

CBAT BOARD MEETING

Minutes of the Trustees' meeting held on 19th May 2021 at 4:00pm via videoconference

Present: John Gilbert (Chair), Debbie Bird, Barbara Green, Ruth Hollier, Nigel Riglar, (from 4.45pm), Judith Taylor, Stuart Wilson (Chief Executive Officer – CEO).

Apologies: Graham Ayre.

In Attendance: Emma Gray, Chief Finance and Operating Officer (CFOO), David Dale (Clerk).

1. Welcome and introductions

In the absence of NR at the start of the meeting JG took the Chair and welcomed everyone, and JT in particular to her first meeting.

It was agreed that, following the initial 'housekeeping' items, the meeting depart from the order of business on the agenda and consider those items which require a formal decision first.

2. Apologies received and accepted:

Graham Ayre.

3. Declarations of Interest:

There were no new general declarations.

4. Minutes of the meeting of 24th March 2021

Trustees considered the draft minutes of the last meeting and requested minor clarifications to titles and attendance, there being no other concerns as to their accuracy it was **proposed** by DB, and **seconded** by RH, that the minutes be approved and signed, to be published on the Trust's website. This was **agreed** unanimously.

5. Action point checklist

The Chair ran through the outstanding actions. On action 123 it was noted that the Berkeley Educational Swimming Trust pool is due to open in term 6 and that the CFOO will undertake a safety audit in early June. On action 183 BG reported that she had secured some help to work with her on the draft People Strategy and she will come back to the Board in due course.

6. Matters arising

None.

7. Trustee appointments and resignations

(i) Appointment

It was noted that the Trust's Members had accepted the Board's recommendation at its last meeting for JT to be appointed as a Trustee.

(ii) Resignations

None.

8. CBAT Master Funding Agreement and Marling Supplemental Funding Agreement (item 10 on the agenda)

These updated documents had been sent to Trustees on 7th May for review. This is in response to the growth in student numbers at Marling from 850 to 1150 over the past few years and the (Department for Education (DfE) have asked the Trust to update the Supplemental Funding Agreement (SFA) for Marling and the Master Funding Agreement (MFA) for CBAT to the latest model. The SFA has been amended to show a capacity of 400 students in the coeducational sixth form. The proposed changes have been discussed with the Trust's solicitor who is satisfied with them.

The CEO said that he would make minor formatting corrections as identified by JG. He responded to Trustees' questions about student numbers and the need for a further SFA when the Trust takes on another school.

Following this discussion, it was **proposed** by JG, and **seconded** by DB, that the amended Master Funding Agreement and Marling Supplemental Funding Agreement be approved and signed. This was **agreed** unanimously.

9. Strategy for Covid-19 recovery and Pupil Premium 2020-23 (item 13 on the agenda)

The CEO presented the draft Strategy. The need for a strategy on the use and monitoring of these premium payments had arisen from a meeting of the Confederation of School Trusts, and reflected DfE grant conditions and good practice on evidence-based impacts as published by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). The CBAT principles for schools to adhere to when developing their plans to use these premiums are whole school approached, targeted approaches, and wider strategies to tackle non-academic barriers to success. Schools will be required to develop their plans at the start of each school year, have them approved by SDBs and Trustees, and report on their implementation, using EEF templates.

Trustees asked about the monitoring of the impact of these premiums. The CEO said that for Pupil Premium, schools are required to demonstrate how their spending decisions are informed by research evidence, and the Deputy Headteachers will work together on this from September. For the delegated Recovery and Catch-up premiums schools will look at their gap analysis. Trustees asked about integrated professional development for teachers and sharing learning between schools. The CEO agreed that the quality of teaching is key, and that he will be meeting with the Trust's Headteachers to share best practice. Trustees commented that the proposed strategy was straightforward and based on sound principles.

Following this discussion, it was **proposed** by JG, and **seconded** by RH, that the Strategy for Covid-19 recovery and Pupil Premium 2020-23 be approved. This was **agreed** unanimously.

10. Leadership growth at Marling School (item 14 on the agenda)

The CEO presented proposals to add capacity to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) at Marling as the trust continues to develop. He said that these had been discussed with NR and with the outgoing and incoming Chairs of the SDB, all of whom were in agreement with the proposals. He said that with continuing growth at Marling and with up to 1,200 students expected in September there was increasing pressure on the existing capacity of the SLT.

To address this the CEO is proposing to appoint a substantive Headteacher, with a permanent Deputy Headteacher and 4 Assistant Headteachers. If this is approved, the proportion of the CEO's time and costs attributable to Marling will decrease from 50% to 40% over the next two years.

Trustees asked about the cost implications. The CEO compared the cost of the proposed SLT with previous costs and the budget and demonstrated that it was affordable in the context of a budget as funding caught up with pupil numbers. Trustees asked about salary ranges compared to other schools and the CFOO said that the cost of the Marling SLT as a proportion of the total workforce cost would be 6%, with 7-8% being the norm.

Trustees asked about the proportion of their time that SLT members would be teaching in the classroom. The CEO said that this would vary across the leadership team with Assistant Heads teaching more than the Deputy Head.

