

Board of Trustees

Wednesday 22 May 2024, 4.30pm

Great Moor House, Exeter

Attended:

Andy Mulcock (AM) - Chair	Philip Bostock (PB) – Vice Chair
Teresa Gardner (TG)	Lee Elliot-Major (LEM)
James Frampton (JF)	Richard Jacobs (RJ)
Jade Otty (JO)	Tim Rutherford (TR) – Deputy CEO
Saxon Spence (SS) <i>Virtually</i>	Crispin Taylor (CT)
Alex Walmsley (AW)	
In Attendance	
Melody Floyde (MF) – Trust Governance Coordinator	Lorraine Mitchell (LM) – Head of Corporate Governance & Compliance
Tamsin Frances – Executive Director (TF)	

Apologies:

Lindsay Hetherington (LH) Moira Marder (MM) – CEO Ben Manning (BM) Sarah O’Meara (SOM)

Meeting Minutes

Item No.	Business	Action
1.	<p>Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest</p> <p>AM welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies were received from Lindsay Hetherington, Ben Manning, Sarah O’Meara and Moira Marder.</p> <p>Tim Rutherford, Deputy CEO, was in attendance for MM.</p> <p>Declarations of interest were noted, as follows: AW: Director, First Federation Trust & Member of Diocesan Education Group AW, RJ, AM: Directors, Fusion School Services Ltd JO: Vice Principal, Exeter College</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of Previous Meeting and Update on Actions.</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 27.03.24 were approved as a full and accurate record.</p> <p>All actions were recorded as complete.</p>	

