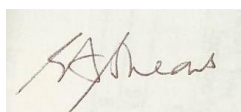


Minutes			
<b>Title:</b>	LiFE Multi Academy Trust Board Meeting - Trustees		
<b>Date:</b>	Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> December 2021	<b>Time:</b>	6.00pm
<b>Chair:</b>	Liz Warren	<b>Location:</b>	Google Meeting
<b>Clerk:</b>	Mike Armstrong		

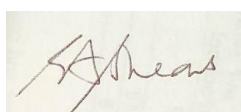
TRUSTEES					
Name	Present /Apologies	Name	Present / Apologies	Name	Present /Apologies
Liz Warren (LWA)	✓	Chris Parkinson (CPA - CEO)	✓	Hatle Mehta (HME)	✓
Hazel Cole (HCO)	✓	Sue Dunford (SDU)	✓	Darren Brumby (DBR)	A
Andy Smith (ANS)	✓	Liam McDonagh (LMcD)	✓	Iain Kinnis (IKI)	✓

In Attendance					
Name	Present /Apologies	Name	Present / Apologies	Name	Present /Apologies
Mike Armstrong Clerk	✓	Chris Tweedale (CTW)	✓	Amelia Smith (AMS)	✓
Gareth Williams (GWI)	✓	Nicola Koncarevic (NKO)	✓		

Notes of meeting	
<b>1</b>	<b>Apologies, introductions and declarations of interest</b>
	<p><b>The Chair welcomed</b> Trustees to the meeting.</p> <p><b>Apologies received:</b> Darren Brumby, accepted</p> <p><b>The Chair introduced</b> Nicola Koncarevic (Director of Education, National Forest Hub) and Amelia Smith (Headteacher at Braunstone Frith Primary School and Coordinator of Primary Education).</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest</p> <p>The meeting moved to Item 4 with a report from AmS.</p>
<b>2</b>	<b>Agree Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>
	<p>It was noted that: - Gareth Williams was Executive Head at Countesthorpe. Liam McDonagh was the link for Braunstone Frith. Iain Kinnis was the link for Ashby.</p> <p><b>The minutes were accepted as a true record subject to the above amendments.</b></p>



3	<b>Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda</b> <b>Recruitment update – Chair</b>
	<p><b>It was pointed out</b> that an action on induction had not been recorded from the September 2021 minutes. <b>It was noted</b> that Safeguarding training had taken place.</p> <p><b>Recruitment</b></p> <p><b>The Chair informed</b> Trustees that the Agency had offered 3 candidates, 2 of whom were interviewed with 1 recommendation to Trustees.</p> <p><b>She added</b> that an issue in the recruitment process was the need for diversity on the Board.</p> <p><b>The CEO stated</b> that there were various forms of diversity but the particular recruitment issue was around race and ethnicity. It was in the Trust charter that Life MAT provide an anti-racist education, however leadership in the Trust was not representative of the student population/local community and the wider staff body. This applied equally to the Trust Board.</p> <p><b>The Chair stated</b> that all three candidates were white British, but the recommended candidate, Hannah Cusworth was the inclusion and diversity champion in the large financial institution she works for. The question was whether Hannah Cusworth was interviewed again by Trustees, or recruitment was continued until a suitable candidate was found to fit the need for diversity as outlined.</p> <p><b>A Trustee commented</b> that, if the main need was for skills, there were few suitable candidates to satisfy the diversity requirement. In the long term the process needs to begin at grass roots level.</p> <p><b>HME said</b> he would like to be on the panel to interview the candidate recommended. Looking forward, the Board of Trustees did need to reflect the ethnic make up of the population served by the MAT and he would like to be involved in this type of recruitment.</p> <p><b>It was agreed</b> that the Chair and HME would interview the candidate and make a recommendation to the Board. Hannah's CV would be shared with Trustees.</p> <p><b>A Trustee asked if there were any local community groups who could be approached to see if any members might be interested in becoming a Trustee.</b></p> <p><b>The CEO said</b> two local groups had been approached without success. This included the Steven Lawrence Research Centre at De Montfort University. Further approaches will be made through the work being done with Leicester Citizens.</p> <p><b>A Trustee asked if Governors from the LGBs with suitable skills and experience could be recruited.</b></p> <p><b>The Chair agreed</b> that this could be looked into.</p> <p><b>The CEO supported the idea but commented</b> that a number of the schools had the same difficulties with representation on their LGB.</p> <p><b>CTW added</b> that the idea of recruiting from LGBs was a good one but pointed out that there were vacancies on the LGBs of all the schools and it would not be a good move to deplete them further.</p> <p><b>The Trustee said</b> that experienced Governors coming to the end of their term and not intending to commit to a further term could be interested in moving to the Board.</p> <p>The meeting moved on to the CEO's report Item 4.</p>
4	<b>Reports</b>
	<b>CEO/Heads' Report</b>



**The CEO informed Trustees** that Amelia Smith (Headteacher at Braunstone Frith Primary Academy and Coordinator of Primary Education) and Simon Brown (Headteacher at Bosworth Academy and Coordinator of Secondary Education) were working together on the method of reporting to the Board of Trustees.

