

Minutes of a meeting of the LiFE Multi Academy Trust Board of Trustees
held at Bosworth Academy
on Monday 4 October 2021
commencing at 6.00 p.m.

Present

Liz Warren (Chair)

Sue Dunford
Iain Kinnis
Liam McDonagh
Chris Parkinson (Chief Executive)
Andy Smith

In Attendance

Sarah Mayes (Director of Finance)
Chris Tweedale (Director of Governance)
Gareth Williams (Deputy CEO & Executive Headteacher Countesthorpe Academy)

Stuart McDonough (Clerk to the meeting)

Minutes		Action
1	Welcome, introductions and apologies	All to note
1.1	The Chair welcomed all present to the meeting including Sue Dunford, attending her first meeting since her appointment as Trustee (6 September 2021). All present introduced themselves to Ms Dunford who, at the invitation of the Chair, summarised her professional experience and background.	
1.2	Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Hatle Mehta (prior commitment). The Chair and Clerk had not heard from Darren Brumby or Hazel Cole and would follow up.	Chair
2	Declarations of Interest	All to note
2.1	LMcD declared a direct non-financial interest in agenda item 5(b) (Minute 10 below) by virtue of his employment, in which capacity he was engaged in a project developing a software system that, when available, would be a launched as a direct competitor to Governor Hub. He acknowledged that at some point in the future, he would welcome the opportunity to invite the Board to consider this system but emphasised that at this stage, he had no wish to or intention of discouraging Trustees from consideration of Governor Hub which he recognised had merit that could offer immediate benefits to the Trust.	
2.2	He offered the Board free access to the product in return for consultation but recognised that a system was needed now.	

<p>3</p> <p>3.1</p> <p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p>	<p>Proposed Reporting Formats for Trustees : Finance</p> <p>Further to discussion at the previous meeting, Sarah Mayes, Director of Finance (SM), presented on-screen a draft proposed revised spreadsheet report format for the Board Finance Report. A copy of the report had been circulated with the agenda and papers for the meeting.</p> <p>SM explained that the report would</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - provide the high level strategic financial summary and related KPIs requested by Trustees; - ultimately be linked directly to the Integrated Curriculum Financial Plan (ICFP) of the Trust together with the detail (available under the sub-tabs to be provided in the report) for each school; and - for the future, be presented to the December and Spring meetings of the Trust Board. The Finance Committee would continue to receive a financial update report to each meeting, issues from which would be reported to the Board by the Committee Chair. Variances to the agreed budget would be reported to the Committee and where necessary, drawn to the attention of the Board. <p>A detailed discussion took place during which Trustees stated that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - whilst they accepted that the Executive should be authorised to manage the Trust Budget including required variances, it was important that Trustees were advised of those variances and the reasons for them; - whilst it was also appropriate that the Finance Committee received and had oversight of more detailed financial reports and that higher level strategic financial reports were brought to the Board, they considered that currently the Trust Board was overly reliant on reports from the Chair of that Committee. Their strong preference was to receive from the Executive a high level Financial Report supported by appropriate narrative; - it was important that Financial Reports to the Board struck an appropriate balance between strategic and operational reporting. Trustees accepted that operational considerations should not normally be brought to the Board but clarification of the mechanisms through which variations to Budget were approved and whereby Trustees had the facility to review the detailed Budget, should they so wish, was required; - it was not clear how much freedom Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) were afforded to vary their approved budgets before a report was brought to the Trust Board seeking approval to those variances and/or to a revised budget. Neither was it clear, where additional expenditure was required, how this was afforded or how it was to be funded; and - the current arrangements for the timings of Financial Reports to the Board required review. It was not clear at what point during the Budget preparation process Trustees could influence the future Budget. 	<p>All to note</p>
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3.4

In response, the Chief Executive (CEO) and the Chair of Finance Committee (AS) advised that –

