

Board of Trustees
Wednesday 9 December 2020, 4.30pm
Virtual Meeting via Teams

Attended:

Rob Bosworth – Chair (RB)
 David Hall (DH)
 Moira Marder (MM)
 Andy Mulcock (AM)
 Saxon Spence (SS)
 Alex Walmsley (AW)

Philip Bostock (PB)
 Richard Jacobs (RJ)
 Beccy Mitchell (RM)
 Sarah O’Meara (SO)
 Crispin Taylor (CT)

Charlotte Davies – Director of Business & Operations (CD)
 Jon Lunn – Director of Education Performance (JL)
 Melody Floyd - Clerk (MF)

Sue Pym – Director of Finance (SP)
 Tim Rutherford (TR) – Deputy CEO

Meeting Minutes

Item Ref	Business	Action
1.	<p>Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest</p> <p>Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, this meeting was held virtually using Microsoft Teams.</p> <p>RB welcomed everyone to the meeting and, noting the busy agenda, requested that scrutiny was the main focus of the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies were received from Lee Elliot-Major.</p> <p>RB noted his pride in the Trust and thanked the Executive for the massive impact they were currently having within the local communities.</p> <p>Declarations of interest were noted, as follows: AW: Director, First Federation Trust. RB: Exeter College DH: Exeter University</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of Previous meetings</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 21.10.20 were approved as a full and accurate record. All actions were recorded as complete.</p>	

<p>3.</p>	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p><u>Autumn Term Dates 2020</u></p> <p>TR updated on the proposed changes to the Autumn Term dates that had been previously discussed with Trustees. It had been decided not to go ahead with the planned early end date and switch to remote learning, due to DfE guidance at the time.</p> <p>However, DfE had now issued new guidance that inset days could be used at the end of the Autumn term if required. Whipton, CEC and Exwick were already due to be closed on 18.12.20 and TR confirmed that the Executive’s intention was now for all Trust Schools to be closed on this date. TR expressed confidence that the time could be made up during the remainder of the school year, and noted that the May half-term was likely to look very different.</p> <p>TR also noted the positive discussions within the Trust about the proposed changes to term dates and extended his thanks to the Trustees for their input. RB also noted the agility of the Trust around this and noted the new sensible approach. Trustees agreed with the intended closure of all Trust schools on 18.12.20.</p> <p>TR also confirmed that the Trustees’ support of the original proposal had been very well received by staff and parents. The conversations, challenge and guidance were very positive and had been appreciated.</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>Appointments & Resignations</p> <p><u>Alex Walmsley – Second Term</u></p> <p>RB confirmed that AW had agreed to stand for a second term as Trustee. RB noted the Trust’s thanks for AW’s work on the finances and business aspects to date. AW’s appointment for a second term as Trustee for four years from 06.02.2021 was unanimously agreed.</p> <p><u>Appointments</u></p> <p>The recent LGB appointments were noted and agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Wadley-Jones, Co-Opted Governor at St Luke’s • John Newcombe, Parent Governor at Marine Academy Secondary • Steve Strang, Reappointment for second term at Cranbrook Education Campus <p>Action: MF to formally record and send out appointment letters to the new Governors.</p> <p><u>Succession Planning</u></p> <p>RB updated on the succession planning being undertaken following his decision to step down as Chair from April 2021, after six years in the role. RB confirmed that DH would also be stepping down as Vice-Chair. The Members had been notified of the intentions and were supportive of the plans for transitioning to the new Chair and Vice Chair.</p> <p>RB has had conversations, outside of the meetings, with two Trustees who had expressed interest in the roles. He requested that any other Trustees who were interested contact him as soon as possible.</p>	<p>MF</p>

The plan would be that the new Chair and Vice Chair would be formally proposed and voted on at the Board of Trustees Meeting on 24.02.21, with a formal handover in April 2021. RB noted that both he and DH would remain on the Board as Trustees until the ends of their Terms. The intention was for there to be a smooth transition.

SS noted her support for DH and RB continuing as Trustees. DH confirmed that he was not planning on stepping down as Chair of the Education Committee during this financial year.

The proposed succession planning process for Chair and Vice Chair of the Trust was agreed.

