

Minutes

Title:	LiFE Multi Academy Trust Board Meeting - Directors		
Date:	Monday 11 th January 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) (arrived where stated)	✓	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	✓ remote				

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> <p>Resolved: the apologies were accepted.</p>
2	Declarations of Interest
	None
3	Urgent Items for AOB agreed prior to the meeting.
	COO Report
4	Minutes and Matters Arising from the meeting on 7 December 2020.
	<p>The minutes had been circulated.</p> <p>Resolved: The minutes of the meeting on 7 December 2020 and the confidential minutes, were accepted as a true record to be signed by the Chair.</p> <p>Matters arising</p>

	<p>The Chair asked if a date had been set to complete the CEO's Performance Management. ASM said it had not. He will arrange with HCO to meet to complete the recommendations.</p> <p>Re Item 11 Training: The Chair stated she had postponed the presentation from EBR to 25th January 2021 at the EGM.</p> <p>Re Item 5 Financial Metrics and KPI session: This has also been deferred until 25th January unless the meeting was too long.</p> <p>The Chair reported that Actions had been completed or held over as stated.</p> <p>Action 10.1 Re Countesthorpe and Google Drive: Countesthorpe continue to use Microsoft Teams for meetings. CGA and the new LGB Chair has been unable to join without a Countesthorpe email. This has been referred.</p> <p>The COO, as Executive Head at Countesthorpe said he was working on this. Guests were not allowed to access meetings.</p> <p>The Chair added that the LGB were not using Google Drive to share documents with the Board.</p> <p>Action 12.1: Deferred until after training presentations.</p>
5	<p>Feedback/actions from AGM</p> <p>The CEO said he now understood how to prepare the report for Members, after attending the AGM, without pausing the Directors agenda.</p> <p>He said the five areas for writing the impact report were: -</p> <p>Strategy. Knowledge and Skills. Collaboration. Accountability. Maintaining MAT culture.</p> <p>LWA commented that she would like to know why Directors were asked to be present. She suggested the Member were asked what input they would like from Directors. This would allow Directors to prepare and give examples from Link Schools etc.</p> <p>The Chair responded that this was the first time Directors had been present at the request of IKI, as this was recommended by the NGA. However, no questions were asked of the Directors.</p> <p>She said she will ask him what he would expect from Directors in future.</p> <p>The Chair added that there was much more she was expecting to be asked.</p>
6	<p>Finance Internal Audit Reports</p> <p>ASM said the Internal Audit was carried out by the Local Authority. The reports had been shared on the Drive.</p> <p>Most of the schools have approved the reports via email, as they were not received in time for the Finance Committee Meeting.</p> <p>There were no contentious points in any of the reports.</p> <p>The management responses have been written, as on the reports, and ASM stated he was happy with them.</p> <p>He asked Directors to approve the management responses.</p>

The Chair proposed and HME seconded that the management responses were approved.

This was approved unanimously with a show of hands.

Resolved: The Internal Audit management responses to the recommendations were approved.

LWA said she would find it helpful to have a simple summary overview for all the school's finances.

ASM said he felt this could be done.

HME suggested that it would be useful to go through the high level numbers for each school, together with the key KPI metrics.

The CEO said there would have to be separate consolidated financial positions for the Ashby and the Bosworth Hubs. This is due to the Ashby Hub showing significant surpluses, which will be used during the age range change.

These could also be amalgamated into one overall position, in addition to the two separate ones if Directors wished.

ASM agreed it was better to keep the two Hubs separate.

The Chair asked if there was a risk management policy as this had come up in one of the reports.

ASM replied that the Finance Policy, which was currently being reviewed, does contain a reference to risk management.

He felt there should be more references to financial risks in addition to other risk.

The Chair stated that there was risk management training on 16th March and suggested a Director should attend.

The Chair commented that, for several schools, the reports highlighted the risk registers needed to be more robust. Three of the LGB Chairs have indicated concern about risk registers and that they need guidance/training on them.