- a) the mechanisms referred to by Trustees were in place : the current operational model of the Trust ensured that through his regular three weekly coaching meetings with individual Heads, the CEO would be made aware of any significant planned or requested variation to a school Budget. The expectation was that, if there was a risk of over expenditure or additional resource being required at any school, the reasons for this would have been identified and captured in the Risk Register. If a school was delivering as it should, the risk would be managed effectively. If it was not, and additional expenditure was needed, this would be discussed at the meetings with the CEO and referred to the Finance Committee, the decision or recommendation from which would be brought to the Trust Board. Examples of this were described;
- b) assurance to Trustees regarding the Budget was also currently provided through the reports from the Finance Committee Chair. It was acknowledged that it may be more appropriate for the report of the Chair to be supported by a high level report from Officers provided this addressed strategic, not operational issues;
- c) Finance Committee membership included LGB finance leads. This, and circulation of monthly management accounts, which were also available to all Trustees on the Board Google Drive, ensured and provided opportunity for effective financial monitoring;
- d) importantly, a cross Trust strategic reporting format was currently being developed in consultation with school Heads. When finalised, this RAG rated report would include individual assessments of the progress of each school against the Trust Strategic Plan and their School Improvement Plans including Integrated Curriculum Financial Planning (ICFP). The CEO suggested that a decision on the final form of the Financial Report to the Board be deferred pending completion of this overarching report, thus ensuring that the two complemented each other and provided the strategic oversight required by Trustees; and
- e) in considering reporting formats, Trustees should bear in mind that significant autonomy was afforded to each school. Consequently, variation between schools in use of their budget were to be expected. There was little risk of major over expenditure because of the mechanisms described above. It was important that, rather than focus on detailed budgets, Trustees developed a good understanding of how budgets varied to reflect the local circumstances of each school. The CEO explained this by reference to ICFP and staffing / cost ratios. He suggested it may be appropriate to support Trustees by arranging a training session to explain these issues.

3.5

As regards the timings of financial reporting to the Board, following explanation and discussion of the Budget preparation process including at LGB level, **Trustees agreed** that, for the future, draft budget proposals be brought to the Spring meeting of the Trust Board, thus affording

<p>3.6</p>	<p>Trustees the opportunity to influence the Budget, with a final Budget report to be brought to the summer meeting for formal approval prior to submission to ESFA.</p> <p>Following further discussion the Board</p> <p>Resolved that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) consideration of the proposed revised format of the Board Financial Report be deferred pending completion of the overarching Strategic Board Report currently being developed (Minute 11 below); ii) subject to (i) above, Financial Reports be brought to the Spring and Summer meetings of the Board as discussed at 3.4 above; and iii) the Chief Executive be requested to arrange a training session for Trustees as suggested at 3.3 (e) above. 	<p>CEO/ SH</p> <p>CEO/ SH</p> <p>CEO</p>
<p>4</p> <p>4.1</p> <p>4.2</p>	<p>Impact of Increased Energy Costs</p> <p>Arising from discussion at Minute 3 above, a Trustee asked</p> <p>Will Budgets be under pressure from increasing utility costs – does this represent an emerging risk?</p> <p>In response, SM advised that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) increasing energy costs would impact on Budgets across the Trust. A review of this was currently underway; b) limited one year fixed term energy supply contracts were in place for Bosworth and Winstanley schools only; c) recent Broker advice suggested that further increases in energy costs were likely and that prices would remain high for perhaps two years, after which they might be expected to reduce; and d) increased provision for energy costs across the Trust would be included in future Budgets. <p>The Board noted the position.</p>	<p>All to note</p>
<p><i>SM withdrew from the meeting (6.35 p.m.)</i></p>		
<p>5</p> <p>5.1</p>	<p>Minutes of the Previous Meeting : 6 September 2021</p> <p>The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record, with a final adjustment, for signature by the Chair.</p>	<p>All to note</p> <p>Chair</p>

