support of being within a MAT. In response to questions, the CEO said that the original target for Trust growth had been to expand to include 2 secondary and 5 primary schools after 3 years.

10. School updates

The CEO referred to the Headteachers' reports circulated in advance of the meeting and asked if there were any specific questions. In reply to a question about why only Y6 pupils were back in school at CWJS he noted that there were no YR and Y1 classes there, and they were at capacity for in school provision whilst maintaining high quality remote learning.

Trustees asked about pastoral support for those who had experienced a family bereavement – does the Trust have the right skills to give support – and what information the Trust has about the numbers of pupils and staff affected? The CEO explained that the Trust can only work with the information volunteered by parents, but that there is a range of support available. He is looking into producing a wellbeing leaflet for pupils and staff. BG and RH said that in their professional capacities they have access to materials and resources that would be relevant here. **Action: BG and RH** to forward the materials and links discussed.

More generally, the CEO referred to the DfE guidance published last week about all pupils returning to school in September. He said that he and the Chair would be writing to all parents to give them confidence that the Trust will be taking all reasonable steps to make the schools safe environments, and explaining some of the practical measures to achieve this including staggered start of term dates, staggered school day timings (starts, breaks, lessons), 'bubbling' of year groups within specific classrooms, and other social distancing measures. At MS, teachers will have to move around the school campus, rather than pupils. He noted that there will be challenges for getting pupils to school where they rely on home to school transport or public transport.

Trustees raised a number of questions including morale amongst teachers, and the possible impact of any local outbreaks of COVID-19. The CEO said that teachers are feeling well-supported and that he would be virtually meeting MS staff later this week to explain the measures being implemented. The Chair said that it was apparent from his meetings with the primary Headteachers and Chairs of Governors that staff there feel well-supported too. In terms of possible local outbreaks it is too early to say exactly how schools will be affected, but there are likely to be cross-boundary issues, for example where teachers live in another town or city and would be impacted by any travel restrictions.

The Chair explained that the final decision to reopen the schools in September would sit with Trustees as before, and that they would need to take into account the DfE guidance at the time, the detailed plans and risk assessments prepared by Headteachers, and the recommendations of SDBs. The CEO said that we think updated DfE guidance is due on 11th August, it will then be necessary for reopening plans to be reassessed and reported to SDBs before coming to Trustees the following week. **Action: CEO** to inform Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of the timetable for decision-making about schools reopening.

11. Health, safety and wellbeing

The FD reported that the focus in recent weeks had been on the risk assessments and practical arrangements for reopening the schools. She is working on ensuring that there is sufficient cleaning capacity to meet the additional requirements for September – it will be important to make staff, pupils and visitors feel safe and supported. Trustees asked if fire drills were

continuing throughout the period of limited provision, the FD said that fire drills and other site tests are continuing as normal.

12. Finance

(i) Budget monitoring

The FD reported on budget actuals for each of the three academy schools for the period to the end of May. After 9 months of the year, performance against budgets is better than forecast and there are no significant concerns. We are still waiting to hear about the possible return of some exam fees paid. Planning for the annual audit will begin in August, with the auditors 'on site' in October.

(ii) Trust and academy budgets 2020/21

The FD explained the main figures in the proposed budgets. Staffing and income figures are as accurate as possible. Some estimated costs may vary e.g. pay awards. There are points to note about MS receiving its lag funding income for 6th Form students, a projected surplus at BPS, and an additional teacher at CWJS for one year only (as reported to Trustees previously). The deadline for submitting budgets this year has been postponed to September, so Trustees will have an updated report before they are asked to approve them. In response to questions from Trustees the FD explained school contributions to the Trust, the cost headings used, and the flexibility to carry forward underspends into the next financial year (within the limits specified in the Articles of Association).

13. School Development Boards – minutes of last meetings

The Clerk referred to the MS minutes circulated in advance, and advised that minutes from the primary SDBs will be circulated when they are finalised and signed. **Action: Clerk** to circulate SDB minutes when available.

14. SDB recommendations for consideration in line with Scheme of Delegation

None since the last Board meeting, this was noted.

15. Trust policies

Revised policies on Data Handling & Protection, Responsible Use of IT, and the Publication Scheme had been circulated in advance. The FD explained that the policies are based on the model policies recommended by the Information Commissioner's Office and that only minor changes have been made to the previous versions (e.g. updating references to SDBs). Trustees discussed the revised policies and noted that some minor amendments were still needed (e.g. updating references to legislation). The FD agreed to review the wording of the relevant sections and update as necessary. **Action: FD** to review and update relevant wording. Subject to the minor amendments noted, it was **proposed** by JG and **seconded** by DB that these policies be approved. This was **agreed** unanimously.

16. Trustees' decisions under Scheme of Delegation since last meeting

The Clerk reminded Trustees of the decisions they had taken remotely since the last meeting (recommendation to Members to appoint BG; approval of Trust policies on Recruitment & Selection and Flexible Working) and said that these had been recorded appropriately.

17. Any other business

- (i) Condition Improvement Fund: the CEO reported that only 1 of the Trust's 6 CIF bids had been successful to demolish a temporary classroom at MS and replace it. BPS and CWJS are

disappointed to be unsuccessful. BPS will need to go ahead and replace broken sash windows over the summer, on health and safety grounds.

- (ii) The CEO reported that a complaint to ESFA with regard to MS admission had not been upheld.
- (iii) The CEO reported that a serial complaint with regard to grammar schools' admission policy has been referred to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator, and the outcome is awaited.

18. Risk register

Deferred to next meeting.

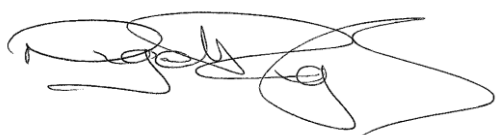
19. Dates of future meetings

The CEO indicated that Trustees may need an extraordinary meeting in the week commencing 17th August, to consider SDB recommendations based on Headteachers' reopening plans and risk assessments. This meeting would also consider Trust and school budgets for 2020/21. It was recognised that some Trustees might not be available that week, and it would be necessary to choose a date that suits the majority.

Trustees agreed to meet on Wednesdays in the 5th week of each term in 2020/21, as follows:

- 30th September 2020 at 4.00pm (virtual)
- 2nd December 2020 at 4.00pm (virtual)
- 3rd February at 6.00pm
- 24th March at 6.00pm
- 19th May at 6.00pm
- 7th July at 6.00pm.

The meeting closed at 5.55pm.



Chair of Trustees

30th September 2020