

**LIFE MULTI ACADEMY TRUST
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
HELD ON THE 5TH SEPTEMBER, 2022 AT 6.00PM**

VIRTUAL MEETING

NON CONFIDENTIAL

COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD

NAME		END DATE OF OFFICE	DESIGNATED ROLE	ATTENDANCE
Liz Warren (LW)	Trustee	29.06.2024	Chair	Y
Chris Parkinson (CPA)	Trustee		CEO	Y
Hazel Cole (HCO)	Trustee	30.09.2023	Vice Chair	Y
Hannah Cusworth (HCU)	Trustee Coopted	22.02.2026		Y
Sue Dunford (SD)	Trustee	05.09.2025		Y
Liam McDonagh (LMcD)	Trustee	02.09.2024		Y
Andy Smith (ASM)	Trustee	19.09.2022		Y
Vacancy	Trustee			
Vacancy	Trustee			
IN ATTENDANCE				
Gareth Williams (GW)			Deputy CEO	
Nicola Koncarevic (NKO)			Director of Education	
Chris Tweedale (CTW)			Director of Governance	
Sarah Mayes(SMA)			Chief Finance Officer	
Sian Griffiths (SGR)			Head of Governance/Clerk to the Board	

The agenda was rescheduled and agenda item 3a was taken as the first item.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2022 – 2023

The Clerk confirmed that no nominations had been received prior to the meeting for the Chair of the Board role. Liz Warren confirmed she was happy to continue as Chair for a further term. Liz Warren was nominated by Andy Smith and seconded by Liam McDonagh.

RESOLVED: the Trustees approved Liz Warren's election as Chair for a further term of 1 year.

Liz Warren took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

2. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed all present including SGR the new Head of Governance who provided a brief overview of the new Clerking Team. CTW/SGR had interviewed and appointed 4 Clerks who had a broad range of experience and skillset, CTW confirmed he was very happy with the appointments. Each Clerk would support 2 Schools.

3. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

The Trustees were asked to declare any potential pecuniary interest or conflict of interest between an individual and the governing board as a whole with the business to be discussed during the meeting. No verbal declarations were made.

3b. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2022 – 2023

The Clerk confirmed that no nominations had been received prior to the meeting for the Chair of the Board role. Hazel Cole advised that she had indicated during the Summer Term that she would not be seeking a further term but agreed to stand in on an interim basis until the next meeting of the Board in October. Hazel Cole was nominated by Andy Smith and seconded by Liam McDonagh.

RESOLVED: the Trustees approved Hazel Cole's election as Vice Chair on an interim basis until the October Board meeting.

4. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The non confidential minutes of the Board meeting held on the [27th June, 2022](#) and [7th July, 2022](#) were approved and confirmed as an accurate record.

5. MATTERS ARISING

The Trustees reviewed and updated the action log from the previous meetings –

DATE	NO.	ACTION	WHO	WHEN	UPDATE
Trust Planning Day					
26.05.2022		MAT Self-Evaluation - Nicola to tell Trustees when a first draft is ready and where to find it; Trustees to work on the Governance section - TBA	NCO		ONGOING - See below
Update – NKO confirmed the MAT SEF had been discussed at the Exec Meeting on the 1 st September and work to populate the SEF had started including the uploading of evidence in readiness for consideration by the Board.					
		Working Party Slots, 2-3 weeks after each Trust Board next year – Liz to add dates to calendar	LW		COMPLETED - see below
Update – LW confirmed dates would be agreed as and when the Board agreed to establish a Working Group.					
Trust Board					
		LW and CTW to discuss Governance Project plan further	LW/CTW		REMOVE – see below.
Update - overtaken by EGR plan. CTW Action Plan to be incorporated into the EGR Action Plan (ACTION SGR)					
		At Trustee planning Day, further discuss cost of Central Services (Top slice discussed) and delegation to Executive (not achieved – LW to discuss with CT and CP and make recommendation, any other Trustees welcome)	LW		ONGOING - the Reserves Policy is a step towards this
27.06.2022	3	ASM advised Working Party Living Wage may be complete by next meeting, if not September. The Chair asked for this piece of work to be undertaken as a priority as this would feed into CFO's work to produce the budget.	ASM	09.2022	COMPLETED - see agenda item 4c Pay Policy
	4	CEO would ask Headteachers to incorporate the safeguarding element into the report commentary	CPA	ASAP	COMPLETED
	5c	Trust Contribution Records - All reports to be submitted if possible before the end of term.	Trustees	ASAP	ONGOING – see below.
Update - only Ibstock outstanding, HCO to complete and upload					
	6	F & I Cttee proposal that the F & I TOR are updated to reflect that LGBs will be informed that, in light of the new detailed SoD, they no longer need to send a rep from September and move the Finance Committee papers to within the Trust Board section of Governor Hub	SGR	ASAP	COMPLETED
07.07.2022	2.1	Minutes of the previous meeting to be circulated and agreed at the September meeting.	LW		COMPLETED
	3.1	Health & Safety policy - to circulate via email the revised Health and Safety policy for agreement. This will be confirmed via email, then agreed and ratified at the September meeting. Chair to add to the agenda.	CTW		COMPLETED - see agenda item 9e below.

