

Minutes of a meeting of the LiFE Multi Academy Trust Board of Trustees
held at Bosworth School
on Monday 7 March 2022
commencing at 6.00 p.m.

Present

Liz Warren (Chair)

Hazel Cole

Hannah Cusworth

Sue Dunford

Iain Kinnis

Hatle Mehta

Liam McDonagh

Chris Parkinson (Chief Executive)

Andy Smith

In Attendance

Chris Tweedale (Director of Governance)

Nicola Koncarevic (Director of Education - Leicester Forest Hub)

Gareth Williams (Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Head, Countesthorpe College)

Stuart McDonough (Clerk to the meeting)

Min. No	Minute	Action
1	Welcome, introductions and apologies	All to note
1.1	The Chair (LW) welcomed all present to the meeting, including Hannah Cusworth (HCu), attending her first meeting as a Trustee.	
1.2	There were no apologies for absence.	
2	Declarations of Interest	All to note
2.1	Messrs Tweedale (CT) and McDonough (SAMcD) declared indirect personal interests in agenda item 16 (Minutes 20 and 21 below).	
3	Minutes of the Previous Meeting : 24 January 2022	All to note
3.1	<p>The following corrections were noted:</p> <p><i>Minute 6.1 Nurseries Update</i> : 2 of the 3 Trust nurseries had been closed, not 3 as stated in the minute.</p> <p><i>Minute 10.5 Admission of Dove Bank Primary School to the Trust</i> : noted that whilst Trustees had unanimously approved admission of the school to the Trust, there had been a difference of view relating to the date of admission.</p> <p>Subject to the above, the minutes of the previous meeting (including the confidential minutes) were approved as a correct record for signature by the Chair.</p>	LW

4	Matters arising from the previous minutes	All to note
4.1	<i>Minute 13 (Trustee Induction Plan)</i> – Noted that – Mr Kinnis (IK) had provided comments to CT on the draft Trustee Induction Plan.	CT
5	Written Resolution	All to note
5.1	<p>Noted that –</p> <p>in accordance with Clause 58 of the Trust Articles of Association, Hannah Cusworth (HCu) had been appointed as a co-opted Trustee for a four year term commencing 14 February 2022. The Chair emphasised that Trustees appointed under this clause had the same responsibilities and rights as Trustees appointed by Members and further, that co-option did not in any way imply that a co-optee was subject to some form of probation.</p>	
6	Trustee Resignations	All to note
6.1	<p>Noted that -</p> <p>a) Daren Brumby had resigned as a Trustee with effect from 4 February 2022;</p> <p>b) Iain Kinnis had confirmed his intention to resign as a Trustee with effect from 31 August 2022; and</p> <p>c) both appointments were Member appointments under Clause 50 of the Trust Articles of Association.</p>	
7	Trustee Appointments : Requirements and Implications	All to note
7.1	Pursuant to Minute 6 above a wide ranging discussion took place around the requirements for and implications of filling the two Member (Clause 50) appointed vacancies. It was suggested that a pre-requisite to further recruitment was to clarify and better define the roles and expectations of Trustees and then to establish and agree the knowledge gap by reference to the issues identified by the Chair in her Presentation “Trust Board Direction” (Minute 15 below).	
7.2	<p>Noted/Agreed that –</p> <p>a) New appointments - skills requirements (Working Party)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A Working Party be established to consider Trustee recruitment arrangements and the skills and experience required of new Trust Board Members, factors to take into account to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the definition of the roles and expectations of Trustees arising from the issues identified by the Chair in her Presentation; • inclusion and diversity; • the findings of the previous Trust Board Skills audit; and • the desirability of relevant practical experience of legal, safeguarding, Primary Education and governance. <p>b) Safeguarding Lead</p> <p>Following a brief discussion, Sue Dunford (SD) confirmed her willingness to continue in this role which the Chief Executive (CP) assured the Board would in future be supported by addition of a Safeguarding Update report in his report to the Board and in the Headteacher Reports to their LGBs. Whilst it would be helpful if new Trustees had experience and/or an appreciation of safeguarding, it would not be necessary to require candidates to have specific safeguarding skills.</p>	<p>Trustees</p> <p>SD</p>