Trustees asked about the process and timetable for recruiting to the vacant/interim SLT posts. The CEO said that all vacancies would be advertised externally, beginning with the Headteacher and with the aim of having the successful candidate in post in January 2022. Recruitment to other posts would depend on the appointment of the Headteacher, but the aim would be to have all in post by May 2022. Trustees commented that the proposals and timetable seemed sensible.

NR joined the meeting at 4.45pm.

Following this detailed discussion, it was **proposed** by SW and **seconded** by DB that the proposals for strengthening the Senior Leadership Team at Marling to comprise a substantive Headteacher post, with a permanent Deputy Headteacher and 4 Assistant Headteachers, be approved. This was **agreed** unanimously.

11. Good Estate Management for Schools (GEMS) vision document (item 18 on the agenda)

The CFOO presented the draft Estates Vision and explained that the need for it had been recognised through the capital funds bidding process. She suggested adding safeguarding and health and safety under the list of priorities. A more detailed Estates Strategy would follow.

Trustees discussed the draft and were satisfied with it, but suggested amending the order of the schools as listed. With this change, it was **proposed** by RH and **seconded** by JT that the Estates Vision be approved and published. This was **agreed** unanimously.

12. Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning (ICFP) self-assessment (item 19 on the agenda)

The CFOO presented this school resource management benchmarking dashboard which had been completed and submitted at Easter. It is designed to help trusts identify areas for improved resource management, and shows how each school compares to thresholds on a range of key indicators using red/amber/green ratings. The indicators include expenditure on different categories, reserves and balances, pupil:teacher ratios and class sizes, and educational outcomes. She explained that there were no particular concerns to bring to Trustees' attention, and no actions required.

Trustees discussed the dashboard and said that it was useful information to have. They asked questions about energy costs at Marling, the CFOO said that older, single storey buildings on a large campus meant that the school is comparatively expensive to heat. She mentioned equipment in West Block that has been poorly installed by a contractor who had gone into administration before completing the work, and Trustees noted the importance of due diligence when appointing contractors.

Trustees noted the information in the dashboard.

13. Marling School Development Board (items 24 and 26 on the agenda)

The CEO reported that the incoming Chair of Governors at Marling had asked that the Associate Headteacher be appointed to the SDB. It was noted that this would be consistent with the

primary SDBs where the Headteacher is automatically a member. Trustees asked about the balance between different categories of Governor on the SDB and were assured that this would not unbalance the membership at all. It was **proposed** by SW and **seconded** by JG that the Terms of Reference for SDBs be modified to allow an Executive Headteacher or Associate Headteacher to be an ex-officio governor, this was **agreed** unanimously.

The CEO reported that Marling SDB had voted to recommend to Trustees that Amanda Arrowsmith be appointed as its new Chair. It was noted that JG would serve as interim Vice Chair until 31st December 2021. It was **proposed** by SW and **seconded** by NR that Amanda Arrowsmith be appointed as Chair of the Marling School Development Board, this was **agreed** unanimously.

The CEO reported that Marling SDB had voted to recommend to Trustees that David Haywood be appointed as a new Governor. He has been interviewed for the role and the SDB believed he would make an excellent Governor and has particular expertise in IT and education. It was **proposed** by SW and **seconded** by RH that David Haywood be appointed to the Marling School Development Board, this was **agreed** unanimously.

14. Trust policies (item 27 on the agenda)

The CEO reported that the following seven existing Trust policies were due for review:

- Bullying and harassment
- Capability
- Code of conduct for all adults
- Disciplinary procedure relating to misconduct for all adults
- Disciplinary rules for all employees
- Grievance procedure
- Whistle-blowing.

They follow the standard EPM model for these policies and only minor updates and revisions are proposed. They will need to go out to consultation with staff and trade unions before being brought back to the Board for approval. It was **proposed** by SW and **seconded** by JG that these seven updated policies be sent to staff and trade unions for consultation, this was **agreed** unanimously.

Teachers' Pay Policy – Potential changes to the sections on progression within bands; application to move to upper pay scale UP1; and TLRs for part-time teachers were all discussed. Further discussion would take place next term prior to consultation on a draft policy.

Support Staff Pay Policy – same as Teacher's Pay Policy but with Green Book Ts and Cs. No significant changes proposed. Annex 2 – on recruitment and retention may not be used. JG – footer needs correcting. it was **proposed** by JG and **seconded** by NR that the policy be approved as a draft for consultation with staff and trade unions, this was **agreed** unanimously.

Pupils with Medical Needs policy – the CFOO explained that this is a new statutory policy. Headteachers and Business Managers have had the opportunity to comment on the draft policy, no further consultation is needed. There being no questions from Trustees, it was **proposed** by JT and **seconded** by RH that the Medical Needs policy be approved for implementation in the Trust's schools, this was **agreed** unanimously.

15. Risk register (item 29 on the agenda)

The CFOO reported that an internal assurance visit is planned for 27th May, the outcome of this will be reported at the next Audit Committee meeting. Under Risk 2.2 she drew Trustees' attention to the review of the business management structure across the schools and said that she would provide an update on this once it has been completed.

