

Minutes

Title:	LiFE Multi Academy Trust Board Meeting - Directors		
Date:	Monday 8 th March 2021	Time:	6.00pm
Chair:	Maria Everley	Location:	Virtual Google Meeting
Clerk:	Mike Armstrong		

DIRECTORS

Name	Present /Apologies	Name	Present / Apologies	Name	Present /Apologies
Maria Everley (MEV)	✓	Chris Parkinson (CPA - CEO)	✓	Andy Smith (ASM)	✓
Chris Garnett (CGA)	✓	Hazel Cole (HCO)	✓	Liam McDonagh (LMcD)	✓
Gareth Williams (GWI)	✓	David Noble (DNO)	✓	Hatle Mehta (HME)	✓
Liz Warren (LWA)	✓				

In Attendance

Name	Present /Apologies	Name	Present / Apologies	Name	Present /Apologies
Mike Armstrong Clerk	✓				

Notes of meeting

1	Welcome and Apologies.
	<p>The Chair welcomed Directors to the meeting and reminded them of the confidentiality of the discussions.</p> <p>Apologies: All present.</p>
2	Declarations of Interest
	None
3	Urgent Items for AOB agreed prior to the meeting.
	None
4	Minutes and Matters Arising from the meeting on 25 January 2021.
	<p>The minutes had been circulated.</p> <p>Resolved: The minutes of the meeting on 25 January 2021 and the confidential minutes, were accepted as a true record to be signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Actions</p> <p>8.1: KPIs and Action Plan. Complete</p> <p>9.1: Meeting remained March 8.</p> <p>9.2: Links to speak to Chairs.</p>

	The Chair said she would look at training on risk registers after the discussion on training Item 9.
5	<p>Finance Capital expenditure. Budget update</p>
	<p>Capital Expenditure</p> <p>AS referred to the Total Swimming Project who were looking to manage the swimming pool. He felt it was a good proposal and would allow refurbishment of the changing rooms and pool area for a small fee of £10k. The income would be around £30k a year (currently £19k). The agreement is for 5 years.</p> <p>LMcD asked about other schools possibly joining the MAT with leisure facilities and asked if a better agreement could be obtained for more pools. AS said the agreement was per swimming pool. He added that Ashby School had a pool and, if approved by the Board, would be brought into the scheme. The Winstanley pool had a current agreement with another company.</p> <p>CG asked if the 50 week year proposed could be accommodated. AS replied that it could. The intention to open more on Sundays might require premises officers on site which would incur extra payments. However, when the 3G pitch opened this would be open on Sundays.</p> <p>The Chair asked what the biggest risk was. AS replied, this would be poor performance but recommendations had been received from other facilities using the company. HC asked if there was a termination clause for poor performance. AS said, he did not know, if not this could be included in the contract.</p> <p>It was proposed by HM and seconded by CG that Total Swimming took over the management of the swimming pool for a period of 5 years.</p> <p>This was agreed unanimously.</p> <p>Budget Update</p> <p>AS commented that there was little extra to report and there were no concerns. Following suggestions from HM and LW the budget documentation will be reformatted. In terms of the effects of lockdown on the budget, there is the increased cost of cleaning and sanitizing equipment and loss of income through lettings and catering etc. However, there were much lower catering, utilities and supply costs etc. Future meetings will look at the 21/22 budget which will be brought to Directors for approval. The Finance Policy was currently being updated to include the additional schools and the hub model. This will be brought to the next meeting of Directors for approval.</p> <p>LW asked if the ‘Schools Resource Management Self Assessment Tool’ referred to in the documentation was likely to be used in the future. AS said the tool was designed to be used annually and provided useful information. The CEO added that finance had been working with this tool alongside the ICFP for a while. He would provide training for Directors on the tool and how he worked with Headteachers using these metrics. The Chair felt it was a very useful tool for benchmarking.</p> <p>HM asked if the report could be provided every three months as it provided useful information.</p>