**Amelia Smith displayed** the Directors Report (NEW) which had been shared via a link in the 'CEO introduction to Autumn 2021 Trustees report'.

**She made** the following points: -

- The work was based on the Life MAT Charter and the previous system of RAG rating school improvement plans.
- A 5 part rating model has been used, which works over a longer period of time. As explained in detail, the 5 parts are Excelling, Embracing, Embedding, Emerging and Exploring.
- Discussions in Senior Leadership Teams lead to a judgment as to where the school is in terms of the 9 areas of the Life Charter (Leadership, Learning & Teaching, Quality Assurance, Professional Development, Curriculum, Community Leadership, Behaviour & wellbeing, Inclusion and Staff Wellbeing).
- The individual schools' ratings (Strategic Planning Wheel 2021/22 Evaluation) are shown on the report tabs and summarised on the RAG Life Charter Tab.
- Each school has completed the Evidence behind decision column and the Next steps to be taken. This supports each school's improvement planning process.
- The system has led to a need for more specific action planning and much more measurable outcomes.
- Schools have carried out the evaluation to produce the ratings at different times. In the future the evaluation will be done at the same point.
- Moving forward the rate of progress will be monitored and flags will be placed where progress is deemed too slow.
- Trustees will receive the reports and evaluations which will be done termly.
- Braunstone Frith uses a three year development plan, the other schools work on a 1 year plan.

**A Trustee commented** that the evidence for the outcomes and the evaluation of the outcomes were a very strong part of the report.

**ASM added** that the system was very useful for the Heads to support school improvement planning not just a reporting tool for Trustees.

**A Trustee asked who would be doing the evaluation.**

**ASM replied** this would be done by Middle Leaders and SLT.

**A Trustee commented** that the report was very clear and brought the strategic planning wheels to life. He felt that external validation the self assessments made by the schools would provide added evidence.

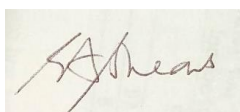
**ASM agreed and added** that Challenge Partner reviews and cross MAT subject reviews would feed into the evidence base.

**The Trustee asked if the introduction of this had identified any work the schools could stop doing.**

**ASM replied** that nothing had been discovered yet. The work could possibly reduce the amount of information in the Self Evaluation Forms.

**The CEO added** that the new reporting system was something the Heads ought to be using in schools anyway, as stated, and replaced the extra report Heads produced for Trustees in each meeting. It allows each school to have their own individual strategic wheel and improvement plan within the strategic development framework of the whole MAT. The format should also be used for reporting to Local Governing Bodies.

Amelia Smith left the meeting.



The meeting returned to Item 2

### **CEO's Report.**

The report had been shared.

**The CEO informed** Trustees that he would be providing a broad view of the main issues, with the main documents embedded for Trustees to view. He made the following points: -

- A LiFE MAT Strategic Wheel has been produced titled 'The Steering Wheel'. During the Spring Term leaders for each spoke of the wheel will be producing a strategic plan and will produce a brief summary of progress at least twice across the year for Trustees.
- CTW will report on governance development and NKO on developing the National Forest Hub.

**CTW stated** that his aim was to make Governance invisible. Trustees needed to be assured that things were happening correctly. As the Trust grows and becomes more complex Governance assurance becomes more important.

**NKO informed** Trustees that establishing trust between the three schools in the National Forest Hub had been a challenge. The schools had worked closely together in the past but many of the links had been broken. Collaborative work was now starting to develop. Meetings were held every week as a group and individually with NKO to finalise curriculum and staffing.

- The recruitment numbers of students into each of the three schools were known. There were some challenges, particularly in Ivanhoe.
- Covid has presented a massive level of challenge over the term. Now that students do not have to self isolate because of cases in their bubble, staff absence due to covid has not resulted in a reduced number of students. Teacher absence over the term has been significantly higher than normal. This has an impact on learning and school culture. However, no school in the Trust has had to close or send students home.