16. Health, safety and wellbeing (item 15 on the agenda)

The CFOO reported - Nothing RIDDOR reportable. Some broken bones in social time. Staff are OK but some flagging a bit after a long term.

The CEO reported - Covid-19 – there have been no positive tests this term. Marling is now part of a trial to conduct daily contact testing where pupils who have been in contact with an infected person as part of the track and trace regime. Participation is voluntary, but pupils choosing not to take part will have to self-isolate away from school if they have been in contact with an infected person.

17. Data protection and privacy (GDPR) (item 16 on the agenda)

CFOO reported that she has completed her training and will train staff at the next INSET day. The Trust will be able to evidence the assessments and actions it has taken. On operational matters, there have been no reportable breaches of GDPR guidelines, a small number of minor issues have been dealt with and learnt from.

18. Finance (item 17 on the agenda)

The CFOO presented monitoring information on the current year's budget. At 31st March the overall spend against budget was 59% of the total, in line with forecasts. In response to Trustees' questions, she gave further details about anticipated income from grants for 16-19 funding and teachers' pay.

For future years' budgets, the CFOO said that these must be submitted to the DfE in July. She reported that the BPS and MS budgets had been approved by the SDBs, and that the CWJS budget would be considered by the SDB at its forthcoming meeting on 24th May.

Trustees raised a number of questions, as follows:

- Are forecast pupil numbers realistic? The CEO said that they are, and are based on the best available data.
- Are assumptions about SEN spending reasonable? The CEO said that they were thorough and cautious, and reflect the good understanding that the primary schools have of the needs of their incoming pupils.
- How is the CBAT Central budget funded and what does it cover? The CFOO explained that the funding comes from 5% contributions from the schools' GAG income, and that it covers the cost of the Trust's SLT and various other items including some administrative support, ICT resources, and traded services.
- What proportion of school budgets are usually attributed to staffing costs? The CEO said that this is usually around 80% of total budget, MS is in line with this although the primary schools are currently a little higher.
- How are utilities costs managed? The CFOO said that energy costs are the main element, and a new energy contract has been agreed which gives the Trust a more cost-effective supply.

- How have exam fees at MS been affected by the pandemic? The CFOO said that we are still paying at the standard rate, although it is expected that there will be a credit given.
- How positive is the three-year budget trend? The CEO said that overall there is a healthy surplus that will enable the Trust to rebuild the level of its reserves, in line with audit recommendations as reported to the Board previously. As the Trust grows it will increase its central reserves.
- How are the costs of supply staff met? The CFOO said that these are largely covered by income from supply insurance.

It was then **proposed** by NR and **seconded** by RH that the proposed three-year budgets for each of the three schools and the Trust's central budget be approved (subject to the CWJS SDB agreeing its budget on 24th May), this was **agreed unanimously**.

EG left the meeting at 6.17pm. Trustees took a 5 minutes break before continuing.

19. Succession planning (AOB)

NR reported that he has established a sub-committee of the Board to consider succession planning. JG, RH and BG are on it. The sub-committee will consider the matter next term and will then report back to the Board. It is likely that this work will extend over 2 or 3 years.

NR left the meeting at 6.25pm.

20. Gloucester Free School

The CEO reported that the main activity at present is consultation on the Fair Banding admissions policy. Once completed, he will report feedback to the Board.

21. Other growth opportunities

The CEO reported that CBAT's bid to sponsor a new school at Bishops Cleeve has progressed to the next stage, following interviews of a large field of bidders CBAT is now on a shortlist of 4.

There are no other growth opportunities active at present.

22. School updates

The CEO presented the three Headteachers' reports. These had been through due diligence including link Trustees meeting with the relevant Headteacher to go through the report in advance. He drew attention to the considerable progress at CWJS since September, more positive than the raw data might suggest. RH said that the maths data showed accelerated progress. Trustees queried the numbers of pupils shown in each year group and a transcription error was identified – the correct numbers are Y3=43, Y4=49, Y5=57 and Y6=52 (total=181). JT indicated that she had experience of education for traveller children that she could share.

Trustees noted the contents of the other reports, there were no questions raised or decisions to be made.

Updated risk assessments – CWJS no change, BPS minor change, MS moving back to specialist spaces so there is a wider use of rooms. The changes have been discussed with staff and trade unions. It was **proposed** by JG and **seconded** by RH to approve the revised risk assessments, this was **agreed unanimously**.

23. Support and monitoring schedule for schools

The CEO reported that he is increasing the level of external scrutiny of some key issues including safeguarding and governance, and explained the steps he is taking to commission further expertise.

24. Teacher pay progression data

The CEO presented and explained this data. Trustees commented that it was helpful and they would be interested in receiving annual updates in future.

25. Board composition and skills

Trustees noted the appointment of JT and welcomed the skills and experience she brings. It was agreed that no further discussion of Board composition and skills is required immediately.

26. Date of next meeting

Wednesday 7th July 2021, 5.00pm, at Marling School.

The meeting ended at 6.46pm.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Taylor', written over a horizontal line.

7th July 2021