<p>6</p> <p>6.1</p> <p>6.2</p> <p>6.3</p> <p>6.4</p>	<p>Matters Arising from the Minutes</p> <p><u>Minute 4 – Safeguarding Training</u></p> <p>Trustees noted that Emma Brown had made arrangements for Safeguarding Training but this had not been well attended. This may have been due to internal communication issues.</p> <p>The Chair agreed to review the position, including communication issues, outside of the meeting.</p> <p><u>Minute 7 – Appointment of Trustees</u></p> <p>In response to a question from the Chair, the Director of Governance (CT)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - confirmed that as provided by Trust Articles, the maximum number of Trustees (nine) were now in place. However, Mr. Kinnis had advised that he wished to return to his role as Member only; and - accordingly, arrangements were now underway with Nurole (Board level recruitment Agency) with a view to identifying potential candidates for appointment to the Board. The Brief to the Agency had emphasised the importance of diversity in terms of candidates being representative of the population served by the Trust and with regard to the skills required (i.e. HR and/or Legal background rather than an educationalist). <p>Replying to a further question from a Trustee, the Chair and CEO advised that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - subsequent to the previous meeting, because of the importance Trustees had attached to the diversity and skills of potential candidates, the Chair had requested the CEO to commission Nurole to support the recruitment process; and - following e-mail consultation of Trustees by the Chair, the CEO had commissioned the Agency subject to revised terms under which they had been paid 50% of their fee for identification of potential candidates, the balance to be paid subject to an appointment being made and to the person appointed remaining with the Trust for a minimum of 12 months. <p>The CEO advised that, in his view, the importance of recruitment of high calibre candidates to the Board, taking into account diversity and the capabilities of candidates in offering appropriate challenge and supporting development of LGBs in the manner required, should not be under-estimated. The support of the independent search agent would make a valuable contribution to this.</p>	<p>All to note</p> <p>Chair</p>
<p>7</p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p>	<p>Trust Risk Register</p> <p>The Trust Risk Register had been made available to Trustees together with the agenda and papers for the meeting in the confidential Google Drive (governor) folder. Trustees had been requested to review the Register and to notify Executive colleagues of any queries/questions prior to the meeting.</p> <p>A wide ranging discussion took place during which reference was made to agenda item 4 (b) (Recommended current position on Trust Growth).</p>	<p>All to note</p>

7.3	<p>Queries and questions raised by Trustees included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a suggestion that greater clarity around the expectations of the purpose of the Register would be beneficial to Trustees' understanding of the risks identified, the mitigations in place or required and the positive opportunities that mitigations might present; - inclusion in the Register of the risk associated with the possible admission of two additional schools to the Trust, currently being considered; - the potential risk to the sustainability of the current assurance Model (as described at Minute 3.3. above) as the Trust expanded; - a suggestion that risk related to governance should be more prominently represented in the Register, having regard to the potential variability in the performance of individual schools/strength of LGBs including potential risks arising from new admissions to the Trust; and - the possibility of establishing a separate Register to identify Opportunities related to risk mitigations. 	
7.4	<p>In response, the CEO stated that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the current assurance model would be sustainable with ten schools but possibly not with (say) 15, unless suitably qualified and experienced senior staff were available to support him and the Trust in other areas. Examples of this were given; - a possible option to consider in term of opportunities arising from risk would be development of an Opportunities Register linked directly to the Risk Register. (Trustees supported this suggestion). The CEO explained that risk associated with possible admission of the two schools referred to by the questioner was low (they were both Ofsted rated Good). This presented opportunities through, for example, the support of DfE / RSC (whose approval would be needed to progress the admissions). This represented an opportunity to exploit the good reputation of the Trust to attract or seek the support of DfE for admission of other Primary Schools. Similarly, the aspirations for Trust Growth represented both a risk and an opportunity: local opportunities were available but risk arose from local competition and the fact that there was no indication as to when the local opportunities would arise and further, that the Trust could not influence the timing of this; and - the risk to governance arising from the variability in the performance of individual schools/strength of each LGB was acknowledged. Issues around this were discussed, including the potential risk that weak governance, or governance that was perceived to be weak, represented to schools notwithstanding that their educational performance might be Good. In that regard, Trustees noted that the governance review and related work being undertaken by the Director of Governance was a direct response to that risk and that this should be acknowledged in risk mitigations. 	<p>CEO</p> <p>CEO</p>
7.5	<p>Trustees supported a suggestion by the Chair that Trustees undertake a SWOT analysis, perhaps in January / February 2022, this to include a further review of financial reporting arrangements and development of an Opportunities Register linked to the Risk Register and to future financial planning.</p>	<p>CEO/ Chair</p>

