

**LIFE MULTI ACADEMY TRUST
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
HELD ON THE 7th JULY, 2025 AT 5.00PM
AT
Room E1, Bosworth Academy, Leicester Lane, Desford, Leicester LE9 9JL**

COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD

NAME		END DATE OF OFFICE	DESIGNATED ROLE	ATTENDANCE
Liz Warren (LWA)	Trustee	09.02.2029	Interim Chair	Y
Chris Parkinson (CPA)	Trustee		CEO	Y
David Gordon (DGO)	Trustee	28.01.2028		Y - virtually
David Maitland (DMA)	Trustee	09.02.2029		Y
Sue Dunford (SDU)	Trustee	05.09.2025		Y
Liam McDonagh (LMcD)	Trustee	09.02.2029		Y - virtually
Andy Smith (ASM)	Trustee	19.09.2026		Y
Ja Kim (JKI)	Trustee	09.02.2029		Y - virtually
Rose Harvey (RHA)	Trustee (Coopted)	03.03.2028		Y
IN ATTENDANCE - STAFF				
Nicola Koncarevic (NKO)			Director of Education (NF)	
Gareth Williams (GWI)			Coordinator of Education (LF)	
Paul Maddox (PMA)			Executive CFO	
Sarah Mayes (SMA)			CFO	
Sophie Williams (SWI)			Executive Leader	
Lara Hall (LHA)			Director of School Improvement	
Ben White (BWH)			Director of School Improvement	
Amelia Smith (ASM)			Director of Primary Education	
Sian Griffiths (SGR)			Director of Governance & Admissions	
IN ATTENDANCE				
John Baumber (JBA)			Prospective Trustee	
Caroline Dickman (CDI)			Prospective Trustee	

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

LWA explained and apologised that she had not been able to complete the Trustee contribution calls with individual Trustees as in previous years. Following AKM's resignation she had agreed to step up as Interim Chair, moving forward DMA had kindly agreed to put his name forward as Chair, LWA would continue as Vice Chair unless another Trustee wished to put their name forward. In line with the note produce by SGR relating to election of Chair and Vice Chair, this was advance notice for all Trustees, who were asked to inform SGR if they wished to put their name forward. The elections would take place on the 22nd September, 2025 when the board next meets.

Currently the number of Trustees was 9 but when the proposed articles were approved this would increase the number to 12, it was hoped that this would be confirmed by January, 2026 when the AGM takes place. As everyone was aware RHA was currently a Coopted Trustee and the Members would be asked in January to appoint as a Trustee to the vacancy which had arisen following AKM's resignation. A further discussion would take place regarding JBA's appointment as a Coopted Trustee in the confidential part of this meeting. All Trustees were aware that a recruitment

drive to increase the number of Trustees was taking place. Caroline Dickman who currently worked for Leicester City Council has made an expression of interest but would need to seek permission from her line manager to progress her application to be a Trustee.

Both John and Caroline were present at the meeting, as observers, and were welcomed by the Chair on behalf of the Trust Board. All present provided an introduction.

2. DECLARATION OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

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

The meeting moved to agenda item 6b Infrastructure (SWI), 6c HR (SWI) and 6d School Improvement (LHA/BWH/ASM) staff then left the meeting following their contribution

Following discussions at the last board meeting, Trustees agreed that it would be helpful to have Senior Staff in attendance to present their reports and respond to any Trustee questions.

6b. Infrastructure, SWI, Executive Leader provided a brief overview –

The summary reflected the significant work undertaken by staff, it had not been possible to condense to one page, the report was a work in progress as SWI took on her new role as COO (Chief Operating Officer) in September. The KPIs and the metrics were not fully embedded in all areas as yet. This is one of the reasons why there were gaps, it was expected those would be tighter for next year. SWI was happy to take Trustees feedback in terms of content/format. The Trustees felt the content was useful.

Q: (DMA) Could you provide more detail about the IT restructure?

A: (SWI) Yes, the restructure is fairly minor and focuses on providing a more trust wide function whereas currently staff are employed/deployed to one specific school, in some areas there had been an imbalance in workloads, the restructure will provide a more consistent and effective approach, we will also end any contracts with external provider and will also be looking to recruit some apprenticeships. MWA had presented the proposals to CPA with the intention to present to the Headteachers Collaboration meeting but decided not to as the changes only impacted a small number of staff. The final proposal will be taken to the Infrastructure Committee in the Autumn term.

Q: (JKI) Looking at the proposal, if we're bringing the function in house why are we only looking at 1 apprenticeship should we be looking at recruiting more technical IT staff at a higher level?

A: (SWI) We already have the staff and capacity, it's more about centralising the function across the Trust with those staff having a more strategic role, delegating work to the apprenticeships.

A: (CPA) The only school which used an external provider was one of the small primaries, the ad hoc arrangements within some of the schools have now been formalised.

ACTION: SGR to place the IT restructure on the Infrastructure agenda.

ACTION: SWI to ask MWA to produce a report for Trustees to be considered at the Infrastructure Committee.

6c. HR (moved to the confidential part of the meeting)

6d. School Improvement (moved to the confidential part of the meeting)

3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The non-confidential minutes of the Board meeting held on the 31st March, 2025 were approved and confirmed as an accurate record.