	<p>c) Possible Need for additional Trustees</p> <p>It was suggested that the developing roles and expectations of Trustees may require an increase in the number of Trustees. The Board was reminded that Clause 58 of Trust Articles provided the means by which to do this (appointment by Trustees via co-option), the alternative being a change to Trust Articles to enable Members to appoint more than the nine Trustees currently permitted by Article 50.</p> <p>The Board agreed that, if they concluded that additional Trustees were required, the preferred option would be co-option by Trustees under Clause 58 of the Articles.</p> <p>d) Appointment of Working Party</p> <p>The Working Party, comprising the Chair together with IK and HCU (and any other Trustee who wished to contribute to the discussion), be authorised to finalise the skills requirement, advert and shortlisting of applicants for the two Member appointed vacancies on the Trust Board. (Trustees requested that they be consulted on the skills requirements developed by the Working Party).</p>	<p>LW/IK/HCU</p> <p>LW</p>
8	Chairs Actions : Authority of the Chair	All to note
8.1	This issue had arisen following discussion at the Finance, Audit and Infrastructure Committee (note 10 of that meeting and Minute 12 below refer).	
8.2	At the request of LW , SAMcD explained that the authority vested in the office of the Chair of the Trust Board to act in matters of urgency or where it was deemed to be in the best interests of the Trust to do so was a well-established governance principle/convention and was referenced in many ESFA/DfE and other Governance advice and publications.	
8.3	<p>In answer to questions, CT and SAMcD explained that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the authority of the Chair to act was subject to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the Chair being satisfied that the matter was urgent (i.e. a decision could not wait until the next Board Committee or Board meeting or approval by Written Resolution); and b) for governance assurance and audit purposes, all decisions taken by the Chair must be reported to and formally noted by the next available meeting of the Trust Board (or Board Committee if appropriate); - ideally the authority should be enshrined in the Trust Scheme of Delegation. That Scheme did not currently exist. The Scheme currently being developed would include that provision; - the authority afforded to the Chair was not normally fettered or constrained. This was because the decisions were subject to significant assurance procedures and relied on advice from the Chief Executive or his senior nominee, and further: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) in some circumstances constraint of the authority to make decisions could prevent an urgent decision being made. This would not be in the best interests of the Trust; 	

8.4	<p>b) the requirement that all decisions taken by the Chair must be reported to the next available Board or Board Committee meant that the decision making process was transparent and further, provided Trustees with the opportunity to review and discuss the circumstances, reasons and frequency of/for decisions and to impose a constraint if they felt that the Chair had not acted reasonably; and</p> <p>c) all decisions taken by the Chair would be subject to the recommendations and/or request of the CEO, or other Senior members of staff under the Trust Scheme of Delegation (once this was in place). The Chair would not therefore be in a position to make a decision, including decisions requiring expenditure, unless the action had been recommended by the Executive.</p> <p>Resolved that -</p> <p>i) the Trust Board Chair be authorised, on recommendation of the Chief Executive or their nominee, to approve actions/take decisions on behalf of the Trust Board where this is deemed to be in the best interests of the Trust and/or urgent; and</p> <p>ii) the authority of the Chair described at (i) above, be incorporated into the Trust Scheme of Delegation.</p>	SAMcD
9	<p>Chairs Actions : Decisions Taken by the Chair since the Previous Meeting</p> <p><u>Local Governing Body Constitution (Variation)</u></p> <p>9.1 The Chair had authorised the Director of Governance to determine all requests received from Local Governing Bodies (LGB) for variation to their constitution and membership including requests for appointment of co-optees, subject only to the request being formally approved by the LGB and to including the rationale for the request.</p> <p>9.2 At the requests of Trustees the Chair and CT explained the reasons for this decision. These included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the desirability of recognising, that in line with the commitment of the Trust to local autonomy, LGBs had different approaches to the allocation of duties and engagement of Governors. Some limited flexibility in LGB Constitution and Membership was therefore desirable. Examples of this were given; and - the delegation was in the interests of efficient decision making, the alternative being to refer all such matters to the Trust Board or for action by the Trust Board Chair. <p>9.3 Trustees agreed that it would be more appropriate to delegate this matter to the Trust Board Chair rather than to the Executive and accordingly</p> <p>Resolved that –</p> <p>the delegation described at 9.1 above be revised as follows:</p> <p><i>“ All requests from Local Governing Bodies for variation to their constitution and membership, including requests for appointment of co-optees, be determined by the Trust Board Chair on recommendation from the Director of Governance and to be subject to prior formal approval by the LGB, to include the rationale for the request, details to be provided to and reviewed by the Director”.</i></p>	<p>All to note</p> <p>CT SAMcD</p>