<p>7.6</p> <p>7.7</p> <p>7.8</p>	<p>In relation to future Growth opportunities, a Trustee asked</p> <p>What is the approach of the Trust to this?</p> <p>The CEO advised that currently the Trust Growth Plan envisaged admission of the two schools referred to above. The interest of the Trust in wishing to be considered for admission of two further schools (planned for Lubbethorpe) had been registered but currently, there was no indication of a timescale for these and there was likely to be competition from other MATs. Beyond that, there was no Trust Marketing Plan or active effort to attract or to identify potential additional schools. However, if an approach was received from a feeder Primary this would of course be discussed. There may be a more immediate opportunity for growth through provision of an additional Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) facility for the National Forest Hub. This possibility would be explored.</p> <p>A Trustee enquired as to the nature of the strategic risk arising from the educational impact of Covid.</p> <p>The CEO advised that Ofqual had confirmed that with the exception of Art and Design, formal examinations in all subjects would be held in summer 2022. The outcomes from the examinations posed a risk to the Trust by virtue of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the uncertainty as to the educational impact that Covid would have on student learning and therefore examination performance and how this would compare locally and nationally, most notably arising from a decision by DfE to publish national league tables related to the summer 2022 examinations outcomes; and b) what he anticipated would be significant variations in 2022 Trust school outcomes compared to those of 2021. Whilst he was confident that the approach adopted by the Trust for the summer 2021 Teacher assessed grades (TAGs) had been valid and robust, that curriculum design supported learning and that catch-up arrangements during the current year would be effective, he was also conscious that formal examinations would reveal the very different learning characteristics of Trust schools. He illustrated this by reference to Braunston Frith and Winstanley schools (where it was clear that students responded more positively to assessed course work than they did to formal examinations) and to Countesthorpe school, where the reverse was true. His concern was that outcome variations would be captured in national league tables but little if any allowance would be made for these factors or for national variations in Covid impacts. <p>In response to a question regarding Age Range Change (ARC), the CEO advised that this was a challenging and difficult project but that it was proceeding well. Clear evidence of improvements in outcomes were emerging but those schools in category remained at risk such that ARC should currently be viewed as a Work in Progress.</p>	<p>CEO</p>
<p>8</p> <p>8.1</p>	<p>Presentation : LiFE Governance Strategy</p> <p>CT gave a Presentation to the Board outlining</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the background to development of Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs); 	<p>All to note</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - development of the Regulatory Framework governing MATs, including the steadily increasing requirements of DfE, ESFA and others for compliance and effective governance within Trust governance structures; - the options open to the Trust Board in terms of the LiFE MAT governance structure, the assumption being (in terms of future LiFE governance strategy) that the Board was committed to a three tier Model in which Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) played a key role, subject always to the degree of delegation afforded to them by the Board, in delivery of the Vision, Values, Ethos and continuous school improvement objectives of the Trust; - the governance implications of the three tier Model, including the respective responsibilities and accountabilities of Members, Trustees and Local Governors; - the issues to which the respective responsibilities of Members, Trustees and Local Governors gave rise in terms of effective communication, clarity of roles, schemes of delegations and the mechanisms through which each tier, and including the Executive and Heads of school, were held to account for effective performance including effective governance; and - the organisational and governance challenges to which the rapid expansion of the Trust gave rise and the importance of ensuring, and being in a position to evidence, that Trust governance was fit for purpose, accountable and compliant into the future. <p>8.2 Expanding on these themes, and in response to questions from Trustees, CT gave examples of the governance challenges facing the Trust. He referred Trustees to his report supporting his Presentation (Minute 9 below) which he explained was based on his findings of his review of current Trust governance arrangements and his knowledge of the progressive tightening of governance requirements of DfE/ESFA, including for example the 2021 Academy Trust Handbook. The Programme of work proposed in his report would addressing those challenges.</p> <p>8.3 CT assured Trustees that, whilst in his view, the actions recommended in his report were necessary if the Trust was to be in a position to evidence that governance standards, practice and procedures were in line with DfE/ESFA requirements, the actions must be, and would be, consistent with the objectives of the Trust in seeking to encourage vibrant and diverse approaches to school improvement (i.e. the actions proposed would seek to ensure and support effective governance without constraining initiative or diversity of provision).</p>	
<p>9</p> <p>9.1</p>	<p>LIFE Governance Strategy : Discussion</p> <p>Following CT’s Presentation, Trustees discussed the supporting report which was in three parts:</p> <p>Part 1 : setting the context in which the need to review Trust governance in light of rapid growth and development had emerged;</p> <p>Part 2: Appendix A – providing a proposed Programme of Work for a Governance Improvement Plan; and</p> <p>Part 3 : Appendix B – setting out a Framework from which LGB Schemes of Delegations could be developed. This document referenced the importance of flexibility and differentiated LGB Terms of reference that would recognise the differing and changing phases of improvement achieved by each school.</p>	<p>All to note</p>

9.2

During a detailed debate, the following issues were discussed:

- the potential solution to effective governance communication and oversight (and streamlining of governance administration) offered by Governor Hub (Minute 10 below).