5. **Chief Executive Officer’s Report**

MM noted that there had been a drop in Covid-19 cases in both Exeter and Plymouth schools since half-term. The two-week October half-term had acted as a circuit break. MM confirmed that there had been limited impact on children’s education within the Trust and that this had been noted by the RSC. The impact on Year 11 had also been minimal which was pleasing given the 2021 exams announcement.

JL gave an update on attendance across the Trust with the caveat that the figures did not include those absent due to X code and was taken from national data. The massive drop in school attendance nationally was noted and JL confirmed that attendance at Trust schools was consistently above the National average. Nationally, secondary school attendance was notably less than Primary.

The attendance for Devon secondary schools was also significantly lower than TWMAT schools which was very positive. This was not the case for primary schools within the Trust, however MM noted the very high attendance at Whipton Barton.

MM thanked the Headteachers and Executive for the frequent updates to risk assessments which had helped to build parents’ confidence. This was reflected in the attendance and schools had worked hard to minimise the impact. Trustees agreed that the attendance across the Trust was very positive.

MM noted that student numbers for first choices was looking very positive for the 2021-22 intake. West Exe was now the most popular school in Exeter. St Luke’s was notably lower but this was to be expected and MM was confident that numbers would increase with second choices. MM also noted that the Trust had worked hard to ensure that vulnerable children were allocated places in schools that were local to them.

SOM noted the drop in numbers at St James, which had historically been oversubscribed, and queried the reason for this. TR noted that there had been changes to bus routes on that side of the city and that students no longer wanted to travel long distances to get to school. The changes in outcomes and performance tables were also a factor. TR noted that parents in the St James area did often choose St Peters. MM also noted that the Trust had been actively encouraging children from Exwick Heights to attend West Exe as it was more local. MM was confident that St James numbers would rise with second choices and allocations. TR also noted the need to increase numbers at St Luke’s and confirmed that the ultimate vision was for first choices to fill all of the Trust Schools. TR noted that the West Exe numbers were very pleasing.

AM confirmed that, whilst the Exwick Heights link with St James had been very positive, the fit for them to go to West Exe was also positive. AM also queried the cohort compared to previous years. MM noted that in terms of cohort this was level.

MM expressed confidence that schools had been working together as a City to ensure that children went to local schools. MM noted that, in the future, the Trust would need to take a more strategic view of PANs across the city.

SS noted the historic anomalies of the catchment areas in Exeter. She also noted that West Exe had made great strides since joining the Trust and that this was very positive.

SS also noted the large number of children at Whipton Barton with FSM. MM confirmed that she was keen to stress to schools that high standards and disadvantage were not mutually exclusive. Inclusivity and high standards could happen at the same time and this would be a point of focus for Whipton.

RJ queried the extent that parents consider schools being part of TWMAT rather than the individual schools. MM noted that, from conversations with two parents, whilst they had chosen Isca due to it being a Trust school, the extra-curricular activities available at the school had had the most influence on their choice. MM noted that schools being part of the Trust was a positive for parents.

PB queried if there was any comparable data for CEC. MM noted that CEC was different due to being an all-through school. There had been 30 first choices, however Year 6 were expected to continue into the secondary school. MM also noted the likely future challenges of trying to accommodate primary students at CEC.

AM noted that it was positive to compare the picture across the Board.

Action: TR to provide update on CEC numbers (Primary and Secondary) at the next Growth Working Group Meeting. MF to add to the Agenda.

TR
MF

CT gave an update on his work with TR and Aimee Mitchell (AM) coordinating the Safeguarding strategy across the Trust. MM thanked CT for his work this term.

CT confirmed that a strategy had been developed for safeguarding reporting and audits. Each school would receive reports including metrics and this would be captured overall for the Board to highlight any risks or issues. An audit schedule had been developed and each school would get a visit, from an external assessor, over the next school year. TR and AM had secured some independent assessors with more potentially for 2022-23. CT noted that it was refreshing to have this in place, especially given the current impact of Covid-19 upon Trust pupils.