9.4	<p><u>SCA Projects 2021 / 2022</u></p> <p>LW and Andy Smith (AS (Chair of the Finance, Audit and Infrastructure Committee)) explained that because the meeting of the Committee on 28 February 2022 had not been quorate, it had not been possible to approve the recommendation of the Chief Finance Officer regarding the actions required to proceed with the projects listed in the Schedule of SCA Projects listed in Appendix 3 to the agenda. Accordingly, because of the need to ensure orders were placed and work expedited, and on recommendation of the two Trustees who had been present at the meeting, LW had authorised the works. (See also Minute 12 below).</p>	
9.5	<p>In response to questions from Trustees, AS and the CEO (CP) advised that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a procedure for prioritisation and allocation of capital funding was being developed and would be brought to the Board for approval. Key elements of this would be consideration of any safeguarding requirements (i.e. requiring adaptations to buildings), health and safety issues and the recently completed building condition survey; - in terms of capital allocations, the Trust was in a transition year wherein some schools had received capital grants under the CIF system. For the future, schools in the Trust would no longer be eligible to apply for CIF funding because the Trust would receive formulaic capital allocations which would be apportioned to schools in accordance with agreed Trust priorities; - because this was a transition year the position on capital funding had not been clear. Caution had therefore been exercised in that capital works had been held pending clarification of the extent and source of capital funding available. The Chief Finance Officer had now confirmed that the position had been clarified and accordingly that the works listed in the schedule could proceed. Some of the funding available for those works was time limited – hence the urgency to proceed without further delay; - many of the works detailed in the Schedule had previously been included in the capital budgets of individual schools and were funded by previously approved CIF funding. It would not have been appropriate, and neither would it be consistent with Trust ethos, to deny those schools the opportunity to complete those works for which they had planned and for which they had secured funding; and - as regards current and future prioritisation of capital works, it was important to recognise that where safeguarding considerations was a factor, these would always be given precedence over other works and where necessary would be authorised to proceed without reference to the Committee or to the Board. 	AS/CP
9.6	<p>Resolved that –</p> <p>the position relating to the Schedule of Works, Capital Funding (including the priority to be given to safeguarding related works) and the decision of the Chair of the Trust Board on the 2021 / 22 SCA Project, be noted.</p>	
9.7	<p><u>Support Staff Pay Award 2021 / 22</u></p> <p>Noted that –</p> <p>LW and AS had authorised (via e mail) implementation of the nationally agreed Support Staff pay award 2021 / 2022. The award (1.75%) had been the subject of protracted</p>	

	national negotiations but had now been agreed and would be paid in March 2022 salaries, backdated to 1 st April 2021. The cost of the award was included within the budget for the current year and had been estimated at 2%.	
10	Unconfirmed Minutes of the Trust AGM 24 January 2022 Noted - without discussion.	All to note
11	Summary Notes of Meeting of LGB Chairs : 31 January 2022 Noted - without discussion.	All to note
12	Notes of the Finance, Audit and Infrastructure Committee : 28 February 2022	All to note
12.1	This meeting had not been quorate. The Trustees present had agreed to proceed with the meeting, any decision required to be referred to the Trust Board. Accordingly, the following matters were referred to the Board for decision. <u>Finance Policy</u>	AS
12.2	AS advised that adjustments were required to this Policy. He had been due to discuss the final draft of the Policy with the Finance Team for presentation to the Board. This had not been possible and would therefore be brought to the next meeting of the Committee for consideration. <u>Gifts and Hospitality Policy</u>	
12.3	AS advised that there had been no major amendments to the Policy which was due for review under the Policy Review Programme.	
12.4	In response to questions , CP confirmed that, as specified in the Policy, staff were not permitted to accept gifts and hospitality above the value of £25. He recommended that the Register of gifts should continue to be maintained in order to provide an audit and assurance trail.	
12.5	Following discussion the Board Resolved that – the Gifts and Hospitality Policy be approved subject to addition of the following clause: <i>“ No more than three Gifts or Hospitality within the £25 maximum limit, given by or offered from the same person or organisation, shall be accepted within any period of twelve months”.</i> <u>Funds Policy</u>	
12.6	AS explained that this new Policy had been developed in line with the recommendations of the External Auditor 2021 / 22. The purpose of the Policy was to better define the nature and purpose of the various Funds operated by the Trust.	AS/SH
12.7	Attention was drawn to a number of Endowment Funds operated/managed by individual schools but which were not defined in the Policy. AS agreed to discuss with the Finance Team the need to include these within the Policy.	
12.8	Resolved that – i) subject to inclusion within the Policy of reference to Trust Endowment Funds the Policy be approved; and ii) AS be requested to circulate the amended Policy to all Trustees.	AS