**A Trustee commented** on the differences in attendance, particularly staff, between Bosworth and Ashby. On a visit to Ashby he had not been asked to wear a mask.

**The CEO replied** that mask wearing was now required in all the schools. Bosworth has suffered from covid amongst its students more than any of the other schools.

**The Trustee asked if best practice in one school was being shared across the MAT.**

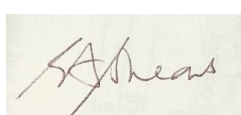
**The CEO replied** that the most effective strategy had been the stepping up to cover initiative, where staff who do not normally work in the classroom were trained to take cover lessons. This was an initiative introduced by NKO.

**NKO added** that Ashby has particular issues with maternity leave and vulnerable members of staff isolating. Best practice in terms of hygiene has been seen at Ivanhoe but the school was really struggling currently with covid cases.

**The CEO stated** that more schools were moving to employing cover supervisors rather than relying on supply agencies. There have been discussions about employing a MAT pool of cover supervisors but Heads were not ready to contribute the funds.

In addition cover managers were collaborating across schools to share capacity for cover supervisors and part time staff were also being used to provide extra hours.

- The CEO, Chair, GWI, NKO and CTW had met with the DFE. The meeting was very positive and the DFE was clearly in support of what the MAT was doing. The School Resource Management Adviser Recommendations Report (SRMA report) had been shared with the DFE who commented how effective the report was.



- The Governing Body at Dove Bank have voted to join the MAT, as reported. The target date for the school to join was April 2022, or September 2022.

#### **Finance – Chair of Finance**

##### **Auditors' report**

##### **SMRA report**

##### **Main points and possible responses**

##### **Proposal - Establish working group to create reporting format for Trustees**

**The Chair of the Finance Committee, (AnS) gave the following report: -**

- The 0.2% savings identified from the SRMA report was targeted at schools requiring it.
- The Integrated Financial Planning Tool (IFPT) will be used more for reports to Trustees rather than budget reports.
- KPI reports, shared in the Finance Folder, were useful for comparison across the schools.
- Budget monitoring software, Orovia BPS, will be introduced from February 2022.
- The internal control issues and risks identified in the audit were outlined in the Audit Management Letter from Burrowes Scarborough. The letter has been shared in the Finance area of the Google Drive. Responses to these risks will need to be made by the central team.
- An aged debt report will be brought to each Finance meeting, aged debt was currently £4m.
- There is a need for a robust asset register system.
- CTW will meet with the Estates Manager and Finance Team to look at the criteria for allocating the capital fund, now allocated through the School Condition Allowance (SCA) rather than through CIF bids.

**CTW stated** that it was the Trustees' role to set the categories for the executive to decide on how the fund will be used within the criteria set by the Board.

#### **Chairs Group – Chair**

##### **Update previously emailed.**

##### **Routes for School Improvement information to CoGs.**

**The Chair had circulated** the presentation she gave at the meeting of the LGB Chairs.

See confidential minute

**A Trustee referred** to the fact that of the 8 schools only 2 Governors were present at the Finance meeting. He felt this was an opportunity for the LGBs to engage, rather than being 'done to.'

**The Chair thought** the feeling was that there was nothing to fight for on behalf of the schools and therefore there was no point attending. The move towards having criteria for capital funding may encourage more LGBs engagement.

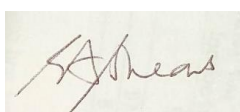
**AnS commented** that representatives from each school LGBs were invited. There had been a discussion about splitting the finance meetings into the two hubs to reduce the size of the meeting.

The budget scrutiny carried out in the meetings was important for school LGB representatives to attend as it enabled them to understand the finances in their own school. It was fair to say that two Governors who usually attended had left their LGB.

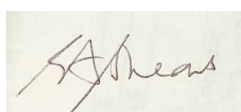
**The CEO added** that the Scheme of Delegation makes it clear that LGBs need to communicate through the finance committee and therefore attendance was required. This message needs to be relayed to the LGBs.