	5.2	To email the proposed LiFE MAT reserves policy to all Trustees over the summer and this will be discussed, agreed and proposed for ratification at the next meeting.	SMA		COMPLETED - uploaded into meeting folder see agenda item 7a.
	5.4	Anti Fraud Policy, to ensure that this is an agenda item at the next members meeting and to ensure that this is clarified.	CTW		COMPLETED - to be added onto AGM agenda
	5.5	To consider the appropriate level of delegation and thresholds for the CFO to be able to approve on the Trustees behalf. This should be taken to the next Trustees Finance Meeting.	CTW/ASM		ONGOING - to be taken to the next Finance Committee
	6.6	Dove Bank – CPA to email the Trustees once he has spoken to the RSC and Ofsted with the outcome of his conversation.	CPA		COMPLETED
	7.1	To arrange completion of any outstanding Trust Contribution Records	All Trustees		ONGOING – see below.
Update - only Ibstock outstanding, HCO to complete and upload					
	8.1	To sign up for the Disciplinary Training from the NGA.	All Trustees		ONGOING – see below
Update - LW was not able to access the training via the link and queried whether any other Trustee had been able to access.					
	8.2	Complaints Policy, to ensure that this policy is updated and circulated prior to the next meeting for ratification.	SGR		ONGOING – see below.
Update - to be considered at the October meeting. CPA suggested that the policy should be uploaded onto Governor Hub and approval confirmed through the noticeboard. ACTION: SGR to upload and Trustees to comment/approve.					

SMA advised that Catherine Hedley had been appointed as the new Business Operations Manager with a start date of the 10th October, 2022, Catherine was currently working 1 day per week.

6. GOVERNANCE

- a. The Trustees received the [External Governance Review Report](#) (EGR) and agreed the next steps to establish a Working Party to look at the report and action plan. The Trustees believed the report gave a very positive outcome and was as expected but provided an agenda to support progress moving forward. In terms of finance LW felt the highlighted areas reflected the issues raised by SMA over the past year.

The membership of the Working Party was considered and agreed as – LW, ASM, CPA, CTW, SMA, SGR however other Trustees were welcome to attend.

ACTION: SGR to upload dates/times over the next couple of weeks and attendees to confirm their availability.

- b. [Articles of Association](#)

The Trustees considered the articles and noted the EGR Report Action Plan recommended ‘consider adopting DfE new (2021) model articles of association to be fully in line with current best practice’.

RESOLVED: The Trustees agreed that the EGR recommendation would be considered by the Working Group as part of the overall review of the EGR Report and Action Plan.

- c. The Trustees noted that Andy Smith's term of office was due to expire on the 19th September, 2022. Andy Smith confirmed he was happy to continue for a further term. Andy Smith's reappointment was proposed by Sue Dunford and seconded by Liz Warren.

RESOLVED: the Trustees approved Andy Smith's reappointment as a Trustee with effect from the 20th September, 2022 for a further term of 4 years.