In that regard, at the invitation of the Chair, LMCD explained that the software solution being developed by his employer and which would compete with Governor Hub (and in which he had declared a direct non-financial interest (Minute 2 above)) was probably 12 months from becoming available for initial release. A key difference between this product and Governor Hub would be the ability of the system to offer data (outcomes) reporting. LMCD reiterated that he was not advocating the product or opposed to early implementation of Governor Hub which he again acknowledged had merit and could support improvements to current Trust governance arrangements;

- the significance of the proposed Programme for Governance Improvement. If approved this would be a Change Management Project that would impact directly on LGBs and other governance arrangements across the Trust. Accordingly, whilst the case in favour of the Programme may be compelling, a more detailed discussion by Trustees of the proposals and the implications of those proposals was desirable before approval (or otherwise) was given by the Board : it was important that Trustees fully understood the implications of implementation of the proposals and that they could be assured that the proposals would support Trust Vision and Values;

- the Trust three-tier Model of Governance.

Trustees **agreed that** the three tier Model was consistent with the Vision and Values of the Trust and that, in order to sustain and support this, communication and consistency between the tiers must be improved. Key issues in this respect included the importance of rigour in LGB oversight by the Board, the role of Members as guardians of Trust governance, the need to ensure flexibility and differentiated terms of reference for LGBs and therefore to develop criteria by which to set differentiation and clarify LGB roles.

- LGB Terms of Reference

The importance of differentiation and clarification of LGB roles in relation to recent and future admissions to the Trust was emphasised. Trustees acknowledged that whilst a common Framework within which LGBs operated was required, a range of possible options must be considered. The key objective was to ensure that the Framework enabled LGBs to thrive and did not stifle innovation or discourage potential new admissions because of a perceived “one size fits all” approach. Examples of three possible differentiated Models of LGB delegations/autonomy and the ability for an LGB to progress (or regress) through these were discussed. The importance of establishing clear criteria against which to assess and monitor each Model was acknowledged. Trustees also acknowledged that whatever Model of delegation applied, the Board would retain ultimate responsibility for the performance of individual schools and therefore that effective oversight and assurance of LGB performance was essential.

9.3

The Chair **PROPOSED** that, rather than take a firm view on the recommendations set out in the report, and having regard to the discussion at Minute 9.2 above, it would be appropriate to establish a Working Group to discuss these and related issues and the proposed Programme of Work. The remit of the Group would be to satisfy themselves and provide assurance to the

<p>9.4</p>	<p>Board that the proposals would bring consistency, not constraint, and would support the Vision and Values of the Trust.</p> <p>Supporting this proposal, the Board</p> <p>Resolved that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) a Working Group comprising the Chair, Messrs Kinnis, Smith, the CEO and a representative(s) of the LGBs be appointed to review the proposed Programme of Governance Improvements, including the suggested Framework of LGB delegations and the issues discussed at Minute 9.2 above, a report and recommendations to be brought to the 6 December 2021 meeting of the Board; and ii) the Director of Governance be requested to make the arrangements for the meeting of the Working Party, to take place during early November 2021. 	<p>Chair/ IK/AS/ CEO LGB rep(s)</p> <p>CT</p>
<p>10</p> <p>10.1</p> <p>10.2</p>	<p>Presentation : Governor Hub</p> <p>The Clerk to the meeting (SAMcD*) gave a Presentation / demonstration of the functionality of the Governor Hub system explaining</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - that the system was wholly GDPR compliant and secure in terms of confidentiality; - that the system was well proven and the software of choice for many Local Authorities, MATs, SATs, Clerking agencies and maintained schools. The system was also popular with auditors and Ofsted Inspectors because of the ease of access to governance information that it provided, examples of which were given; - the functionality of the system which was “user friendly” and supportive of Member, Trustee, Governor and Executive governance practice and procedures, providing a developing and secure archive of Trust governance. He emphasised that, in his view to make best use of the system it must be configured to meet the requirements and perspectives of users (i.e. Trustees and Governors) and the potential advantages of this in terms of ease of access to governance documentation, streamlined procedures, communications and governance assurance; and - the potential of the system to streamline administration and support efficiencies through use of the functionality offered by, for example, removing the necessity for individual School Business Managers annually to identify, download and provide copies of LGB minutes to auditors. Efficient and streamlined governance administration was also supported through auto-prompts of expiry of terms of office, reminders of Policy renewal dates, on line facilities for signing minutes and confirming completion of declarations of interest / acceptance of KCSiE etc, Trustee and governor training records. The system generated reports and records for these and many other governance functions. <p>In reply to questions SAMcD stated that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - existing documentation could be migrated onto the system; - the annual cost of implementing the system across the Trust was £1100 per annum; 	<p>All to note</p>