**The Trustee asked if it had been made explicit that a Governor with responsibility for finance was required.**

**The CEO replied** that it was clear in the scheme of delegation.



	<p><b>CTW felt</b> some of the Governors turned up because they felt they had to 'fight our corner' rather than the need to inform the wider group about their own school. The increasing size of the MAT means that the ways it has worked in the past would not work in the same way in the future. There needs to be more clarity and transparency about the MAT's expectations.</p>
5	<p><b>Review Risk Register</b>  <b>Ashby</b>  <b>Link Reports - IK</b>  <b>Safeguarding - CEO</b>  <b>Governance – Chair</b>  <b>Kingsway</b>  <b>Link Report</b>  <b>CEO update</b>  <b>Ofsted complaints</b>  <b>Other risks</b></p>
	<p>See confidential minute</p>
6	<p><b>Trust Board matters - Chair</b></p>
	<p><b>Ratify Schemes of Delegation for Ivanhoe and Ibstock, previously circulated</b>  <b>AGM</b>  <b>Trustee Roles – Chair</b></p> <p><b>Schemes of Delegation</b></p> <p>The final draft of the schemes for Ivanhoe and Ibstock had been shared.</p> <p><b>The schemes of delegation were ratified unanimously by a show of hands.</b></p> <p><b>AGM</b></p> <p><b>The Chair stated</b> she was working with SMA on the Trustees report for the AGM. The meeting will be on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2022. All Trustees were invited and The Chair hoped all could attend.</p> <p><b>Trustee Roles</b></p> <p><b>The Chair said</b> she would like a meeting, or a working party to discuss the distribution of work amongst Trustees.  <b>A Trustee felt</b> the roles would become clear once the operating model for Governance was accepted. This included Members, Trustees and LGBs.  <b>The Chair agreed but added</b> the Link Role model was not functioning effectively and there was no new model in place. There needed to be an interim model to cover the responsibilities of the Trust Board to support the Executive.  <b>The Trustee emphasised</b> that there had to be clarity about the organisation of Governance before any other school joined the MAT.  <b>The Chair accepted</b> this but there needed to be a discussion around the expectations of the role of Trustee and time commitment required.  <b>She offered</b> to write a paper on the role requirements to be circulated for comments, to be followed by role allocation once agreed.  <b>The Trustee stated</b> opposition to that approach.</p> <p><b>A Trustee asked how other responsibilities would be decided, other than the current ones of safeguarding and finance.</b>  <b>The Chair replied</b> that work was generated in each meeting which needed to be done by a Trustee or group of Trustees. The previous Chair had done a huge amount of this work and the role needed to be more sustainable for future Chairs particularly as the MAT had increased in size and will continue to do so.  <b>She felt</b> a meeting was required to discuss this.</p>



	<p><b>ACTION 6.1: Chair to send out an invitation for a meeting to discuss Trustee Roles for any interested Trustee to join.</b></p> <p><b>A Trustee agreed</b> that the link model was unsustainable as the MAT increased in size <b>and suggested</b> that Trustee Roles could be aligned to the reports received from the schools which identify the priorities for development. Each Trustee could monitor a priority across the MAT.</p> <p><b>The CEO said</b> the horizontal responsibility for a priority area across all schools would work well. However, a Trustee would need to be responsible for support when a school had an OFSTED Inspection and would therefore need to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school and how the MAT was supporting Governance and school development. For this reason, the model of Governance needs to be clear and Trustees will need to contribute.</p> <p><b>The Trustee suggested</b> a group governance model where a number of Trustees were linked to a group of schools.</p> <p><b>The Chair stated</b> she would write a paper for discussions outlining the different option for the interim governance model</p> <p><b>ACTION 6.2: Chair to write a paper on the options for a governance model.</b></p> <p><b>CTW commented</b> that, in his experience as a CEO in Trusts with more schools than Trustees, the Executive were available to support schools during OFSTED accompanied by a Trustee.</p> <p><b>He added</b> that the Governance Model should not be based around considerations regarding OFSTED inspections.</p> <p><b>The CEO clarified</b> that the Executive were not allowed to join meetings between inspectors and the local governors. Trustees were allowed to join these meetings.</p> <p><b>He added</b> that any model must allow the Board to know what was being delivered in the schools and the experience of the students</p>
7	<p><b>Trust Governance Strategy – Director of Governance</b></p>
	<p><b>Progress update and forward plan</b>  <b>Recommendations</b>  <b>LGB Terms of Reference</b>  <b>Policy Review and Management</b></p> <p><b>CTW stated</b> that, as the MAT becomes more complex, the Governance system needs to be formalised. This includes the roles of Members, Trustees, Local Governors and the MAT Executive. He was creating options and ideas for the Board to decide on the final system. LGBs have been operating in quite an informal structure and this requires formalising. However there is no intention to stifle difference. The Board needs to be assured that the right curriculum is being taught and, as custodians of £50m of funding, need to be assured of best practice.</p> <p><b>He felt</b> there were actions which needed to be done quickly. These include: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trustee Induction</li> </ul> <p><b>ACTION 7.1: CTW to produce a Trustee Induction Plan by the end of January 2022.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal Board Approval of the Schemes of Delegation (SOD) was required each year. These outline the powers delegated to the LGBs by the Board. It has become clear that the SODs need to be reviewed and this will be done over the coming year to be adopted in September 2022.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Schemes of Delegation for all 8 schools were approved unanimously.</b></p> <p><b>Local Governing Body Terms of Reference.</b></p>



The document 'Agenda item 7 (a) LGB Terms of Reference' had been shared.