	<p>The CEO commented that the metrics would not be expected to change during the year, unless a school was not spending according to its budget, which would be identified in the budget reports.</p> <p>The Chair commented it had been minuted that it might not be possible to address each school's budget and capital plan in the allotted time. The minutes were quite Bosworth heavy.</p> <p>She asked if any of the schools felt their budget was not being fully addressed.</p> <p>AS said, there was a need to reformat as stated. The aim was to have a Health & Safety and Infrastructure Committee; however, infrastructure was heavily linked to finance. He did not feel that finance meeting in the hubs would help.</p> <p>MH suggested the finance meetings were split into primary and secondary schools.</p> <p>LW suggested that there was one meeting with break out sessions for primary and secondary.</p> <p>The Chair queried where health and safety sat in the meeting structure, was it in the new committee as suggested or withing the LGBs with Link Directors monitoring this to ensure compliance.</p> <p>AS replied that there was a MAT wide Estates Manager whose remit will be for Health and Safety across all schools.</p> <p>There were no further questions.</p>
6	<p>MAT Central Team Structure for approval</p> <p>Moved to after Item 9.</p> <p>The COO had shared the 'LiFE Organisational Structure 2021 v1' graphic.</p> <p>The CEO stated that the rapid growth from 5 to 8 schools required a restructure of the central team operations. The existing operating model will continue with school practitioners at different levels who coordinate the high level collaboration.</p> <p>The COO referred to his graphic, with the two proposed hubs at the top. The model follows the good practice for the original 5 schools now in the Bosworth Hub. The Trust was about to advertise for the Senior Leadership Partners, who will be existing Senior Leaders across the Trust in a variety of key areas such as curriculum, teaching and learning, safeguarding etc. A member of the senior leadership team from each school will be released for 1 day per week to work across the Trust where required.</p> <p>The Director of Educational Change will be a temporary position to oversee the age range change. When this is complete the Coordinators of Primary and Secondary Phases (Secondary and Primary Heads for 1 day per fortnight) will work across both Hubs.</p> <p>Under this level is the proposed Senior Team of the Trust.</p> <p>The CEO added that the structure would be put in place for a 1 year trial period before moving to a permanent model. The model demonstrates leadership from the middle as the desired operating model.</p> <p>HM asked about Directors of HR and IT which were missing from the model.</p> <p>The CEO replied that these positions were in place but were not on the leadership model. This included a Director of Estates in addition to HR, IT and Catering. These posts are line managed by the CFO or COO. These positions will be included on the final diagram once line management was established.</p> <p>The Chair asked about the Director of Governance and Compliance/COO post.</p> <p>The COO said this would be split to 3 days COO and 1 day Governance and Compliance. In his role as Deputy CEO, he would take on some of the COO responsibilities.</p> <p>The CEO added that the 1 day allocated for Director of Governance would be as discussed previously, working with LGBs to ensure they understood the SOD etc.</p> <p>The Chair asked if this role would be expanded to include other responsibilities for governance other than those discussed. This to include the needs of single LGBs as well as LGBs across the MAT.</p> <p>The CEO confirmed that it would.</p>

	<p>The CEO said he needed approval to move ahead with the appointments needed to complete the structure outlined, particularly the internal appointments and the Director of Educational Change.</p> <p>The Chair asked about the financial impact of the appointments if approved. The CEO replied that there was sufficient carry forward from the top slice to cover the costs.</p> <p>The Chair proposed that the Organisational Structure was approved and the CEO could move ahead with the necessary appointments. This was seconded by Andy Smith.</p> <p>This was carried unanimously.</p> <p>Resolved: The Organisational Structure was approved and the CEO given permission to make the necessary appointments as outlined.</p> <p>There were no further questions.</p>
7	<p>CEO report and Risk Register Head Teachers reports</p> <p>Regarding the Headteacher's reports, the CEO said the Headteachers were asked to comment on 4 areas, attendance of children in school: attendance and engagement with remote learning, safeguarding and wellbeing of students/staff and progress data from the autumn term.</p> <p>The CEO made the following comments on the red areas of risk register: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Braunstone Frith budget for 2021/22 has come in at £100k less than projected (300k less in 2020/21). This was not the case in the other schools where the projections were accurate. The errors were in the modelling by one of the employees and a support plan will be put in place. In addition, a decision was taken in the Leicester City Schools Forum to cap the minimum funding guarantee which was not fed back to the school and caused around 50% of the error. The risk is a very small percentage of the MAT budget. • Overall, the final budget shows the MAT is better off than the projections indicated. • The risk level of reopening after lockdown has been reduced due to the experience from the previous closure. • Teacher absence at Countesthorpe has increased as stated. The section 188 issue could result in the lowering of morale. <p>The Chair asked about the morale of staff at Countesthorpe. The COO replied that the morale was surprisingly good. Staff feel progress was being made. The consultation process has been very transparent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour at Winstanley has an increased risk level of a 1 to a 2. Students who did not engage with remote learning may experience difficulties on return resulting in poor behaviour. <p>There were no further questions.</p> <p>The CEO stated that the schools had really stepped up again in a very difficult term. Testing is being carried out in all the schools. All schools have provided live lessons during lockdown. He added he was really proud of the Leaders and Teams in the schools and the schools have worked very well together in sharing the workload.</p> <p>CG asked how the schools were dealing with the notion of the 'lost generation' and negative language.</p>