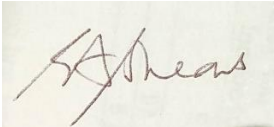
<p>10.3</p> <p>10.4</p> <p>10.5</p> <p>10.6</p> <p>10.7</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the functionality of the system included discreet confidential areas to which access was limited to designated individuals. Conversely, information could be made available to all those registered on the system. He illustrated this by reference to a discreet area that might be required for e.g. a confidential process being considered by a small group or establishment on the system of a library of Trust Policies which could be made available in one place accessible to all; and - subject to timely provision to him of the information required to configure the system, he would require approximately one week to establish the system such that it was fully operational and available to all Trust Members, Trustees, Governors and designated staff. <p>A discussion took place around implementation of the system and the extent to which if approved, it should be imposed or offered to LGBs. Trustees agreed that the preferred option was to secure voluntary “buy in” to the system.</p> <p>SAMcD stated that, in his experience, whilst in a limited number of instances there may be initial suspicion or resistance to installation of the system, once users appreciated the advantages and simplicity of Governor Hub they welcomed and embraced it. In reply to a question from a Trustee he stated that, in his view:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - if the Board agreed that Governor Hub should be the preferred system for management of governance across the Trust, provided the purpose/objective of implementing it was explained individually to each LGB, it was unlikely that there would be strong objections to it; and - were the Board to agree to pilot the system with a view to formal evaluation in (say) twelve months, it would not be reasonable for any LGB or individual to refuse to participate in a pilot project. <p>CT suggested that, if the Board was minded to support implementation of Governor Hub, he and SAMcD would meet with each of the LGBs to explain and demonstrate the system with a view to assuring Governors and securing their cooperation in a pilot project.</p> <p>Following further discussion it was formally PROPOSED and SECONDED that Governor Hub be implemented across the Trust (as discussed at Minute 10.4 and 10.5 above) for a pilot period of around 12 months, following which the system be evaluated and reviewed with a view to further development or otherwise.</p> <p>Resolved unanimously that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Governor Hub be adopted for a 12 month pilot project as proposed at Minute 10.6 above; and ii) the Director of Governance be authorised to take all necessary action to implement the system across the Trust, particularly through presenting to, and engaging LGBs with the benefits of the system, taking every effort for it not to feel a forced implementation. 	<p>CT/ SAMcD</p>
<p><i>*Clerk's note</i></p>	<p><i>SAMcD assured the Board that he had no direct or indirect interest in or relationship with Governor Hub. His recommendation in favour of the system arose from his previous experience of installation and use of it for other MATs/schools.</i></p>	