She was under the impression that risk registers in schools were fine. She felt this could be another role for Link Directors to monitor risk registers, ask Chairs what the new and emerging risks were and flag up concerns with Chairs and Directors.

The Chair will construct a list of questions for Link Directors to ask Chairs and LGBs each term and items which should be on the LGB Agenda.

Another issue was the pecuniary interests of Governors had not all been recorded.

The CEO added that these pecuniary interest returns did exist but had not been found by the auditors. The reports will be corrected for these issues.

DNO asked if each school should have a risk register similar to the Trusts in Board Meetings

The Chair confirmed this was the case.

DNO added that the local risk registers should be consistent with the Trust risk register.

The Chair agreed and said she was looking for guidance/training on risk registers for LGBs.

ACTION 6.1: Chair will construct agenda for 25th January 2021 for comment.

ACTION 6.2: Chair to identify guidance/training on risk registers.

IMPACT STATEMENT

Link Director monitoring will increase the strength of Local Governance.

Local risk registers will become consistent with the Trust risk register.

7	<p>Schools /Risk register Schools update retesting, cases, confidence and attendance. Curriculum – REAL LiFE curriculum presentation 20th Jan</p>
	<p>The CEO gave the following update: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first week back in school was very challenging. The CEO and Heads had worked over the break to ensure lateral flow testing procedures in place for Jan 11th, 2021. However, schools were then put in lockdown from the start of term. • Schools are open for vulnerable and critical worker children. • Slightly greater numbers are attending the secondary schools than during the first lockdown. These numbers are still manageable and safe. • BF has 120 children attending. A risk assessment will be written to define what a safe number of children on site is. The other primaries have lower numbers at present. • Training was delivered in secondary schools on lateral flow testing, which was well received. Tests will begin in the current week. • A challenge is to increase the number of live lessons through video streaming. In secondary schools over 90% of lessons are being delivered in all year groups. • In the primaries all of the children are able to engage with some live lessons. • Live lessons are much better for the students as there is a sense of attachment and stop the students feeling isolated. Attendance can be mapped. Feedback is easier for staff to a whole class. • Morale is as high as could be expected. <p>CGA asked how the students and staff had responded to the late cancellation of the public exams. The CEO replied that staff were aware it was always a possibility. There were currently some vocational exams continuing, however there is no penalty if a student chooses not to take the exam. The situation will be clearer when the system for moderating assessment in schools is announced.</p> <p>DNO asked if work done during the lockdown will factor into the final grade. The CEO replied that it was likely this will be taken into account.</p> <p>HCO asked if it was known if all families had enough data to access all the lessons. The CEO said parents have been asked to let the schools know if there were any issues with accessing the online content.</p> <p>HCO asked if there were any plans for PE type activities, as the worry was that the students would not exercise themselves. The CEO said it was difficult to monitor if students were actually being active. They were encouraged to do something active every day.</p> <p>IMPACT STATEMENT</p> <p>Live online lessons are engaging the students and contributing to wellbeing.</p> <p>REAL LiFE curriculum presentation 20th Jan 2021</p> <p>The Chair reminded Directors of the event and said all should have had an invitation. She asked Directors to let her know if they were attending.</p> <p>HCO said invitations for the presentation had gone out to all schools except Kingsway and Countesthorpe as there had been no response from the Chairs or Clerks with a list of Governors.</p>