<p>12.9</p> <p>12.10</p> <p>12.11</p> <p>12.12</p>	<p><u>Draft Terms of Reference and Delegations ((new) Finance and Resources Committee and proposed Audit and Risk Committee)</u></p> <p>AS advised that he supported the documents which he recommended for adoption within the context of the developing Trust wide Scheme of Delegation effective from September 2022.</p> <p>Resolved that –</p> <p>the draft Terms of Reference for the two Committees be approved.</p> <p><u>Notes of the meeting</u></p> <p>Resolved that –</p> <p>subject to 12.2 – 12.10 above, the notes of the meeting be received and noted.</p> <p><u>Committee Attendance</u></p> <p>LW requested all Trustees to note the importance of attending meetings of Trust Board Committees and ensuring that they were quorate.</p>	<p></p> <p>CT/ SAMcD</p> <p>Trustees</p>
	Assurance Reports	
<p>13</p> <p>13.1</p>	<p>Report of the Chief Executive</p> <p>Presenting his termly report, CP highlighted the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the significant increase in safeguarding issues and concerns. This was not unique to the Trust and was common across the sector nationally, a major contributory factor being reaction to lockdown, school closure and related matters. Following consideration of the most recent reports from Headteachers of Trust schools he had decided that consideration and reporting of Safeguarding matters required greater focus. Accordingly, for the future, his report to the Board would include a Section dedicated to Safeguarding updates, developments and clarification of safeguarding statistics and potential safeguarding issues. This would be developed from the more detailed Safeguarding Reports and incident analyses that he had instructed Headteachers to include in their termly reports to LGBs; - attendance and persistent absence, which he emphasised were safeguarding matters. The significant increase in both of these was reflective of a national issue and was a concern for the Trust. Trustees noted that pre-covid, persistent absence had averaged around 8/9% across the Trust but currently ranged from 25% - 40%. A major challenge in this regard was the difficulty of differentiating absence due to Covid and absence for other reasons. This had been exacerbated by the decision of DfE to change the coding of absence system so that Covid related absence was no longer accounted for separately. It was also likely that the most recent figures were distorted by the data collection point. This related to the first 105 days of the 2021 / 22 Academic Year so that the high incidence of Covid amongst students experienced during the Autumn term, and the associated requirement for perhaps 10 days absence, possibly exaggerated the true absence figure. Nevertheless, the current incidence of absence was too high and was a concern that was being investigated and addressed. (In response to questions CP explained in detail the change that DfE had made to the absence coding system and the difficulties this presented in terms of interpreting and distinguishing between Covid, other sickness and other absence data); and - the level of staff absence: this was thought to be a factor in the level of student absence. Levels of staff absence, (around 15% at maximum but averaging around 10%) were unprecedented and were a significant concern. 	<p>All to note</p> <p>CP</p> <p>SD to note</p>

	<p>Whilst this was due primarily to Covid, other factors were at play (see Minute 13.2 below). The efforts of staff to support colleagues had been commendable. Due to their efforts it had not been necessary to close classes or Year Groups. Trustees were asked to note however that other activities, examples of which were given, had necessarily been reduced or cancelled in order to ensure that schools and individual Year Groups/classes remained open.</p>	
13.2	<p>With regard to student and staff absence, it was clear that social, emotional and mental health issues were increasingly causal factors. Whilst pastoral support and counselling was available to students, and a range of support was available to staff, a review of the resources currently provided for this was required. This would include consideration of the significant impact on staff wellbeing of the increase in safeguarding issues and the nature of those issues. The staff involved across the Trust in these matters were very stretched. Budgets would need to be adjusted to ensure that the necessary support for students and staff was available.</p> <p>See confidential minute 13.3 and 13.4</p>	CP
13.5	<p>Trustees expressed concern and asked questions about the impacts on staff described by CP and the associated increase in demand/provision for wellbeing support both generally and specifically relating to challenging safeguarding issues with which staff were required to deal. Questions included how staff morale was responding to the situation and whether or not there might be a risk that in the near future there was a risk of an increase in staff resignations and the extent to which this was being anticipated.</p>	
13.6	<p>CP advised that in his view, based on conversations with Headteachers and staff, morale was good. Despite the pressures, the majority of staff were resilient notwithstanding that they may have recourse to occasional wellbeing related support, a facility that was valued by staff. The supportive culture of the Trust and within each school was instrumental in this through close collaboration and support, examples of which were given. Staff turnover currently was within the expected range and due to the usual factors.</p>	
13.7	<p>NK endorsed the views of CP, explaining that collaboration, mutual support, sharing of best practice and targeted CPD were important contributory factors in supporting the morale of teaching staff. Support staff presented more of an issue however in relation to which recruitment was becoming increasingly difficult. Trustees asked further questions about the options open to the Trust to address this.</p>	
13.8	<p>CP explained that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - staff salaries accounted for approximately 75% of school budgets. Of this, around 25% represented support staff salaries and covered a wide range of staff including professional and ancillary staff; - an increasingly key issue for lower paid support staff, most notably TA's and ancillary staff, was salary, the levels of which were becoming less competitive compared to the local and national economy; - funding increases received by the Trust were not sufficient to enable the Trust to increase salaries of lower paid staff to a more competitive level. The options open to the Trust to address this dilemma were limited: either to reduce expenditure on education improvement or to employ less teachers. Neither of these options were acceptable. 	
13.9	<p>CP commented that existing support staff shared in and benefitted from the collaborative approach of the Trust, which provided opportunities for support staff to broaden their experience and/or work in or with other Trust schools. Staff enjoyed working across school boundaries in this way. The Deputy Chief Executive (GW) endorsed these</p>	

