



Minutes

Meeting	Board of Trustees
Date	7 November 2022

Attendance & Apologies

Trustees		Trustees	
Christopher Watt (Chair) CW	P	Duncan Nicholson (DN) Co-opted Trustee	Ap
Jamie Clarke (JRC)	P	Frances Craven (FC) Co-opted Trustee	Ap
Tim Foster (TF) Trustee	Ap	Gary Foote (GF) Co-opted Trustee	P
Jo Chitty (JC) Trustee	P	Trust representatives	
Thomas Schilling (TS) Co-opted Trustee	Ap	Sue Wagstaff (SW) CFO	P

(key: P=Present, Ap=apologies received, A=absent)

In attendance: Katie Fell (Clerk) (KLF)

No.	Item	Action
1.	<p>Welcome, introductions and apologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apologies received and recorded from TF, TS, DN, FC. CW reported that Thomas Schilling has regrettably tendered his resignation as a trustee with immediate effect due to personal reasons. Trustees expressed their disappointment to hear the news. Four trustees were present hence the meeting was quorate with a majority of the board in attendance. 	
2.	<p>Declaration of interests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> None declared. 	
3.	<p>MMA from 27th September 2022</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes from the board meeting on 27 September 2022 were reviewed and confirmed as an accurate record. The chair signed the minutes electronically due to the meeting being remote. All actions were reviewed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new trading company has held its first meeting. TLT policies have been reviewed and amended with further comments where required. Outstanding actions include Health & Safety compliance issues to be discussed at the SBM meeting on 11/11/22 with SW; and the wording of the Reserves Policy still needs to be resolved. 	
4.	<p>TLT annual pay recommendations to be reviewed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Pay and Personnel Committee (P&PC) met on 7th October to undertake a salary benchmarking exercise across the MAT with headteachers and members of the P&PC present. <p>The CEO selected the sample to be analysed in the benchmarking and standardising process. A robust process was followed which was scrutinised by trustees from the P&PC. A sample of staff who were eligible to progress through thresholds from M6 to M9 to the expert teacher range were included in the sample to ensure consistency of approach across the MAT.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It was noted that the TLT appraisal process is currently still linked to pay awards and the appraiser’s evaluation is taken into consideration when pay is reviewed. ● The new Pay Policy 2022 has been updated in line with the national STPCD. Incremental increases will be honoured where line managers are in support of this and when evidenced by thorough performance management. ● Trustees were assured that decisions were benchmarked via the process outlined above. 	
5.	<p>CEO Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A summary update on progress since the start of term was shared. ● Trustees were informed that EWS received an Ofsted inspection on 1 and 2 November and the provisional judgement was shared. This remains confidential until it has been confirmed and published. ● External KS4 exam results from the summer were shared. Attention was drawn to the key strengths in overall progress 8 for Sponne and GAC; English is particularly strong at GAC and maths at Sponne. Science is exceptionally strong at Sponne. Disadvantaged students achieved best at Sponne, closely followed by Rushden. EAL pupils achieved very strongly at GAD and Rushden, closely followed by GAC and Lord Grey. ● Key weaknesses in the exam results include: overall at Stantonbury and EWS, particularly in terms of progress. Subject areas requiring improvement were identified and it was noted that progress in humanities subjects is not strong across the trust. We are appointing an additional School Improvement Director for humanities to help support improvement. Progress in foreign languages is generally strong although it was noted that pupil numbers entering these subjects are frequently quite low. ● Governance arrangements for LGBs in the trust were reviewed following some recent changes to terms of office. Trustees were asked to review the current list of Chairs of Governors and trust representative vacancies and to make contact with the CEO, Chair or Clerk to find out further information or to volunteer to take on any roles. Priority vacancies currently are at Stantonbury AIB and Lord Grey LGB Chair role. ● ACTION: Trustees to review the follow up email from the Clerk and respond by 12 noon 15 November. ● Jim Parker is doing some good work liaising with the local Headteacher network in the Milton Keynes area and may be able to recruit some headteachers or deputies who are seeking a governor or chair role at another school, which could be beneficial CPD to support