- d. The Trustees noted the 2 Trustee vacancies and received an update on recruitment to the roles. LW had been approached by an individual who had HR expertise but unfortunately since their discussion had withdrawn due to an increase in workload. LW had also had discussion with a number of other individuals but no progress had been made to date, 2 individuals were more interested in becoming involved at LGB level. Contact had also been made with the Stephen Lawrence Foundation, the Trustees were mindful that there was a lack of ethnicity and diversity on the Board.

ACTION: LW and SGR to discuss and look at other organisations to approach and other recruitment channels.

NKO advised that a National Forest Open Evening was due to take place in the near future and was happy to circulate flyers at the event.

ACTION: SGR to contact JM to source flyer and forward to NKO.

- e. The Trustees considered the CEO Performance Management Panel and agreed the membership as follows - Sue Dunford (Chair), Liam McDonagh, Liz Warren.
- f. The Trustees reviewed the [Trust Code of Conduct, 2022](#). The Trustees were confident that the code reflected the 7 Nolan Principles and covered all areas including time commitment etc but minor amendments were required in terms of replacing 'Governor' with 'Trustee'.

RESOLVED: the Trustees agree to adopt the Code of Conduct subject to the above amendments.

ACTION: SGR to amend the code of conduct and also circulate to all LGB's for noting and adoption.

- g. Ensure all Trustees have completed the Declaration of Pecuniary Interest and confirmations including KCSIE, 2022 via Governor Hub.

ACTION: SGR to upload Code of Conduct and upload message onto Governor Hub requesting all Trustees to complete the necessary confirmations and declarations.

- h. The Trustees reviewed the list of Trustees with Special Responsibilities.
LW advised that Trustees were no longer linked to specific Schools but were linked to the Strategic Wheel areas instead, Safeguarding – Sue Dunford, F & I Committee Chair - Andy Smith and A & R Committee Chair – Hazel Cole.

ACTION: LW to send list to SGR for uploading on to Governor Hub and also to provide an update on Committee membership.

- i. Ensure the Trust Website and Get Information about School (GIAS) is compliant

ACTION: SGR would check and update as necessary.

- j. To review the Skills Audit and consider future training needs
SGR advised a number of Skills Audit Forms were outstanding. The information from the forms would be populated into the matrix which would provide an overview of the gaps in the Boards skillset and support the recruitment of appropriately experienced Trustees.

ACTION: Trustees to complete the Skills Audit Form asap and return to SGR

7. OVERVIEW OF DIRECTION FOR

- a. Reserves including policy progress [Link to Papers](#). The draft policy had been uploaded into the folder together with the Reserves Financial Year 2022 - 2023 Sheet (Appendices). SMA provided an overview, the draft policy was a starting point. The Trust Board was responsible for the effective and efficient use of available resources, was ultimately responsible for the allocation of resources to deliver the strategic vision of the Trust and was had responsibility for maintaining sufficient reserves to ensure that the Trust remained financially stable. The purpose of the policy was to assist in strategic planning by considering how new projects or activities would be funded, informed the budget process at both a School and at Trust level. The ESFA required a 5 – 8% reserve, the Trusts reserves were significantly higher, so SMA had looked to identify what each School may need. There were a significant number of differing situations and challenges which impacted on those requirements e.g. deprivation. The policy was at the first draft stage for review by the trustees.

ASM felt the draft policy was very fair and pulled in a few categories but also defined the Trusts current position and where the Trust wanted to be. Some Schools would still choose to retain their own reserves but that was a common issue. The reserves was just one way in which the Trust could support Schools there were a number of other ways. ASM believed this was a very good starting point.

Q: Has the draft policy been circulated to stakeholders e.g Schools for comment?

A: No, we wanted the Board to consider the draft policy in the first instance, there is also a possibility of an announcement by the Government this week around additional funding e.g. energy costs. We don't think we'll have a problem as a Trust but in terms of individual Schools they may move into a deficit position and would require support from the Trust. Nationally the Government can't allow a position where 50% of MAT's fail if the current situation around increase costs continue. As a Trust we will need to be cautious in terms of non compulsory/additional expenditure.

Q: Who has the final say and at what level are the decisions made on the spending of reserves, SMA do you feel you have the controls we need as a Trust?