<p>3.</p>	<p>LGB & Trust Board Update</p> <p><u>Appointments & Resignations</u></p> <p>Trustees reviewed and approved the co-opted Governor Appointment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denis Casey, QE <p>Trustees reviewed and noted the recent Parent and Staff governor appointments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lynne Palmer, Parent Governor, ASAP • Rob Salmon, Parent Governor, ASAP • Amy Morton, Staff Governor, MAP Secondary <p>Trustees reviewed and noted the recent Governor Resignations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stuart Koehler-Lewis, Co-opted Governor, Lipson • Carl Hutchings, Staff Governor, Isca • Ben Hooper, Co-opted Governor, Whipton Barton <p><u>Trust Board</u></p> <p>AM noted that Lindsay Hetherington would be stepping down as a Trustee at the end of the academic year. A potential replacement had been suggested and a meeting would be arranged to explore this further.</p> <p>Action: Formally confirm Governor appointments.</p> <p><u>Governor Recruitment</u></p> <p>LM gave an overview of the current LGB vacancy status. The Trust Link Governor roles would be appointed for September.</p> <p>Trustees noted that Exwick had a higher number of vacancies than other schools. LM confirmed that this was an area of focus and noted that it tended to be more difficult to recruit to primary school governance. Trustee support with identifying potential new governors was requested, particularly from HE and FE.</p> <p><i>Are the local governing boards too large if we are looking to have 11 governors in total on each? Co-opted is for 4-6 governors, currently there are only 2 at Exwick. We need to be mindful of not overstretching the current governors within the link roles. Currently there are no governors from FE/HE on the LGB at Exwick Heights.</i></p> <p><u>Governance Review</u></p> <p>The Audit & Risk committee had advised that an external review of governance should be undertaken. Trustees agreed that it was important to ensure that the Trust Governance was still meeting the needs of the Trust effectively, particularly given the increase in size. Potential options were being explored and it was agreed that this would be taken forward by the Chairs Governance Committee and presented to Trust Board for approval for a review at the start of the next academic year.</p> <p>AM noted that there would also be a separate piece of work to review the current governance function that would be reported to the Chairs Committee.</p>	<p>MF</p>
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	<p><u>LGB Consultation Plans</u></p> <p>LM gave an overview of the proposed changes to the local governance function for 2024-25. The changes were being introduced following “You said we Did” feedback from governors. LM and TR had been meeting with LGB chairs individually to outline suggestions and to gather feedback. The proposed changes would be shared at the LGB Chairs Group meeting on 11.06.24 and formally reviewed by the Chairs Governance Committee to move forwards.</p> <p>There were currently 120 governors across the Trust who were all volunteers. A lot of thought was being put into the cycles of business and health checks. The link governors were now working very effectively in their roles.</p> <p><i>Trustees noted that strengthening the link between LGBs and the Trust Board was a crucial part of governance. Trustees also noted the need to increase diversity on boards and that governance should relate to parents and the community, rather than being seen as separate. It was noted that this was also being considered in terms of the wider Trust Board.</i></p> <p>Action: Draft LGB Proposals for 2024-25 to be shared for feedback.</p> <p>It was noted that there had been three Ofsted inspections of Trust schools in the previous month and that the governors contributed immensely with their knowledge of the schools. Trustees wanted this to be formally recognised.</p> <p>It was agreed that it would be beneficial for Trustees to visit Trust Schools and to attend LGB meetings where possible during the next academic year. Trustees were also encouraged to sign up for Trust School Open Mornings.</p> <p>Action: look at options for Trustees to visit LGB meetings and schools during the next academic year.</p> <p><u>Governance Conference 10.07.24</u></p> <p>Initial proposals for the Governance Conference were shared. Trustees agreed that it was important for the day not to be too content heavy with plenty of time for Q&A and engagement.</p> <p><u>Governance Meeting Dates 2024-25</u></p> <p>MF advised that the governance meeting dates were being set to fit in with the Trust’s updated rhythm of the year. The dates would be presented to the Chairs Governance Committee ahead of Trust Board approval.</p> <p>It was agreed that the current arrangements for non-Executive support at the scrutiny panels should continue for 2024-25 and that this would be reviewed further following the governance review.</p> <p>Action: TR to confirm continuation of scrutiny panel attendance with Sally Apps and Richard Gill.</p>	<p>LM/MF</p> <p>MF</p> <p>TR</p>
4.	<p>Policies for Approval</p> <p>Trustees reviewed and approved the following policies:</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trust Investment Policy • Trust Collective Resourcing Policy • Trust Conflict of Interests Policy <p>Trustees noted the work that had gone into updating the policies and extended thanks for this.</p> <p>Action: Update and ensure publication of the policies.</p>	MF
5.	<p>Financial Update</p> <p>The current challenging financial position for all Trusts was noted. The benchmarking report from the Auditors showed that TWT was where expected against similar sized Trusts.</p> <p>Sue Pym would be stepping down as Executive Director and CFO. Sue had done a superb job and Trustees wanted to extend their thanks for the hard work over the years and noted how fortunate the Trust had been to have worked with Sue.</p> <p>Action: TF to share details of Sue Pym’s collection with Trustees and make suggestions on appropriate ways for Trustees to mark Sue’s leaving.</p> <p>AW gave an overview from the Finance & Resources Committee. The committee had considered emerging risks and whether they would impact Trust finances in a significant way. Budgets were the biggest issue for Trusts. The covid funding would no longer be received, this would have an impact. It was noted that Exmouth, Laira Green and Tor Bridge were not yet included in the budget.</p> <p>Capital funding was tight with QE being a particular risk. There was a good framework in place. The funding for a net zero boiler at ASAP had been approved.</p> <p>Management Accounts remained on track. Cashflow continued to be strong.</p> <p>An initial draft budget for 2024-25 had been presented at F&R, showing a significant potential net deficit. It was noted that, nationally, Trusts were averaging a 5% net deficit for next year. The final budget would be approved by the Trust Board in July. There was confidence that a budget could be set and it was noted that the year-end was likely to bring a surplus.</p> <p><i>Are the new schools positive additions to the budget? They mitigate risks, they have a good history of financial management. Tor Bridge will bring reserves.</i></p> <p><i>Trustees noted that historically the budget position had been improved upon in previous years. We are better placed than most.</i></p> <p>Trustees were satisfied with the financial information received. There were no further questions.</p> <p><u>Appointment of new CFO</u></p> <p>Following recommendation by F&R committee, the Trust Board approved the appointment of Liam Dingle as the new Trust CFO.</p> <p>Action: Update GIAS to reflect the new CFO appointment.</p>	TF
		MF