<p>13.10</p>	<p>comments, quoting an example of the extensive workload faced by a school safeguarding team and the way in which this had been managed through collaboration across schools and the team spirit that this had engendered amongst the staff involved.</p> <p>Concluding discussion, LW suggested that the Finance, Audit and Infrastructure Committee consider the issue further at their next meeting, possibly with a view to the Board making representations to the Government regarding the position of low paid staff in schools.</p>	<p>AS</p> <p>AS</p>
<p>14</p> <p>14.1</p> <p>14.2</p>	<p>Presentation : How Organisational Structure supports Educational Vision</p> <p>The Board received and noted a Presentation from the Chief Executive setting out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the values, ethos, mission, design principles and educational purpose of the Trust : this included continued commitment to the “Four Pillars” on which the Trust had been established (i.e. school transformation, collaboration, educational autonomy and the position and educational offering of the school in relation to the local community); - the possibly unique position of the Trust in seeking to deliver their mission against a background in the sector of a move towards standardisation and uniformity in the interests primarily of outcomes : LiFE sought to deliver the highest possible academic outcomes whilst simultaneously delivering wider values and outcomes that would prepare children for adult life and maximise their life chances and opportunities; - the importance of the Strategic Wheel approach including the three domains that underscored the four quadrants of the Wheel (i.e. Innovating Strategy, Developing Outstanding Infrastructure and Coaching for school Improvement); - the developing Trust Board structure required to support the Trust Executive and recognise recent and possible future growth. A key feature of this was that, with a few exceptions, Central Trust Leadership remained actively and closely embedded within schools and school improvement activity rather than seeking to develop direction from the Centre. The importance of this to the ethos of the Trust was explained by reference to practical examples; - in addition to the importance of embedded Trust Leadership, the significance of this in terms of creating a supportive culture that encouraged innovation and created “psychological safety” for staff was explained; - the importance of Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) within the Board governance structure and of governors fully understanding and promoting at local level the values, ethos, mission, design principles and educational purpose of the Trust; - the ambitions for supporting and developing children on which the Trust had been founded and the importance of periodic review and refreshment of these; and - against the background and issues explained above, the need to ensure that, in recognising the developing the need for a more structured approach to the organisation, particularly in relation to governance, that the structure must support and uphold, not hinder, the founding principles, values, vision and educational improvement objectives of the Trust. <p>Concluding, CP presented an illustrative structure chart that mapped the proposed School Improvement and supporting Governance Structures of the Organisation, emphasising that whilst this was shown as two divisions, in practice they would be integrated and organised to support delivery of the Trust vision.</p>	<p>All to note</p>

14.3	<p>In response to comments from Trustees, who indicated their support for the approach described, CP confirmed that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - arrangements would be made to ensure that new Trustees were briefed on these matters as part of their Induction and further, arrangements should be put in place to reflect on and refresh the Trust vision with longer serving Trustees. He acknowledged that hitherto this had not always happened; and - that the issues presented would form part of the LiFE MAT Strategic Planning Day conference to which LGB Chairs would be invited (and which had now been re-scheduled to 7 June 2022). 	<p>CP/CT</p> <p>CP</p>
15	Presentation : Trust Board Direction – towards a three year Plan	All to note
15.1	<p>LW introduced her Presentation by thanking CP for his Presentation and reaffirming the support of the Board for the organisational structure and vision described. By reference to Power Point slides she reminded Trustees of the key factors that had impacted on development of the Trust (i.e. the Pandemic and Rapid Growth from three to eight schools) and of the effect of this on the need for development of Trust Governance structures, systems and procedures. This included the need to ensure that the Executive had the capacity required, but also to ensure that Trustees had the capacity and structures needed to set, support and maintain effective oversight of the priorities and objectives of the Trust. This included for example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - developing and maintaining good practice; - holding senior leaders across the Trust to account; - meaningful and regular self-review; and - ensuring capacity for continual school improvement at Executive, school and Board level. This would require effective governance to ensure Board leadership, appropriate governance structures including a Trust Scheme of Delegation, effective accountability and scrutiny and compliance. 	
15.2	<p>LW explained that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - with these key features in mind there was a need to reflect on and to develop the role of Trustees, including recruitment (and the importance of diversity and appropriate skill sets), and clarification of expectations and roles and responsibilities to ensure that these aligned with the Strategic Wheel; - to ensure effective governance and to support individual Trustees, the Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies, a more structured approach to Trust governance was required. A start had been made on this through the current Governance Improvement Review which it was important to complete as soon as possible and which had illustrated the need for the Board to have access to and the support of a Governance Professional; - it was important that LGBs understood and supported the principles, ethos and vision set out at Minute 14 above; and - these and related issues should in her view be developed into a three-year Plan. She suggested that a Working Party be established to develop a draft Plan for consideration at the Trust Strategic Planning Day conference and invited all Governors to consider participating in discussions around development of the Plan, which would be held virtually. IK confirmed his wish to join the Working Party. 	
15.3	<p>LW agreed to circulate dates for meetings of the Working Party and reiterated that all Trustees were welcome to participate.</p>	LW
16	Report of the Chair	All to note