A: Yes, but the reserves are Trust reserves and some Schools will struggle, whereas some wouldn't have a problem. We have Schools with higher levels of challenge due to deprivation etc who would really struggle if they weren't in the Trust, we do believe that Headteachers realise that if one School fails we all fail.

Q: So what action do we need to take?

A: Trustees need to agree whether we should share the policy and appendices with Headteachers and Chairs and ask for feedback for consideration by the Board in October.

RESOLVED: the Trustees agrees the draft policy and appendices should be circulated to Headteachers and Chairs for consultation.

ACTION: CPA would take to the meeting with Headteachers on the 13th September, 2022 and LW would take to the Chairs Group on the 28th September, 2022 for consideration and comment.

8. DATA – KS2, GCSE'S AND A' LEVELS [Link to Folder](#)

LW asked CPA to provide an overview of headlines, Trustees were advised that the data would be considered in greater depth at a later meeting.

CPA advised that this year's data should be viewed with caution, the data did not always reflect the attainment of the Students in difficult circumstances. Those difficulties included the impact of Covid e.g. Parents working to ensure the Children engaged online the School communities have been variable in their response to the difficulties. Comparisons should not be made between Schools in the Trust or nationally. More significant analysis would be undertaken in the coming weeks which would identify the causes behind the data but with some caveat. The issues identified for this year may not be a reflection of previous years or in future years.

KS2, the data was generally pleasing within the Schools in the Trust there were also some positives in the associate Schools – Desford and Dove Bank. In Braunstone Frith there had been some real positives in a community which was a largely deprived area where the expectation had been for a greater level of drop off of in those Schools. Work

was taking place around Progress scores. Desford was strong in terms of their scores whereas Dove Bank had been impacted by Staff absences, which had been raised by CPA in the July meeting in particular around Math's which had impacted on the combined scores, in particular around an unqualified Staff cover who struggled with Math's.

Q: The data shows Pupils at expected in Desford 79% reading, is that expected and better?

A: Its expected +.

A' levels, there was quite a bit of variance in terms of prior attainment. Bosworth had made significant progress on the previous 2 years intake in comparison to 2019. One of the positives was that at the end of results day all the Pupils has secured places.

Q: Has the gap in PP increased from pre lockdown?

A: Yes, across all Key Stages and Schools.

Q: Are the gaps worse than we expected?

A: We don't know as yet as we haven't quantified, Staff have worked really hard to ameliorate the impact and Schools will be looking at this as part of their Strategic Plan.

Q: Within the Schools have they noticed differences amongst and between subjects e.g. Chemistry and Geography and how Pupils have coped and also are there any concerns from previous years e.g. a slightly weaker Department has it been able to overcome the difficulties or has Covid exacerbated issues?

A: We're looking at outcores in the subjects at a later date the Board will receive a more comprehensive overview, in A' levels the smaller cohorts can skew the data e.g. in a group of 5 the results of 3 Pupils (who have challenges) can have a significant impact whereas in a normal size cohort this wouldn't happen. At A' level we are seeing some variations, there may be a number of reasons for this one of which is health and wellbeing of Staff and how they have returned after the pandemic as well as the Children and their Parent's. As a Trust we've had high levels of Staff absence and continue to do so but we need to let the Schools carry out their own analysis first then speak to the Headteachers to make sure we get the analysis process right.

GCSE's, across some School's quite a common issue had been where Pupils had dropped 2/3 subjects to focus on the subjects which would support them to get on to their subject courses in future years. This had impacted on our Schools so languages took a hit in Winstanley but to a lesser degree at Ashby. Our Schools went into the pandemic with aspirational curriculums which made it more difficult. The Trust need to be mindful not to make judgements until all the analysis has been completed. The SISRA collaborative data there may be some issues around the accuracy but at the moment this was the best indicator of progress score. MIS shares about a 1/3rd of the data nationally to produce the progress scores. There had been massive discrepancies in the data in terms of regions, e.g the difference between London and the South East was significant and the East Midlands where our Schools were based was one of the lowest performing areas. Ofsted have advised the Inspection Teams not to look at a single or group of figures and compare to 2019 or other Schools and draw conclusions, in particular September, 2019 when inspections were undertaken under the old framework. Schools had been impacted by a number of challenges e.g. where Pupils were on placement at alternative provisions, PA's (Persistent Absences) and Departments who have experienced high/multiple numbers of Staff absences due to Covid which had caused a lack of cohesion in terms of cover and continuity and the Progress 8 data had not taken into account the effects of SEMH.