MM shared some positive news stories from Trust Schools and noted that she was proud of being the CEO of the Trust and noted that the “fun” was still within the Trust even though it had been very tough at some points over the last year.

RB noted the positive stories were a breath of fresh air and extended his thanks to the schools for providing them. He also thanked JL for the data and CT for his work on the Safeguarding strategy.

	RM joined the meeting at 17:08	
6.	<p>Growth Working Group</p> <p>PB gave an update on the recent Growth Working Group meeting on 11.11.20.</p> <p>A full record of the discussion is in Part B of the Minutes.</p>	
7.	<p>Committee Minutes</p> <p><u>Audit, Finance & Resources Committee</u></p> <p>AW updated on the AFR Committee held on 11.11.20. Bishops Fleming had been in attendance to update on the statutory accounts and, to the credit of the Finance Team, there were no adjustments. There was only one minor management note which was a great outcome.</p> <p>AW noted that the ESFA had a current focus on internal assurance and scrutiny of all areas of risk to the Trust. The internal auditors had been engaged and there was a plan in place which was reassuring.</p> <p><u>Finance Update and KPIs</u></p> <p>SP gave an overview of the Trust financial position.</p> <p>A full record of the discussion is in Part B of the Minutes.</p> <p><u>Approval of Annual Accounts</u></p> <p>AW noted that the Trust Annual Accounts needed to be formally approved. Trustees formally agreed the Annual Accounts and SP confirmed that these would be signed off electronically.</p> <p>AW recorded thanks to the Finance Team for their hard work, especially with the challenges of remote working. RB noted that the Members had also extended their thanks to the Finance Team.</p> <p><u>Education Committee</u></p> <p>DH gave an update on the work of the Education Committee, although noted that the Committee had not met since September. DH confirmed that graded Ofsted inspections would now not be returning until April 2021. The DfE had also confirmed that grading for the Summer Exams would be more generous in line with national outcomes in 2020. KS2 SATS would go ahead but results would not be published. DH noted the number of “U-turns” over the past nine months and anticipated the potential for further changes.</p> <p>MM confirmed that there would be formal reporting on student attendance for 2020-21 and also pupil destinations. There would also be a report on the subjects being undertaken in KS4 & KS5 to ensure the breadth of curriculum. There was also clear guidance on online learning standards as part of the Ofsted framework.</p>	

	DH updated that he and MM had discussed the way in which the Education Committee would handle complaints going forwards and this would be discussed at the next meeting.	
8.	<p>LGB Chairs Meeting – 11.11.20</p> <p>RB gave an update on the LGB Chairs meeting held on 11.11.20.</p> <p>RB noted that the recent meetings had been less formal and that minutes had not been taken or published. The meetings had also been held more frequently due to them being virtual. The meetings had been positive and some of the chairs had met with David Carter as part of the Governance Review.</p> <p>The LGB Chairs were happy with the way the Trust had been functioning during Covid-19.</p> <p>RB noted that he had also discussed the potential change to August term dates with the LGB Chairs who had been positive about this.</p> <p>RB will provide a further Trust update to the LGB Chairs at the next meeting on 15.12.20</p>	
9.	<p>Members Meeting – 01.12.20</p> <p>RB gave an update on the Members Meeting held on 01.12.20.</p> <p>The Members had agreed the Annual Accounts subject to ratification by the Board.</p> <p>RB had updated the Members on the succession plan for Chair and Vice Chair and they had been supportive of this.</p> <p>The Members had also been interested to hear about the Sir David Carter review and RB noted that they would need to have formal sign off.</p> <p>MM noted that Jonathan Greener, the representative for EDEN, had been a positive addition to the Trust.</p> <p>The Members had agreed the changes to the Articles of Association in relation to All Saints joining the Trust. A special resolution was being signed and would be filed with Companies House.</p>	
10.	<p>Plymouth Governance (STANDING ITEM)</p> <p>AW updated on the recent face-to-face LGB meeting held in Plymouth. He noted some discomfort in holding face-to-face meetings at this time and that the blended approach had made it difficult for virtual attendees to participate.</p> <p>The meeting had been very positive with several new Governors on board, and school staff in attendance for specific items.</p> <p>Finances at MAP had been a concern, but AW felt positive that this was now under control and the Finance Team had a better handle on the finances.</p> <p>AW noted that the Chair of MAP Secondary had stepped down. MM confirmed that Mark Delf, the current Vice Chair, would be stepping up. Mark is currently the lead for Education at Cornwall College.</p>	