	<p>The CEO replied that all the schools had done online assemblies to prepare the students for their return. There has been good communication with parents. All negative language has been banned in all schools. The terms 'catch up' and 'recovery' are not used. The attitude of the press has been explained to the students. They have been told they will perform as well as if not better than previous years. There will clearly be individual students who will need extra support.</p> <p>DN asked about if the performance data in the reports were based on mock examinations taken before lockdown.</p> <p>The CEO replied this was the case in the secondary schools. Many students prepared well for these as they knew the results were important in terms of the final grade awarded. The mock exam data therefore showed an improvement. However, the spread of the data was far wider than seen before and the students who are struggling are receiving tutoring support using the government funding allocated for 'catch up'. Online support was provided during lockdown.</p> <p>He added that the Year 10 were of greater concern as they had missed more school than Year 11 in the first lockdown.</p> <p>DN asked what data would be collected on Year 10.</p> <p>The CEO said that there was tracking data produced in the autumn term. The students will not be tested until the summer term as it would not be good practice to test the students shortly after their return.</p> <p>CG asked if the wearing of masks was an issue.</p> <p>The CEO said most parents were supporting the schools with masks. There had been some challenges to this in all the secondary schools. The issue will be dealt with in the same way as students not wearing correct uniform.</p> <p>CG asked about staff morale.</p> <p>The CEO said there were some staff who were anxious. However, staff are being well supported by senior leaders. Most staff are really pleased to have the students back. The mental health and wellbeing of all staff is a priority for leaders.</p> <p>DN asked what the approach was for the awarding of the grades in the summer.</p> <p>The CEO replied there had only been detail on the broad principles from the exam boards so far. There is a cross MAT Working Party which will set principals for each school to follow. However, the schools will not be setting extra exams in each subject, which is a method being used in other schools. The Year 11 teachers will be consolidating work already taught with the students before moving on to new work. The national picture on this will be monitored to ensure MAT students are not disadvantaged.</p> <p>The Chair offered the congratulations of the Board to all of the Senior Leadership Teams for providing the data. She particularly commended Winstanley on the information regarding the wellbeing of staff, students and families and Braunstone Frith on their data analysis.</p> <p>There were no further questions.</p>
8	<p>COO report CLCC restructuring.</p>
	<p>The COO report had been shared.</p> <p>The COO informed Directors that Two presentations from AS on Leadership and SH on the Real Life Curriculum were given to the Trust Leaders Network, a national event. These were well received.</p> <p>Countesthorpe</p>

	<p>The CEO highlighted the following in addition to the earlier comments: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The award of the Inclusion Quality Mark to Countesthorpe. • Countesthorpe staff were still on board with the improvements being made despite the challenges of the restructure. <p>SEMH Primary Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The centre is now running and one child has been admitted. • A lot of work was done with parents remotely in the previous week. • An extra £20k was obtained from the LA to improve the outside environment and signage. <p>There were no questions.</p>
9	<p>Training Action:</p>
	<p>LW had circulated a discussion document on training, in conjunction with HC and LMCD, following the presentations on 25th January 2021. The document was based on feedback from Directors and Chairs of Governors.</p> <p>It was felt that neither of the presenters could provide all of the development needs of the MAT. It was recommended that a Head of Governance was considered by the Board.</p> <p>HC commented that a Head of Governance would ensure that the messages from the Board, currently delivered by Link Directors, would be more consistent.</p> <p>CG supported the appointment of a Head of Governance as this would become increasingly important as more schools joined the MAT.</p> <p>The Chair agreed and added that the initial contact with new Governing Bodies and Chairs to explain the role and delegated responsibilities of LGBs would be part of the role, which she had recently taken on with the Ashby Chair.</p> <p>The Chair stated that the Board needed to decide if the LTS core provision should be retained and employ other trainers to provide the bespoke MAT training required.</p> <p>LW suggested that the CEO's proposals for the structure of the central team needed to be considered before taking these decisions.</p> <p>The CEO responded that a new role 'Director of Governance', recommended by the Directors, could be added to the Central Team model. In terms of training requirements, he felt that some training should be bespoke for Governance.</p> <p>LW said the differing responsibilities of LGB's in all academies compared to maintained schools was the same in all academies, so training was available on this. She had reservations about a lot of bespoke MAT training.</p> <p>She added that Chairs had commented that meeting with Chairs/Governors from other MATs would be useful.</p> <p>The CEO replied that training through the LA was not doing all of what the MAT needed. LGBs did not feel they understood the scheme of delegation compared to the responsibilities of a maintained school GB. There was also a need for a LiFE MAT Governance Handbook.</p>