**CTW stated** that Appendix 2 outlined the current position with each LGB. This needs to be rationalised.

**1. CTW recommended that an LGB Constitution and Terms of Reference had: -**

- A minimum of 2 Parent Governors
- A minimum of 4 Community Governors
- Headteacher as an Ex Officio Governor
- 2 Staff Governors (1 teacher and 1 non teacher)
- Up to 3 extra Community Governors which may be parents.

This gives a minimum of 9 and a maximum of 12 Governors on each LGB.

Where a school joined the Trust the standing LGB would be kept until terms of office ended.

**Appointment of Local Governors**

**CTW said** there was no Trust Policy on LGB appointments.

- 2. CTW recommended that the Trust Board reserved the right to approve the appointment of Community Governors put forward by the LGBs.**

**Appointment of LGB Chairs and Vice Chairs**

- 3. CTW recommended that The Trust Board ratify the appointment of the Chair of each LGB.**

**Removal and Suspension of Governors**

- 4. CTW recommended that, with the exception of the Chair, LGBs were responsible for removing or suspending Local Governors.**

**A Trustee asked about quoracy.**

**CTW replied** that the quoracy was 5 Governors but there could not be a majority of staff Governors.

**The Trustee asked if there was a need to be specific about the type of Governors.**

**CTW replied** that there had to be 2 named Parent Governors.

**The Trustee said** he supported the recommendations as a working model but felt there needed to be an overall working Governance Model before final decisions could be made. As an example the number of Local Governors required could depend on the amount of financial delegation given to the LGB.

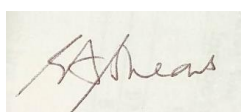
**The Chair added** that the skills required for Local Governors needed to be taken into account.

CTW redefined the constitution to read : -

- 2 elected Parent Governors
- Headteacher
- 2 Staff Governors as defined to be elected by staff.
- Up to 7 (minimum 4) other Governors who may be Parents.

**CTW Clarified: -**

- The two Parent Governors to be elected by the parent body where possible, with the preference that they were parents of children currently at the school.
- The term of office for a Governor to be 4 years, with a maximum of 2 terms under normal conditions. Terms of office longer than 8 years to be ratified by the Board.





**It was proposed** by IKI and **seconded** by HCO that the 4 recommendations were approved.

**The 4 recommendations above were approved unanimously.**

#### **Policy Review**

The document 'Policy Review and Management' had been shared.

**CTW stated** that there were 78 policies on different websites. The requirement was for 23 statutory policies.

**1. CTW recommended a categorisation of policies as follows:-**

- a) Operational procedures**
- b) Trust level**
- c) Trust wide**
- d) Local**

(definitions of each category in the document)

**A Trustee commented** that many of the Policies contained elements of procedure, which did not need approval by the Board. He felt that policies rarely changed but procedures did.

**He wondered** if the procedural elements could be removed from the policy to make them more succinct.

**CTW agreed** that the procedural elements could be in category 1 and categories 2 to 4 would contain the policies to be approved at the level indicated.

**2. CTW recommended Option A from the document.**

**3. CTW recommended that 1 policy was scrutinised each term.**

**4. CTW recommended a review of the Governance areas on School and Trust websites.**

**A Trustee asked** for a report on the Policies and procedures removed during the review of the 78 currently on the websites.

**ACTION 7.1: CTW to report on the policies and procedures removed during the review.**

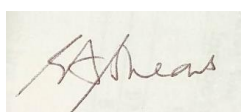
**Trustees approved the 4 recommendations above for Policies.**

**8 Any other urgent AOB, to be agreed prior to the meeting**

None

**MINUTES AGREED & SIGNED**

**Meeting closed at 9.05 p.m.**



## Future Meetings

<b>Members AGM followed by Trust Board</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> January, 2022
<b>Finance Committee</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> February 2022
<b>Trust Board</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> March 2022
<b>Trust Board</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> May, 2022
<b>Finance Committee</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> Jun, 2022
<b>Trust Board</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> Jun, 2022
<b>Trust Strategic Planning Day</b>	<b>Proposed 7<sup>th</sup> June 2022</b>