	<p>The LGB had been very positive about the Plymouth Hub being formed once All Saints had joined the Trust and AW noted that confidence in the Trust was high.</p> <p>RB noted that Leigh Withers had emailed regarding the focus of the LGB going forwards and his wishes for this. AW had spoken to Leigh and, although this had been put on hold for the time being, it had been very positive and proactive.</p> <p>RB had met with key senior stakeholders in Plymouth who were keen to become involved going forwards.</p> <p>RB extended his thanks to AW for his support with Plymouth and noted the need to keep the current arrangement in place until such time that the Plymouth Hub could be formed.</p>	
11.	<p>Whipton Barton Update (STANDING ITEM)</p> <p>SOM gave an update on her work with Whipton Barton Federation.</p> <p>A full record of the discussion is in Part B of the Minutes.</p>	

Items for Information

12.	<p>Report from PFI Working Group</p> <p>AW noted that the last meeting of the PFI Working Group had been on 04.11.20 and the next meeting would be on 16.12.20.</p> <p>The timeframe for the project was still progressing reasonably well with good support from DCC. There had been a slight delay in tenders for the HardFM services with the deadline having been pushed back to the end of January 2021. This still left a comfortable amount of time for reaching the target project mobilisation date of 01.04.21. St Peters and Wynstream were also still supportive of the project.</p> <p>SS queried if there would be a possibility of relaxing the constraints on schools on the amount of hours they could use the schools. CD confirmed that, when lettings and external use had been transferred out, the schools would have control of this. There would be an increase in the amount of time for schools and this would be more flexible.</p>	
13.	<p>David Carter Governance Review</p> <p>David Carter had sent a first draft of his report to MM and RB. They were due to meet with David on 17.12.20. RB noted that he had been impressed that, within a short period of time, David had really got to grips with the Trust.</p> <p>A full record of the discussion in in Part B of the Minutes.</p>	
14.	<p>Strategic Risk Register (STANDING ITEM)</p> <p>CD gave an overview of the changes to the Strategic Risk Register.</p>	

	<p>Governance risks had been increased due to the current pressures around ensuring this was in place for the growing Trust.</p> <p>The likelihood had been increased in relation to publicity and reputation due to the increased scrutiny on schools arising from the Covid-19 situation.</p> <p>RB queried whether the risk for the Exeter New School needed to be adjusted to reflect that it may not open on time and within budget. TR noted that this was a good point and that clarity was required in the New Year. TR also noted the need to look at the impact of the New School on other schools and confirmed that the demand would need to be clarified. He confirmed that the target build time was still feasible but unlikely.</p> <p>PB noted the fluid situation and that this would continue to be monitored by the Growth Working Group. Action: TR to present an update on the Exeter New School to the Growth Committee at the next meeting.</p>	TR
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Any Other Business

	<p>Trust Annual Report for Parents</p> <p>AM updated on the recent meeting he had attended with Emma Darke and MF to look at producing a Trust Annual Report for parents and other stakeholders. This would look at the Trust's identity and give a greater understanding of the Trust. The plan was for the report to be available in print and electronically, with videos to be included in future years.</p> <p>AM noted that Trust branding would also be reviewed over the coming month and TR confirmed that branding and recruitment would be a focus for the Trust in the future.</p> <p>RB noted the great job that Emma had been doing around getting the Trust "out there" and providing support with communications.</p> <p>SS noted that QE joining the Trust would be a big opportunity for the Exeter area and queried if the Trust would be using this opportunity. MM confirmed that, once due diligence was completed, this would be done at the right time. Emma had already done background work on this.</p> <p>RB extended his thanks to the Executive for their hard work over the past year. The positives of the work of the Trust were evident and was very much appreciated.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 18:45</p> <p>Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 24 February 2021, 4.30pm - TBC</p>	
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Signed by the Chair of the Board:



Date: 24.02.21