LW stated that there was concern about the cost effectiveness of the offer from Hollis Associates. There had been a request for more detail on prices which had not been provided. LW recommended that the package was not purchased as a whole but Hollis could be used for certain aspects.
The CEO felt the Hollis Associates presentation was much closer to the needs of the MAT, whereas LTS did not address any bespoke offer.

LW proposed a meeting between the group (LW, HC and LMCD) with the CEO to determine the priorities and the funding available.

This was agreed.

ACTION 9.1: CEO to meet with LW, HC and LMCD to discuss training priorities for MAT Governance.

AS commented that governor support was required in addition to initial training. The support has been provided by the CEO and Chair. As agreed, this is no longer viable. He felt there was a clear need for a Director of Governance. Bespoke training was required for governance and he felt Hollis Associates would be able to deliver this. However, the nature of the bespoke training would need to be defined.

The Chair said there was a need to define three areas: -

- The role of the Director of Governance.
- What was required from LTS?
- What was required for MAT specific training?

These will need to be costed separately.

She added that the CEO felt the bespoke training was the most urgent. Hollis Associates could be commissioned to deliver that as a starting point.

LW agreed that the bespoke training should be commissioned for the LGBs joining the MAT immediately.

Impact Statement

Decisions made which will affect the quality of Governance.

The Chair raised the question of recruitment of local governors. She did not feel it was the responsibility of the Board of Directors to recruit local governors but suggested a generic letter was produced for LGBs to use for recruitment which could be amended to include particular skills required.

LW suggested an advert was placed for the recruitment of Local Governors in all MAT schools.

HC agreed it was the responsibility of the LGBs to recruit their Governors. She added that there was a feeling in local governance that they were being 'talked down to'.

HC suggested a working party was set up of Governors across the MAT to put together a recruitment package.

The CEO commented that this illustrated the need for training for LGBs on the scheme of delegation. and in what aspects of this they can have a big input. If capacity becomes limited by too few governors the LGB can ask the Board to take responsibility for some aspects of the scheme and concentrate on areas they do have the capacity to tackle. LGBs need to have representatives from the local community and therefore recruitment must lie with the LGBs.

ACTION 9.2: Commission Hollis Associates to deliver bespoke training for LGBs on an agreed priority area.

ACTION 9.3: Determine what training LTS can deliver from the priority areas and identify gaps.

The meeting then moved to Item 6.

10	MAT development Ashby School Ibstock and Ivanhoe Ashby SoD
T	<p>The CEO confirmed that Ashby joined the MAT on 1st March 2021. Ibstock was scheduled to join on 1st May 2021 and Ivanhoe on 1st June 2021. CT was mostly through the due diligence process and had not raised any alarms to date.</p> <p>The proposed Scheme of Delegation for Ashby had been shared with Directors.</p> <p>HC asked if the new Schemes of Delegation could indicate the differences from other schools SOD for Directors.</p> <p>The CEO said he would do this. The Ashby SOD was different in parts to the others.</p> <p>The Chair proposed that the Board accepted the Scheme of Delegation for Ashby School. This was seconded by Liz Warren.</p> <p>This was agreed unanimously.</p> <p>Resolved: The Scheme of Delegation for Ashby School was accepted.</p> <p>The Chair informed Directors that she had met with the Chairs of Ibstock and Ivanhoe. Reports had been written and shared.</p> <p>She added that she was meeting with all three Chairs in the Ashby Hub on 9th March 2021. There was a need to get the Ashby LGB on board with the values and vision of the MAT.</p> <p>The Chair asked about applications for places in the secondary schools where parents were not getting their first choice.</p> <p>The CEO replied the only issue was at Bosworth. The number of first choices was similar to previous years but the number from in the catchment area had increased greatly. Although this is the second criteria for selection there was an oversubscription of 100 students from the catchment area. Children from schools in the catchment area were then the next criteria. 8 families in Desford have been refused a place but must be admitted on the first day if they have not been offered a place within the catchment. Extra students will not receive funding until September 2022.</p> <p>The Chair said this situation will worsen as new housing has been approved in the area.</p>
11	Directors Action Plan – for comments and questions.
	<p>The Clerk felt the action plan was an aid for Directors to carry out a self assessment on their performance as a Director to be discussed with the Chair.</p> <p>The Chair asked Directors to consider what they felt their priorities were from the action plan and what they needed to do to work towards achieving these priorities. The Chair will then have a brief discussion with each Director via email/phone to agree targets.</p> <p>The Chair added that the role of the Link Director was the key to ensure good governance across the MAT.</p> <p>ACTION 11.1: Directors to choose 2/3 priorities from action plan for personal improvement as a Director to be discussed with Chair.</p>