11	Proposed Reporting Formats for Trustees : Strategic Planning and Accountability	All to note
11.1	Further to discussion at Minute 3 above, with the aid of on-screen Presentation, the CEO reminded Trustees of the strategic Values and Vision to which the Trust committed on its' establishment in 2016 and the practical implications of this in terms of the core commitment to provision of quality education, shared accountability and community engagement.	
11.2	<p>He explained that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the core commitment of the Trust was underpinned by Organisational Design Principles relating to Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment. These principles were intrinsically linked to and developed around the Vision, Values, Knowledge, Skills and Attributes of the Trust and manifested themselves in the ways in which the Trust operated in terms of encouraging innovation, supporting and facilitating school improvement and developing the organisational infrastructure needed to sustain these. In his view, to be effective, strategic reporting to the Board must focus on delivery of the core commitment rather than on detailed operational activities. This approach was in line with previous discussion of the Board regarding the format of reports to Trustees; - the importance of strategic discussion and reporting to the Board was recognised and accepted. In considering a strategic reporting format, it was important to be aware that the strategies needed to support the effective operation and delivery of the aspirations of the Trust were captured in the Strategic Planning Wheel, copies of which were circulated at the meeting. The Wheel comprised a number of segments each of which summarised the key activities being undertaken by, and the objectives of, the Trust in relation to Innovation, School Improvement and development of Outstanding Infrastructure, all of which supported the central theme of the Trust that "Nobody is successful unless we are all successful". Practical examples of the activity captured in segments of the Wheel were outlined. In addition to summarising the over-arching Design Principles of the Trust, the Wheel provided the basis from which each school was required to develop their own Strategic Planning Wheel aligned with and mapped to Trust Vision, Values, aspiration and objectives for delivery of school improvement; - each of the segments of the Wheel, at Trust and at School level, were supported by detailed KPIs, progress in relation to which was monitored and measured in discussion with leadership of individual schools, who were required to assess and report progress against the actions set out in their Wheel to the Executive and to their respective LGBs; - accordingly, a high level reporting format drawn from the Strategic Wheel was being developed. This was currently being finalised in discussion with Heads of School. A draft of the report was presented on screen. When completed, the report would <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide high level strategic assurance to the Board developed from the detailed termly assessments of Heads of School as overseen by the Executive; • present to the Board a RAG rated summary assessment, measured against key KPIs, of progress against the individual Development Plans of each school, including key school improvement targets. This would enable Trustees to review the overall performance of the Trust and the performance of individual schools against their detailed KPIs and by comparison to each other. The information for each school would be captured on a single page (illustrated on screen). Where progress appeared to be below expectation or causing concern, Trustees would be able to explore in detail the reasons for this and the actions being taken to address the 	

<p>11.3</p>	<p>matter: the high level Board report would be supported by access to the detailed individual LGB and other reports that would become available on Governor Hub.</p> <p>In reply to questions from Trustees, the CEO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - illustrated on-screen how the high level RAG rated report would relate to the Strategic Wheel, facilitate comparison between schools and alert Trustees to whole school performance levels and/or performance in relation to individual KPIs or activities (i.e. Green = on target/performing well/Amber = possible cause for concern/or under performance/Red = cause for concern); - explained that the report would be supported by a list of key KPIs rather than a detailed narrative report; - agreed that the nature of the report was primarily subjective but would also be quantified by reference to e.g. outcomes data and further, the rationale for the termly assessment of each Head would be subject to explanation /justification to the Executive generally and to him personally through the assurance process described at Minute 3 above; - advised that, for the reasons discussed at Minutes 3 and 7 above, the report would not include specific financial information on individual schools because the RAG rating would alert Trustees to developing concerns at each school. As previously explained, risks related to each school would be identified in the Risk Register and where required, resources made available to the school to address those risks. Where a RAG rating was Amber or Red, Trustees would require an explanation of this including whether or not finance or other resource was a concern. If necessary, discussion could take place with Trustees around the need for additional resource and/or the effective use of resource. This would be more meaningful than presenting a statement of the current financial position of each school which would not of itself provide an indication of performance in terms of delivery of school and Trust objectives; - confirmed that, once the approach to high level reporting had been established and embedded, new entrants to the Trust would be required to subscribe to and support the system; and - assured Trustees of his intention to bring a finalised draft of the report to the December 2021 meeting of the Trust Board for approval. 	
<p>11.4</p>	<p>Trustees welcomed the approach and the further explanation of the CEO as to how it would operate in practice. They agreed that the high level focus of the report would support strategic discussion. Further consideration of the arrangements whereby LINK Trustees were allocated to a school/LGB would be required, this to include clarification of the purpose of that role and the sustainability of it as the Trust expanded. (See Minute 13 below)</p>	<p>CEO Trustees</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>Performance : Summer Outcomes 2021</p>	<p>All to note</p>
<p>12.1</p>	<p>Further to Minute 6 of the previous meeting, the Board received and noted the oral report of the CEO who</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - updated Trustees on the further analysis of summer 2021 Teacher assessed outcomes (TAGs). He reiterated his view (Minute 7.7 above) that the TAG process adopted across the Trust had been robust. Following a comparison of those outcomes with SISRA data, 	

