

Trustees Board Minutes

Meeting	Trustees Board	Date	Tuesday, 6th December 2022
Location	Executive Boardroom, Broadstairs College	Time	9.15 am
Membership	Tammy Mitchell (CEO), Graham Razey (Chair) (GR), Peter Troke (PT), Bernadette Lax (BL), Peter Goldsack (PG), <i>Chris Argent (CA)</i> , Michael Ashley (MA), Alan Horton (AH), Barbara Conroy (BC)		
In Attendance	Chris Legg, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Sharon Hollingsworth, Director of Governance (DoG) Claire Edgeworth, Executive Support Officer (CE) Rebecca Chatwin (RC), Guest		

*\*Italics denotes absence*

	ITEM	COMMENTS	ACTION
1	Welcome and apologies for absence	Apologies were received from CA.  AH joined the meeting virtually.  RC joined the meeting as an observer and was welcomed to the meeting.	
2	Declarations of Interest	There were no additional declarations to the meeting other than those declared as standing.	
3	Minutes of the meeting held 20 <sup>th</sup> September 22 including any confidential minutes	The minutes from the meeting held on the 20 <sup>th</sup> September 2022, were agreed to be an accurate record and will be duly signed by the Chair following the meeting.  <b>AGREED – Minutes from the meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> September 2022.</b>	

4	Matters arising not covered by this agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Scheme of Delegation has been circulated.</li> <li>• CA has been invited to the Strategic Finance Workshop.</li> <li>• School Improvement Plan has been circulated.</li> <li>• Confidential Minutes – KCC defaulted on a £50,000 payment to Bysing Wood and a letter was sent from the Group. A settlement figure of £50,000 has been agreed and a formal letter of acceptance has been sent. The CEO will update the Trustees when the money has arrived.</li> <li>• Secondary provision will be in the Growth Plan.</li> <li>• Pay policy is on the Agenda.</li> </ul>	CEO
5	Chairs Update	<p>The Chair meets regularly with the CEO in terms of the Trust performance.</p> <p>The focus has been on the schools and there has been a lot of activity. The CEO has been working with the schools on their SDPs and it has been a busy end to the year re accounts and audits.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>NOTED – Chairs Update</b></p>	
6	CEO Termly Update	<p>The CEO had circulated the School Priorities Overview as requested by the Trustees. The pupil numbers need to be updated as Bysing Wood has had a significant growth and had a 1/3<sup>rd</sup> growth in 12 months. The Trustees need to be aware that East Stour has a high level of mobility pupils, and this has a significant impact on their data.</p> <p>The CEO advised that attendance is a challenge but there has been significant improvement Trust wide.</p> <p>The current challenges are around the financial uncertainty and there are emerging cost pressures which the Trustees need to review.</p> <p>The CEO updated the RAC Committee on safeguarding and performance indicators and gave a full overview. The CEO feels that the focus of Ofsted has changed to become a tick box exercise. The CEO is aware of some schools dropping in grades due to safeguarding concerns and paper trails. On review, all the Trust schools were strong on safeguarding. The Trustees</p>	

queried why Ofsted had changed and the CEO advised that it was not clear but wondered if there had been an incident. The Trustees queried if the electronic platforms had raised the bar of what we can do and it is now an expectation. The CEO advised that we use three different platforms across the Trust.

The CEO school visits have been focused on key priorities linked to the Trust Strategic Plan. The CEO acknowledged that after Covid children were not ready to learn, so there is a focus on getting teaching and learning back to where it was. A training day with Tom Sherrington had taken place and this had invigorated the staff. There is a focus on raising attainment and Briary is the biggest concern in the rate of returning progress. There are a number of schools in the Ofsted window, Holywell, Queenborough and Bysing Wood. There is a concern that Bysing Wood historical attainment is low and Covid has not helped, but Trustees need to be mindful that during Covid they had cohorts of 10-12 children. Holywell is going from strength to strength but will not reach outstanding as has two ECTs.

There has been a focus on the bottom 20% less able pupils which is where attainment is poorer in 5 out of 6 of the schools. There is also a focus on reading as children who are strong readers can access the curriculum easier.

There is a big focus on attendance, as this impacts attainment. There is a wide gap between Free School Meals (FSM) and non FSM, and the lowest attending FSM children have the highest level of need and they are not attending. Queenborough have had the most improvement and there has been a huge improvement at Bysing Wood. Attendance is now being discussed in terms of hours of learning gained rather than percentages.

The schools are working with the colleges and pupils are attending the colleges and engaging with the curriculum departments. There has been a cricket event and all 6 schools competed against each other at Kent Cricket ground.

The Trustees queried the data predictions showing Briary is lower on phonics and whether this was due to a low start line base level or due to the teaching. The CEO advised this was a single year group and the teacher is an ECT in their first year. There is a plan in place and the school is waiting for the Q1 budget, as they want to put another teacher in Year 1 to support