	<p>ACTION 7.1: LMD and CGA to follow up with Chairs.</p> <p>ASM commented that the daily briefings from the CEO were very useful.</p> <p>HCO reported an operational issues with group emails, as the recipients were not listed in the group. The Chair said this should be taken up with Pete Johnson in IT support.</p>
8	<p>MAT development Confidential Item</p>
	<p>See confidential minutes</p> <p>IMPACT STATEMENT</p> <p>Schools joining the MAT are aligned to its vision and values.</p>
9	<p>Governance Link directors Succession planning</p>
	<p>The Chair thanked LWA, ASM and LMD for their feedback as Link Directors.</p> <p>She asked all Link Directors to make plans for contact with the Chairs and LGBs for the spring term. A spring term planner had been shared on the drive to indicate the mandatory and recommended items on the agenda for the spring term LGB meetings.</p> <p>Links should also discuss risk registers with Chairs to discover any issues which required attention. In addition, discuss the use of Strategic Planning Wheels by the LGB.</p> <p>ACTIONS 9.1: Link Directors to look at the spring term planner from LTS and discuss LGB agendas with Chairs. Raise the question of risk registers and strategic planning wheels.</p> <p>Succession planning</p> <p>The Chair said she had discussions with most Directors and had met with ASM, as Vice Chair. The expectation from the Members meeting was that they would not sanction more than two more years for the Chair and Vice Chair but this had not materialised. However, Directors do need to look at succession planning.</p> <p>The discussions between MEV and ASM led to the conclusion that he should not be Vice Chair, as he was unlikely to take the role of Chair in the future and had many other responsibilities.</p> <p>It was felt ASM's primary role should be as Director of Finance, with HME possibly becoming Vice Chair of Finance to move into the Chair role at a later date.</p> <p>ASM was also keen to take on Nursery provision oversight.</p> <p>There was therefore a vacancy for a Vice Chair.</p> <p>The Chair indicated she would rather leave the position open and utilise the skills of the other Directors, with the aim of this becoming a shadowing role in the next academic year.</p> <p>ASM commented that he was happy to retain the finance responsibility for the rest of his term. The position of Vice Chair of finance was required to share the work and for succession planning.</p> <p>He supported HME for this role.</p> <p>HME had lost connection, (reportedly 10 minutes previously)</p> <p>ASM said he would contact HME to discuss.</p>

	<p>LWA commented that the CEO would need a named Vice Chair in the event of MEV not being available. CEO agreed there needed to be a named Vice Chair.</p> <p>The Chair stated that ASM would therefore retain the position nominally, but this could not be a long term solution.</p>
10	Directors Action Plan
	<p>The Clerk stated that the priorities for the action plan had been decided in the last meeting, from Directors responses to the 21 questions. The Chair had listed these with comments and the Clerk was intended to look at action statements and success criteria in each of these priorities. This task had not yet been completed.</p> <p>It was agreed the draft plan would be presented in the next meeting.</p>
11	Any Other Business / Future agenda items
	<p>COO Report</p> <p>The COO referred to the staff survey results at Countesthorpe which had been shared. He stated the results in all the areas had improved since the last survey. He would update the document to ensure the data from previously was available.</p> <p>He gave the following update: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Headteachers Board has approved the opening of the Primary Shine Centre at Kingsway. Children will be admitted from 20th February 2021. • The numbers for the Year 7 intake at Countesthorpe have fallen badly to 135 first choices (188 last year 205 starting). Budgeting will be based on 140. • Faculties will be restructuring and forming a Faculty structure. The TLRs will also be restructured, as there are too many teachers with a TLR. • It is the City intake for students which has dropped in numbers, possibly due to a new school in the City. • Covid has clearly affected the recruitment of children, with prospective parents being unable to visit the school to see the improvements etc. When possible, a new marketing campaign will be run. • In terms of the remote learning only 20 students out of the 1370 did not access the first 4 days of live lessons. <p>There were no questions.</p> <p>The Chair recorded the thanks of the Directors for the excellent work of all staff in the MAT in very difficult circumstances and thanked the CEO for his excellent leadership.</p>
12	Identification of Confidential Items and Actions
	Ashby discussion
13	Date of next meetings
	EGM: 25 January 2021

	Finance meeting: 1 March 2021 Directors board meeting: 8 March 2021
14	Meeting Closed at 8.00 p.m.
MINUTES AGREED & SIGNED	