<p>16.1</p> <p>16.2</p> <p>16.3</p> <p>16.4</p> <p>16.5</p>	<p><u>External review of Trust Governance</u></p> <p>LW reminded the Board that Members had requested this. At her invitation, CT reported that under a support package provided by DfE the Trust could arrange for the Review to be undertaken by a National Leader in Governance. Accordingly he had made contact with Steve Pilkington NLG with whom he proposed to agree a scoping exercise for the Review.</p> <p>In reply to questions from Trustees CT stated that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trust Members had requested that the Board arrange the exercise. He did not therefore propose that Members be involved in developing the Brief; - he would ensure that the scoping exercise met the requirements of Members and of Trust Articles/DfE guidance on external reviews. In that regard, it was essential to ensure that the Reviewer understood the distinct features of the Trust as described at Minutes 14 and 15 above. This would be made clear in the Brief for the Review; - the scope/Brief for the Review would be brought to the Trust Board for approval at either the May or June meeting*; - he was satisfied that a review by an NLG would meet the requirement of Members for an independent third party review; and - he anticipated that the Review would be conducted over approximately two days. <p><u>Safeguarding</u></p> <p>LW stated that the assurance given by CP (Minute 13 above) that his termly report to the Board, and the Headteacher reports to LGBs, would in future include a section on Safeguarding had addressed the issues she had intended to raise under this item. She suggested that in her capacity as Trust Board Safeguarding lead, SD arrange to meet with CT with a view to developing appropriate safeguarding monitoring and reporting arrangements*.</p> <p><u>Kingsway Recruitment</u></p> <p>HCu agreed to support LW on the Recruitment Panel. CP agreed to provide HCu with a copy of the Trust Recruitment Policy.</p> <p><u>ESFA/DfE Reorganisation</u></p> <p>Trustees received and noted a Paper prepared by LW setting out the key findings of a Review into the governance and effectiveness of the ESFA, the conclusions from which had resulted in a planned re-organisation of the current Regional Schools Commissioner structure. LW suggested that, once the new structure had been established it was likely that further reforms of the schools sector and possible refreshment of the academisation programme would be forthcoming.</p>	<p>CT</p> <p>SD/CT</p> <p>LW/HCu CP</p>
<p><i>*Clerk's note</i></p>	<p>16.2 The Chair has requested that the Review take place in late May / early June 2022, the scope for the exercise to be available in advance.</p> <p>16.3 The Chair advises that SD will also meet GW, as deputy CEO with brief for Safeguarding.</p>	
<p>17</p> <p>17.1</p>	<p>Countesthorpe Academy : Prospective Development</p> <p>GW outlined proposals for the future potential development of Countesthorpe Academy, to include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a 3G pitch similar to that at Bosworth Academy; 	<p>All to note</p>