The Chair asked Directors to comment on the following question: -

‘What do you think would make your role in the meetings run more smoothly.’

HC suggested links on the Agenda to the documentation.

The Clerk suggested the documents were listed in a separate column on the agenda with a link to each document in the Drive.

ACTION 11.2: Clerk to add links to documents listed on the agenda.

HM suggested a financial slide be prepared for each school to summarise the position.

DN referred to each schools’ performance data.

He asked if Directors should be analysing the data or was this the role of the LGBs.

The Chair replied that this could be done via a Curriculum Sub Committee which would have an overview of the performance data. The second option was for Link Directors to ensure the LGBs had interrogated the data thoroughly.

HM asked what the key metrics for performance data were.

The CEO replied that the key metrics in secondary schools were the projected Progress 8 score and progress in core subjects. In primary the progress at the end of KS1 and KS2 were the key indicators in reading, writing and maths (phonics in KS1).

He added that the role of the Directors was to ensure they had an understanding of what was happening in each of the schools and take action if there were any issues. He agreed with the Chair on the role of LGBs, monitored by the Link Director.

HC raised a concern regarding the time required to carry out the Link Director role including reading the reports/minutes produced. She said it would be quicker to attend all the meetings.

She felt reading all the documents duplicated the work when there was an executive summary for Directors to understand the headline data etc. in each school.

The CEO agreed but added the pandemic had halted the reporting of headline data.

The Chair restated that the role of the Link Director was to ensure the LGBs were interrogating the data. However, she did not feel this was being shared sufficiently in the Directors’ meetings and reports. This should provide a second layer of evidence to back up the CEO reports on progress.

LW said she had found the suggested questions for Chairs of LGBs provided by the Chair to be very helpful and provides a focus for the monitoring of the LGBs each term.

The Chair agreed and suggested that Link Directors fed back to the Board the headlines from their link school.

There were no further comments or questions.

The Chair asked Directors to consider forming a Curriculum Sub Committee for discussion in a future meeting.

12	Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link reports • CoG report • Training report • Recruitment • Strategic Planning
	Link Reports Bosworth HC reported that she had spoken, as a group, to the Chairs of the LGB, Teaching and Learning Committee and Stakeholders Committee. She made the following points: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategic planning day had been discussed. The feeling was that the SLT had already decided on the agenda. • The Academy do use the strategic planning wheel to formulate agendas for the committees and the SIDP (School Improvement Development Plan). They felt the SIDP did help to steer questions in the meetings. HC said she would write up the report for uploading. CG stated he had recently uploaded a report on his attendance at the Countesthorpe LGB meeting. He added that the update report from the Chair, provided for the new Chair of the Countesthorpe LGB was very helpful and he felt this might be useful for the other LGBs. The COO agreed that this had been very useful in the LGB meeting to update Governors on the work of the Trust. The Chair said she had raised a Trust report to LGBs at the Chairs of Governors meeting. The suggestions received were: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of collaboration between schools across the MAT. • Update on key issues across the MAT. • Celebrating success across the MAT The Chair added that the feeling was that LGBs wanted to feel part of something and she felt strongly that this should be delivered. ACTION 12.1: Chair to write a termly update for LGBs to be issued through Link Directors for discussion as an agenda item. There were no comments or questions.
13	Future agenda items
	Finance Policy Strategic Planning MAT development Curriculum Committee discussion

14	Identification of Confidential Items and Actions
	Nothing
15	CEO pay scale.
	<p>The CEO left the meeting for this item.</p> <p>The proposals from the Pay Committee on the CEO's Performance Management outcomes and pay award were approved unanimously.</p>
16	Any Other Business
	<p>The Chair asked Directors if they agreed to be consulted by email regarding any training proposed in the immediate future.</p> <p>This was agreed.</p>
	Next meeting
	Directors meeting 10/5/21 Finance meeting 21/6/21
MINUTES AGREED & SIGNED	