	<p>JF left the meeting at 5.20pm.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Chief Executive Officer’s Report</p> <p>TR gave an overview of key themes. Trustees confirmed that they had read MM’s report in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>Trustees questioned the DCEO.</p> <p><i>Where schools are receiving intensive support, is the resourcing input relatively the same and are you comfortable with the level of support? We are content with where we are putting capacity, improvements are being seen and being triangulated through school reviews.</i></p> <p>TR confirmed that the Executive were relatively content with school improvement overall. Predictions needed to improve, this had been highlighted by both the ESP and by the Executive Team.</p> <p><i>Nationally we are still seeing bigger gaps between disadvantaged (DS) and other students, do you have a sense of this across the Trust? This year’s predications were pessimistic, and schools need to become more consistent with these. Some specific students in the DS category do have an impact on the overall predictions however there is not a consistent pattern across schools. We are not anticipating a significant gap in DS outcomes. The Year 11 cohort nationally are still impacted from Covid.</i></p> <p><i>Are the Senior Team looking at how to increase capacity without unbalancing the Trust, given the Trust’s recent rapid growth? The structures in place below Executive Level were noted. The Trust’s school improvement function is strong. We are investing significant sums to ensure school improvement capacity is in place for next year. The Future Headteacher programme has been very positive in enabling support to be put into schools were needed. This is additional capacity that we are able to deploy without affecting other schools. There is strong personal development within the Trust so recruitment internally is strong. This is a benefit of using a collaborative approach.</i></p> <p><i>Trustees noted that it was important to remember that new schools could bring capacity to the Trust as well as use it.</i></p> <p><u>Matford Brook Academy (MBA)</u> - Hannah Rose had been appointed as the acting Headteacher at Matford Brook to cover ESH’s maternity leave. Hannah had been on site ahead of schedule to allow for a smooth transition. It was noted that the MBA LGB were very supportive of the arrangements.</p> <p>DfE had noted some concerns with the MBA building. There were no further details available, an update was expected in early June. DfE were working hard with TWT to undertake some cautious planning. <i>Trustees noted that they were aware of the situation and would request that DfE provide some financial support if this was required.</i></p> <p><u>Growth Committee Update</u> The Growth Committee had not met since the previous board meeting so there were no additional updates.</p>	

	<p>The announcement of the General Election on 04.07.24 could potentially have implications for the advisory board. There was not expected to be an impact on schools who had already been approved.</p> <p>Exmouth Community College - Thanks were expressed to the F&R Committee for agreeing the self-delivery of the RAAC block at Exmouth. This was now moving ahead.</p> <p><i>Trustees asked how the recent consultation meetings with the Exmouth community had been received?</i> There had been lots of concern about things seen on social media. However the sessions have been positive and have been a good opportunity to talk to the community about TWT. There had been some positive challenge from a very positively engaged and invested parent body. The new headteacher had already started to make improvements and TWT were keen to enable the vision. The Staff consultation had also been positively received.</p> <p>Charter Working Group – meeting on 4th July. JO and CT involved. The charter consultants were doing a desktop exercise and meeting with five members of staff. A provisional date for a charter day had been proposed for 18.10.24, Trustees would be Trustees invited to this.</p> <p>TWT Institute – Julie Fossey would be leading on this going forwards.</p> <p>Alternative Provision strategy – Matt Bindon had recently been appointed to lead on AP for the Trust. This was a significant investment ahead of time for developing AP provision for the Trust. TWT was engaging with LAs on strategies.</p> <p>RJ left the meeting at 18:28</p> <p>A full record of the discussion is in Part B of the Minutes</p>	
7.	<p>Education Committee and Scrutiny Panel Feedback</p> <p>JO gave an update on the recent Education Committee and Education Scrutiny Panel (ESP) meetings.</p> <p>A safeguarding audit update had been received. Thanks were extended to TG and CT who were the safeguarding Trustees and had been involved in the Safeguarding Group. The recent positive feedback from Ofsted about safeguarding in Trust schools was noted.</p> <p>Health Checks would be reducing to twice yearly in 2024-25. This had been agreed by the Education Committee. There would be no change to the number of data drops and visibility of data.</p> <p>Predictions had been reviewed. There were positive primary predictions and more pessimistic secondary predictions.</p> <p>ESP – had reviewed the data in detail. One of the takeaways from the meeting was that the volume of data was large, it was important for Trustees to receive the right level of data to ensure focus on the correct areas and to provide meaningful challenge. Jon Lunn would be looking at reducing and simplifying the data dashboard further for next year.</p>	

	<p>Trustees had also noted that it would be helpful to have a sense of structure and who people were, when looking at resources. It was agreed that a review at Education Committee on the resource available would be beneficial. Action: Add “Strategy for Capacity in School Improvement” to the agenda for the next Education Committee.</p> <p>The ESP had received presentations on curriculum design and Post 16 provision.</p> <p>A full record of the discussion is in Part B of the minutes.</p> <p>CT left the meeting at 18:41</p>	<p>MF/MH</p>
<p>Any Other Business</p>		
	<p>Trustee skills audit to be sent out after half-term.</p> <p>Conference 10.07.24 – priority event for Trustees to attend.</p> <p>Thanks were extended to all for the ongoing work.</p> <p>Meeting closed at 18:42</p> <p>Date of Next Meetings: Weds 10 July 2024 (Conference)</p>	

Signed by the Chair of the Board:

Signed electronically on Governor Hub

Date: 10.07.24