		<p>the children. The new teacher is getting support and is using Kate Espley as a mentor but every day counts with learning. The Trustees queried if the Phonics Programme we use is consistent and whether one was stronger. The CEO advised that there are 4 programmes across 6 schools and Briary are using the same as two other schools and there is a difference in rate of progress. East Stour had the lowest attainment in Year 6 but have highest phonics outcomes. The Trustees discussed the different programmes.</p> <p>The Governors discussed the different cohorts in the schools and the percentage of children on FSM. The CEO advised that Bysing Wood serves a deprived area and is a challenging school, and they have only a few parents who are employed and only one parent is a professional across the whole school. Palm Bay have affluent families, but their data is below average and the gaps have got wider with disadvantaged children. Palm Bay do not have a FLO and the Trustees queried if the leadership team gets caught up doing the work of the FLO and the CEO agreed.</p> <p>The Deputy is the DSL and deals with all parental challenges whereas in other schools there are two other staff before you get to a senior leader. The Palm Bay leadership team are now looking at this. The Trustees queried if the Governors were aware and the CEO advised that the interim Headteacher has spoken to the Chair and has contacted the DoG for some support. The Trustees queried the low data for Briary and the CEO worries they are being over cautious as they are strong practitioners. This will be included in the CEO's next report.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>NOTED – CEO's Report</b></p>	CEO
7	<p><b>Director of Governance Update</b></p>	<p>The DoG updated the Trustees on the current Trust membership and Terms of Office. There is one Trustee vacancy which is hoped RC will fill. This appointment will be confirmed by the Members.</p> <p><u>Trustees Development Plan</u></p> <p>The overall results across the Board show that there is a broad range of skills however there are some areas where Trustees need to build confidence and areas of development. One of the Governing Boards only ask their Governors to review the previous year's audit results and ask everyone to identify one area they can improve and making it their personal responsibility to do so, as well as seeking some development in areas where the score is lower overall. As a</p>	

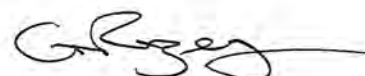


		<p>The DoG circulated feedback reports from the Trustee visits. The Trustees all agreed to undertake at least one visit per year, and the Chair encouraged Trustees to undertake the visits.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>NOTED - Director of Governance Update</b></p>	
8	Growth Plan Update	This item was deemed confidential and will form Part A of the minutes.	
9	Management Accounts – October 2022	<p>The CFO circulated the Management Account prior to the meeting.</p> <p>The CFO talked the Trustees through the accounts and highlighted areas of note.</p> <p>The Q1 forecast will be in the November Management Accounts but the CFO is aware of the energy cost pressures and will meet with the CEO and Lisa Hogan, Group Head of Financial Planning and Analysis, this week to discuss.</p> <p>The Chair advised that it will be interesting to note where the pressures are coming from.</p> <p>The CFO advised that the biggest cost pressure was pay and 5 out of 6 schools have underbudgeted. The CFO noted that the premises costs are dominated by one school who got their budgeting wrong. There is a plan to spend reserves at one school.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>NOTED - Management Accounts – October 2022</b></p>	
10	Headline Emerging Financial Costs Pressure	<p>A pay increase was budgeted for but what has been agreed nationally is different and there is a new minimum wage of £10.42, which will affect about 50% of the workforce. The CEO advised that KR1 and KR2 were wiped out over the last 18 months and cleaners, support staff, LSAs and site staff are on KR3. Highly skilled staff are on KS5. As from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023, they will all be on one band. There is money coming into schools from the DfE in April and this should cover the pay rise. The CEO advised that the Trust did not implement the last Kent pay rise, so we are already below the Kent pay range. The CEO acknowledged that there are some challenges and there are some schools that need to make decisions as they might need to make redundancies and use their reserves.</p>	

		<p>All energy relief ends at the end of March for everyone in the education sector and there will be a one off payment made of £16k per primary school to support energy saving measures. This was announced this morning. The energy tariffs are fixed with Laser and Kent will renegotiate and we have to decide whether to stay or not.</p> <p>Catering supplies are creeping up and one of the new schools have got their budgeting wrong. The DfE (ESFA) are not putting up their Free Schools Meal (FSM) rate.</p> <p><b>NOTED - Headline Emerging Financial Costs Pressure</b></p>	
11	Feedback from Committee Meetings	<p><u>Finance Committee – 29.11.22</u> The Finance Committee Chair could not attend the meeting today, and MA advised that the only thing that came up as a concern regarding KCC's financial problems and we need to watch the High Needs Funding as they are scaling back.</p> <p><u>RAC Committee – 29.11.22</u> PT advised that the committee looked at the budget and met with the external auditors. PT queried that there were no conclusions in the report. The Auditors Report will be discussed in the AGM after this meeting. The RAC Committee discussed cyber security and the CFO will meet with the auditors to obtain a quote for an internal review of cyber security arrangements.</p> <p><b>NOTED - Feedback from Committee Meetings</b></p>	CFO
12	Pay Policy	<p>The national Pay Policy covers Teachers pay and conditions and the terms of conditions for support staff come from the KCC Policy.</p> <p>The CEO advised that in light of the discussion on pay pressures, we need to consider our own terms and conditions and pay scale for support staff and the CEO is working on this and every school will need to agree to this. It was acknowledged this might put off other schools joining us. Currently we cannot pay higher skilled workers across the Trust and this might be an opportunity to pay more effective pay but have less staff. It was acknowledged that we are</p>	

		<p>struggling to recruit staff as some supermarkets pay more. The Trustees queried if this would change the terms and conditions and the CEO advised that everyone would have to agree to it.</p> <p>The CEO advised that a Committee would need to look at this before comes back to the Trustee Board. It was agreed this needs to sit with the Finance Committee. The Headteachers would need to want this change but at the moment they are keen as in April they will have no way to differentiate. The CEO will circulate the new amended Pay Policy.</p> <p>It was noted that the Pay Policy had been approved by Trustees at the September meeting subject to the pay scales therein being updated in line with the Teachers Pay and Conditions Policy when published.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NOTED – updated Pay Policy</p>	CEO
13	Any Other Business	<p>There were no items under Any Other Business.</p> <p>The Chair asked for this item to be removed from future Agendas.</p>	
14	Matters Considered Confidential	Item 8 was deemed confidential and will form Part A of the minutes.	
15	Date and time of next meeting	7 <sup>th</sup> March 2023 at 2 p.m.	

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.45 am.



Signed:

Print: Graham Razez

Dated: 7 March 2023