17.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - development of an E-sports curriculum and supporting facilities, the potential of which, including benefits and future career opportunities for students, were explained. Practical examples from elsewhere were given. (In response to a question from a Trustee, GW confirmed that the content of the E-sports curriculum would be appropriate for the under 18s; - provision of a 24 place E-sports arena; and - the potential benefits of the proposed facilities for the local community. <p>GW explained that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - he had posted further details of the proposal on Governor Hub immediately prior to the meeting. He encouraged Trustees to review these; - his purpose in presenting proposals at this stage was to promote the concept and to gauge the level of support amongst Trustees; - feasibility studies and significant capital expenditure (around £500,000) would be required. However he and senior colleagues were confident that the facilities could be accommodated on the site and, if approved, would prove to be successful, not only opening up new opportunities for students across the MAT but also in attracting sixth form students to the College. It was likely that partnership funding could be secured to support the cost, a significant part of which could be met from Countesthorpe reserves; - he had held preliminary discussions about provision of the 3G pitch with representatives of the Leicestershire and Rutland County Football Association who were very supportive of the proposal and who had advised that, subject to a firm commitment to proceed, the Association would undertake, at their expense, a full feasibility study of the location and requirements for the pitch; and - discussions with interested parties of the proposed E-sports concept had suggested significant interest from Providers and a projected three year pay back on the investment required. Countesthorpe Academy would be the only school in the area and one of very few nationally to offer this facility. 	Trustees
17.3	<p>CP commented that if Trustees supported and agreed to proceed with the proposal, marketing and engagement with local sports and activity Clubs would be developed. An essential criteria for those wishing to partner the school in use of the facilities would be formal agreement to commit to LiFE values.</p>	GW
17.4	<p>Following discussion it was agreed that further reports on development of the proposal be presented to the Finance, Audit and Infrastructure Committee (or the successor Finance and Resources Committee). (LMcD offered to discuss the proposal further with GW with a view to bringing his professional knowledge to the discussion.</p>	
18	Reports from Trustees – none.	
19	Trust Risk Register	All to note
19.1	CP presented the Register which was received and noted . There was no discussion of the confidential section of the Register.	
19.2	<p>Trustees asked questions to which CP responded, including</p> <p>See Confidential Minute</p>	
20	Staffing (Governance)	All to note
20.1	CT reported that following his appointment to a position elsewhere, SAMcD had resigned his Consultancy to the Trust. He expressed his appreciation to SAMcD for the significant	

<p>20.2</p> <p>20.3</p>	<p>contribution he had made to development of Trust Governance during his time with the Trust.</p> <p>A job description for a Trust Governance Officer had been developed and a review of current LGB clerking arrangements was underway. An interim solution would be required for the summer term, the intention being that permanent arrangements would be in place from September 2022.</p> <p>Trustees noted the position. (See minute 25 below).</p>	<p>CT</p>
<p>21</p> <p>21.1</p> <p>21.2</p>	<p>Trust Governance Improvement Programme</p> <p>Further to Minute 14 of the previous meeting, CT reported that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) arrangements were in hand for the independent Review of Trust Governance requested by Members (Minute 16.1 above); b) development of the draft Trust Scheme of Delegation was proceeding as planned: Terms of Reference and Delegations for the new Risk and Audit Committee and Finance and Resources Committee had been agreed (Minute 12 above). Discussions with LGBs were continuing regarding revised Terms of Reference and delegations for LGBs. The final element of the Scheme (delegations from the Trust Board to the Executive) was being developed; c) the Project Plan for the Improving Governance Review being undertaken by CT/SAMcD was not yet available but would be brought to a future meeting. The Plan would include target completion dates for each element of the Review; d) the review of Trustee and Governor Training was underway. This was a complex exercise given the number and differing existing contractual arrangements that schools and the Trust currently had with a range of Providers. The Training Programme approved by the Board (Hollis Associates) had, to date, been well received by participants. The Training Review would be included within the Project Plan; and e) Registration on Governor Hub was now close to 100%. Trustees agreed this was a significant achievement. SAMcD was requested to arrange training in use of the system for Trustees and Governors, to be provided remotely if possible. <p>In reply to questions CT and SAMcD advised that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the contract that some schools had with the County Council Traded Services (Governor Support) Unit was due automatically to renew on 1st April annually. CT was minded to terminate the arrangement; - the Trust had enrolled with the NGA (Gold Service). This entitled all Trustees and Governors to access the NGA on-line training and advice facilities. In order to facilitate this, the NGA provided a data base that had to be populated and maintained by the Trust. The issue was further complicated because some schools already had different levels of NGA membership but their maintenance of the data base had lapsed. Additionally, membership of LCC Governor Services entitled Trustees and Governors to access NGA on-line training facilities but the data base for this had also lapsed. Currently, no-one in the Trust had responsibility for co-ordinating the actions to make best use of NGA membership. Doing so was a resource issue. At the request of Trustees CT agreed to discuss the issue with the CEO's PA; - with regard to the review of Trust and school websites, SAMcD reminded Trustees that he had completed this in October 2021 when he had advised that, in terms of Trustee and Governor Membership, Register of Interests and record of attendance at meetings, all Trust websites were out of date and therefore non-compliant. The resources required to address this were not available. The issue had been raised at the recent meeting of the Finance, 	<p>All to note</p> <p>CT SAMcD</p> <p>CT</p> <p>CT</p> <p>SAMcD</p> <p>CT</p> <p>CT</p>