their career development. ● The CEO and Chair of Trustees met with two TLT Members recently to discuss the Strategic Growth Plan, which was well received. Growth will primarily be targeted in the current regional hub areas West Mids, Northants and Milton Keynes. ● The growth plan has been updated with the aim of the trust growing to around 20 to 25 schools in total comprising between 10 and 14 secondary schools (currently 10) and six to 11 primaries (currently 3). ● The Executive Team are meeting with a local primary MAT in Oxfordshire who are looking to join a larger trust, and there are a number of Single Academy Trusts (SATs) meeting TLT to conduct their own due diligence before expressing an interest in joining. ● Trustees confirmed they were happy with the strategic growth plan and for the CEO to share it with the DfE. 	ALL
6.	<p>CFO Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A short progress report was provided since there have only been four operational weeks since the last board meeting. ● Central finance and school finance teams are busy working on the annual accounts. A summary of the actual outturn for each school, any reserves carried forward, retained cash flow and a final balance was shared in the CFO report. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trustees asked for clarification of £18m reported for Stantonbury. This figure is the brought in figure for the capital and buildings. This is a financial accounting exercise that must be completed when a new school joins the trust, and it will not appear in the final annual accounts and report. Overall the trust is in a secure position financially with healthy reserves generated in the past year. Most schools have built up a good level of reserves with the exception of EWS. However it was explained that they had a poorly maintained site and a large number of land and buildings to maintain. EWS is in an improving financial position and the current SBM has made significant improvements in financial management, plus additional funding for Afghan students and Covid savings have masked the underlying issues that remain. The School Capital Allocation (SCA) process is not yet underway for 2022-23, in some part due to the Estates Manager role currently being vacant, and the CFO is meeting with SBMs on Friday 11/11/22 to discuss further. The current strategy will be to take a cautionary approach and focus on initiatives and critical repairs this year. The Chair stated that one of the governors at GAC is involved in energy and construction and may be able to offer some help. Trustees were updated on the recruitment of the HR and Estates Manager roles. There has been one unsuccessful round of recruitment for the Estates role, so we have decided to use an external recruitment company to take on a search and selection project to source better quality candidates within the desired timeframes. The salary range for these roles has been expanded to take into account market rates and to attract suitably experienced candidates. These roles are essential to support the ongoing operational priorities and growth strategy of the trust. 	
7.	Risk Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risks identified during the course of the meeting and to be updated on the TLT risk register include: EWS Ofsted rating as a reputational and operational risk. Trustees recognised the support required and that it needs to be actively managed. Recruitment / staffing – strategic and operational risk of not being able to recruit central team roles and the impact it has on the Exec Team as well as operational school based staff. Financial risk with ongoing energy prices rising rapidly and increasing salary costs. 	
8.	Policies for approval <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TLT Pay Policy 2022 has been circulated to unions and staff and their comments have been collated and considered. A member of the Pay & Personnel Committee asked for clarification that the question about double jumps within the pay scales had been addressed and amended in the policy. CEO confirmed this was the case. Trustees approved the TLT Pay Policy 2022. 	
10.	AOB <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There being no further business the meeting was declared closed. The Chair thanked trustees for their time and continued support. 	

Meeting closed at: 17:50

Signed: _____
Chair of Trustees

Date: 23/01/2023

Next Meeting:

**7th December 2022 - TLT Finance Committee Meeting (all trustees invited)
to receive Annual Accounts 31st August 2022 presented by Crowe**

**14th December 2022 - TLT Finance Committee Meeting (all trustees invited)
to formally approve the Annual Accounts 31st August 2022**

ACTIONS from this meeting		
ACTION	BY WHOM	BY DATE
Call for volunteers to fill current AIB/LGB governance and trust rep arrangements	ALL	15/11/22