	<p>it appeared that Trust 2021 outcomes were broadly comparable to those of summer 2019;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - advised that outcomes at Winstanley school had increased significantly. This had been expected and was due in part to improvement measures taken at the school but was also a reflection of the fact that Winstanley students responded better to the assessment method than they did to formal examination. It was likely that 2022 outcomes would fall back to around minus 0.4; - outcomes at Ashby were difficult to assess because the school did not subscribe to SISRA. The school did subscribe to the ALPs data analysis system which provided forecasts of expected grades rather than the national comparison provided by SISRA; - KS5 and KS4 outcomes at Countesthorpe suggested a score of minus 0.4 but this could be expected to improve with the return to formal examinations. Students at this school were known to respond better to examinations than their counterparts at Winstanley, an indication of the impact of the contrasting social backgrounds of the two groups. However, for both groups the impact of Covid would remain an unknown and concerning factor; and - KS2 Teach Assessment outcomes (2 schools) were available to Trustees on Google Drive. 	
<p>13</p> <p>13.1</p> <p>13.2</p>	<p>Trustee Roles and Role Allocation</p> <p>Further to Minute 7 of the previous meeting, copies of a Discussion Paper prepared by the Chair setting out the broad expectation of Governors and Trustees were tabled. The Chair suggested that the remit of the Working Party appointed at Minute 9 above be extended to include consideration of the Paper, including in particular the LGB LINK role of a Trustee.</p> <p>During the discussion that followed it was</p> <p>Agreed that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) an LGB LINK Trustee be appointed to each school; ii) the Chair would circulate a proposed allocation of Trustees to each LGB, Trustees to advise the Chair of their agreement or otherwise of the proposed allocations. (LMcD to be the Braunstone Frith LINK and IKi to be the Ashby LINK); iii) in addition to the Discussion Paper provided by the Chair, the Board Level Strategic Wheel would provide a focus for developing proposals for the role expectations of Governors and Trustees; iv) a standard reporting format for LGB LINK Trustees was required as a means of capturing good practice and providing a framework for reports to the Board. Ideally this would be made available on line; v) respective roles should be agreed and documented to ensure consistency across the Trust and to support and guide those new to office; and vi) it was important that guidance in relation to the Trustee LGB LINK role <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • made clear the strategic nature of the Trustee role and supported a coherent 	<p>All to note</p> <p>Chair Chair/LMcD Trustees</p>

13.3	<p>consistent approach by Trustees to engagement with and their oversight of LGBs by reference to delivery by each school of Trust Vision and Values and School Improvement in the context of the Board level Strategic Wheel;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilitated a meaningful role, not a “tick box” approach, helped to identify Trust-wide issues and conveyed the wish of the Board to support LGBs and to improve communication across the Trust; and • identified boundaries between the respective roles of Trustees and Governors and, for example, provided Trustees with a brief summary of prompts for discussion rather than a standard list of questions to ask at LGB meetings. <p>Resolved that –</p> <p>the Working Party established at Minute 9 above be requested to consider items (iii) – (vi) above.*</p> <p><i>*Trustees agreed that the report of the Working Party on these matters could be referred to January 2022 meeting.</i></p>	
14 14.1 14.2	<p>Chief Executive Performance Management Appraisal : Appointment of Panel</p> <p>Resolved that –</p> <p>Ms Dunford and Messrs Smith and McDonagh be appointed to the Chief Executive Performance Appraisal Panel.</p> <p>Noted that –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the dates of the Panel meetings had yet to be agreed; b) the Panel would be supported by the independent Advisor previously agreed by the Board; and c) the usual arrangement was to hold an informal meeting of the Panel at which the formal approach would be agreed. This meeting would be followed by the formal meeting at which the CEO and the appointed Advisor would be present. 	<p>All to note</p> <p>SD/AS/ LMcD</p>
15 15.1 15.2	<p>Dates of Future meetings</p> <p>The next meeting of the Trust Board was confirmed as 6 December 2021 – 6.00 p.m.</p> <p>Following comments from Trustees, CT agreed to review the dates of the meetings listed on the agenda and to circulate a corrected schedule of meetings.</p>	<p>All to note</p> <p>CT</p>
<p><i>The meeting concluded at 8.45 p.m.</i></p>		

Chair 

Liz Warren

Date 6.12.2021

samcd.7.10.21agreed with Chair.11.10.21