Q: Do Headteachers and Staff feel valued in terms of SATS etc?

A: Yes, by their Schools but it would be useful for the Trust to recognise their achievements and effort.

Q: Would it be appropriate for the Trustees to send a message to congratulate Students and Staff, do we have any monies for gifts e.g Staff room delivery?

A: We have a tight gifting policy but we can look at this (CPA/SMA), we have some funds but not for individual gifts for Staff so could cover this cost.

ACTION: letter to be sent to Schools from the Trustees and SMA to look at funding a gift for the Staff room.

9. POLICIES

SGR provided an update on the work around policies. The schedule produced by CTW had been updated to reflect any changes in the DFE statutory guidance March, 2022. SGR would be emailing out to all Schools to request their Policy Schedule this week and also a reminder that whilst the piece of work around policies was taking place all School policies must be reviewed and approved by the LGB and uploaded onto the School Website. The schedule from the Schools would be included into the main policy schedule. Following a discussion with CTW all HR and Governance Policies would be Trust wide policies but Teaching & Learning would fall under the remit of the LGB/Schools.

- a. [KCSIE, 2022](#) and [Summary of Changes](#)

CTW/SGR were exploring options in terms of Safer Recruitment and Basic Safeguarding Courses. NKO suggested using the National College which the Trust subscribed to, this was useful as the course was online and Trustees/Governors could the course was online so could be completed when individuals had time. The courses were accredited. LW also mentioned the NGA course which the Trust also subscribed too. CPA commented that whilst the training delivered by Hollis training was not accredited the training supported the ethos of the Trusts approach to safeguarding.

RESOLVED : the accredited training would be completed through NGA/National College.

ACTION: GW/SD to discuss and then SD will speak to Governors.

ACTION: GW to confirm what parts of the KCSIE the Trustees need to have read.

- b. Safeguarding Policy, 2022 – update received.
- c. Pay Policy, 2022 – Trustees were advised that the Living Wage had been implemented but in terms of Teachers and Support Staff estimated monies had been included in the budget, the pay awards had not as yet been agreed. SMA also raised the potential risk which the Trusts own living wage policy together with those pay awards (which were expected to be large for Teachers) would mean for most of the Schools in terms of their budgets and asked Trustees to be aware that the challenge was likely to cause a return to an in-year deficit. When this risk was clearer it would be included in the risk register. CTW also raised an issue in terms of the Trust wide policy and ensuring consistency and moderation across the Schools, this was piece of work which SGR/CTW was working on and one proposal was for HR to be involved in the Pay Committee to ensure consistency
- d. Health & Safety Policy – the Trustees received an update on responses to points made on the 7th July, 2022. The amended document had been uploaded today, Jeanette Harris had looked at concerns raised by IK and had now amended the policy and template. LW confirmed she was happy with the documents and asked if other Trustees had any queries. CTW confirmed that Health & Safety was the employer's responsibility, but the Board needed to agree the level of delegation to Schools. CPA agreed that the policy was trust wide, but the appendices would reflect the difference in the sites e.g. swimming pools etc.

7.44 pm LW connection dropped out HCO took the Chair.

ACTION: CTW/SGR/SMA/GW to look at School Generic appendices before October meeting.

10. AOB

- a. LW requested a list of names, roles and contact details for the Central Team.

ACTION: CPA to ask JM to send a copy to SGR for uploading onto Governor Hub.

- b. Working Party to look at EGR dates/times.

ACTION: SGR to put suggested dates/times on Governor Hub.

7.48pm LW rejoined the meeting

11. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETINGS

The Trustees noted the date and time of the next Board meeting on the 10th October, 2022 at 6.00pm.

The meeting closed at 8.01pm