21.3	<p>Audit and Infrastructure Committee at which it had been noted that the capacity of the Governance and Compliance Section had recently been increased from 1 to 3.5 FTE staff. The Chief Finance Officer had agreed that, in light of this, that Section would assume responsibility for updating these records on all Trust/school websites; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the revised and streamlined approach to Policy Review was included within the Governance Improvement Programme. However, as advised at previous meetings this was a task requiring significant resource which was not currently available. Development of the revised approach and supporting assurance arrangements would be included in the Project Plan. <p>The Board noted the position.</p>	<p>SM</p> <p>CT</p>
<p>22</p> <p>22.1</p> <p>22.2</p>	<p>Proposed Admission of Desford Primary School to the Trust</p> <p>CT presented his report, posted on Governor Hub in advance of the meeting. He reminded the Board of the background to the proposal and, in response to questions from Trustees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - confirmed that the Governing Body of the school had formally agreed to join the Trust and were currently undertaking necessary consultations and due process. The Governing Body had been hopeful of early admission but had been advised that the prior formal approval of the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) was required and therefore the most likely admission date would be September 2022; - the school (a small one form entry) was currently judged by Ofsted as a “Good” school and would therefore add to Primary capacity, thereby supporting and complementing the Primary offering of the Trust. Admission would bring the total number of schools in the Trust to ten (6 Secondary and 4 Primary); - the resources required to absorb the school into the Trust were available. Capacity and arrangements were in place to support the school through the Central Team subject to an agreed admission date of September 2022; and - admission of the school would be subject to due diligence, the outcome from which would be reported to Trustees. <p>Resolved that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) the proposal to admit Desford Primary School to the Trust be approved, subject to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● completion of and satisfactory outcome from due diligence; and ● the approval of the Regional Schools Commissioner. ii) subject to (i) above, the Chief Executive be authorised to take all necessary actions to secure the admission of the school to the Trust on a date to be agreed with the RSC and the school. 	<p>All to note</p> <p>CT</p>
	<i>HCu and HM withdrew from the meeting (8.47 p.m.)</i>	
<p>23</p> <p>23.1</p>	<p>Items of Any Other Business</p> <p>See Confidential Minute</p>	<p>All to note</p>
<p>24</p>	<p>Dates of Future Meetings</p> <p><u>Trust Board:</u></p>	<p>All to note</p>

	<p>9 May</p> <p>27 June</p> <p>Finance, Audit and Infrastructure Committee : 7 June</p> <p>Trust Strategic Planning Day : 7 June</p>	
	<i>All staff and non-Trustees withdrew from the meeting (8.51 p.m.)</i>	
25	Staffing Matter (Governance)	All to note
25.1	Trustees discussed recommendations provided by CT for staffing support for Governance to the Trust from September 2022.	
25.2	They recognised the great value added by CT in the post of Director of Governance since his appointment but were concerned that the title didn't cover the work he was undertaking for much of his time. They also recognised the significant value he brought to many other aspects of the Trust Executive. His mapping of the current structure had been particularly valuable to Trustees.	
25.3	<p>Following a detailed discussion, Trustees</p> <p>Resolved that -</p> <p>the staffing structure for governance support to the Trust be approved as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two levels of post, part or full time – likely to be term time only plus two weeks. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> One, Governance Officer level, to lead clerking of the Trust Board and Panel / appeal hearings, management of Governor Hub, the Trust Scheme of Delegation, Policy Review and development support etc. (Trustees understood that this would be a Governance Professional as outlined in the NGA Job description. The post would report to a member of the Executive, to be agreed); and The second level, Governance clerk(s) to be line-managed by the Governance Officer and who would clerk and support LGB meetings. 	
25.4	Arising from the above discussion, Trustees welcomed CT's offer to stay on in the Director for Governance role from September 2022 but, as it was likely that he would be asked to undertake other work for the Trust, they felt that this would continue to blur reporting lines. They were however comfortable that, if he was to continue to work for the Trust in other capacities as seemed likely, a handover with the Governance Officer could be facilitated. It was recognised that recruitment to the above posts may go beyond September. Trustees welcomed the possible extension of the current arrangement with CT until recruitment of the Governance Officer was complete.	
25.5	In response to a Trustee question , CP confirmed that the overall cost of Governance support would be lower when the structure above was implemented.	
<i>samcd draft agreed with Chair</i>	<i>The meeting concluded at 21.00 p.m.</i>	

A small rectangular image showing a handwritten signature in dark ink on a light-colored, slightly textured background. The signature appears to be 'L. Warren' written in a cursive, somewhat stylized hand.

.....(Signed)
L. Warren (Chair)

9th May 2022