4. MATTERS ARISING

The Trustees reviewed and updated the action log from previous meetings – for ease of reference ongoing actions highlighted in **blue** -

DATE	NO	ACTION	WHO	WHEN	UPDATES
23.09.2024	6e	Community Engagement – role of the executive CEO/LWA to agree who will lead on this item	CEO/AMA		COMPLETED
Update – CEO confirmed Dave Bennett (DBE), Headteacher at Winstanley who was part of the newly formed Trust Leadership Group had agreed to lead on this action. The Trust was developing this area which was connected to the community engagement part of the strategic wheel. CEO and DBE had met to agree the KPIs to ensure they aligned with other areas of the trusts strategic planning, this piece of work would be finalised by the end of this term. Part of the work, which had been completed included re-engagement with Leicester and Leicestershire Citizens Group.					
09.12.2024	11c	LWA/SGR to review the process to receive assurance from the LGBs.	LWA/SGR		COMPLETED
Update – SGR confirmed this was an ongoing action which aligned with an ongoing action from the chairs group - to review the process to review the assurance from the LGB's to the Trust Board, both actions had been paused until the ERG (external review of governance) had been completed. The reviewer had been asked to include this as part of the review and provide some recommendations. The report would be available in early May.					
31.03.2025	5aii	SGR to convene a meeting of the board of directors for the subsidiary company.	SGR	ASAP	ONGOING see update below.
Update – to be arranged in the Autumn term SGR to contact ASM					
	5b	Admissions - SGR to notify the Leicestershire County Council and Leicester City Council of the decision to move the in year function in house. .	SGR	ASAP	COMPLETED
	5d	Trust Board reporting and executive attendance - CEO to ensure there were 3 additional summary reports available for the July board meeting.	CEO	27.06.2025	COMPLETED see agenda item 6a, b & c
	5d	Trust Board reporting and executive attendance - SGR to place the summary reports as an item on the July agenda.	SGR	ASAP	COMPLETED see agenda item 6a, b & c
	5d	Trust Board reporting and executive attendance - LWA/CEO to agree attendance for the next meeting.	AMA/CEO	Agenda setting - May	COMPLETED
	6	SGR to ensure a letter on behalf of the Trustees is sent to the staff at Dove Bank and all staff who supported the school during the recent Ofsted.	SGR	ASAP	COMPLETED
	9	Strategic Wheel - SGR to add onto the July agenda.	SGR	ASAP	COMPLETED see agenda item 8
	10ai	SGR agreed to put SI meeting dates as an agenda item on the next SI agenda in May.	SGR	ASAP	COMPLETED
	10ai	LWA/SDU to progress the reporting process and timing of meetings etc in relation to the School Improvement Committee.	LWA/SDU	ASAP	COMPLETED
	10b	SGR to ensure LGB reports are available for the Trust Board in July.	SGR	27.06.2025	COMPLETED see agenda item 9b.
	11f	Professional Development & Appraisal Policy - LWA/CEO to agree a form of words and notify HR Business Partner.	LWA/CEO	ASAP	COMPLETED
	12b	SGR to send calendar invites to Trustees re: Strategy Day	SGR	ASAP	COMPLETED

5. GOVERNANCE & COMPLIANCE

- a. The Trustees **agreed** to appoint Sue Dunford as a Co-opted Trustee with effect from the 7th July, 2025 until such time as the Members can appoint for a further term of 4 years, at the AGM in January, 2026.
- b. Election of Chair and Vice Chair, new process shared with Trustees no comments received, so in line with the process the elections will take place in September.
- c. The Trustees reviewed and **agreed** the membership of the Finance, Infrastructure, School Improvement, People & Pay and Audit & Risk Committees from the 1st September, 2025 for 2025 - 2026.

The Trustees noted for the forthcoming year, as there may be some new Trustees and leavers, the board would need to be flexible in the short term and deploy Trustees closer to their strengths in the longer term. The composition of the committees may change, there were currently 4 prospective candidates 2 with a HR background, 1 with an educational background and 1 who was a qualified accountant. SGR would start the process to schedule interviews over the summer break, Trustees were asked and agreed to provide availability.

CEO Performance Management – this will need continuity LWA agreed to email all Trustees and bring the membership back to the September meeting.

ACTION: LWA to email Trustees and agree the membership of the CEO Performance Panel, to be reported at the September Board Meeting.

COMMITTEE	CHAIR	MEMBERSHIP
Audit & Risk	Ja Kim	David Maitland
		Andy Smith
		Ja Kim
Note/rationale	As DMA is stepping up as Chair of the Trust Board he should not Chair the Audit & Risk Committee but could continue as a member.	
Finance	Andy Smith	Andy Smith
		David Gordon
		Liam McDonagh
		Ja Kim
Note/rationale	David Gordon to join to provide continuity when Liam McDonagh steps away.	
Infrastructure	Andy Smith	Andy Smith
		Liam McDonagh
		Ja Kim
People & Pay	Rosie Harvey (Autumn term)	Rosie Harvey
		Liz Warren
		Liam McDonagh
School Improvement	Sue Dunford	Sue Dunford
		Rosie Harvey
		David Gordon
		John Baumber
Chairs Group	David Maitland/Liz Warren (TBC)	Chairs of LGB's (or their representatives)
CEO Performance Review	LWA will send an email to Trustees	

e. The Trustees ratified the appointments of the Chairs of the LGB's for 2025 - 2026 (received to date) -

SCHOOL	CHAIR
Ashby	Nigel Middleton
Bosworth	Peter Crowe
Braunstone Frith	
Countesthorpe	Anne Melville (up to 31.12.2025)
Desford	
Dove Bank	
Ibstock	
Ivanhoe	
Kingsway	Lis Stock (up to 31.12.2025)
The Winstanley	

f. External Review of Governance – the Trustees **agreed** to arrange a board planning session, similar to last year, to include a session with Clare Allen, ERG Reviewer who would present the report and support with the co construction of an action plan. CPA suggested this session could then move to a review of the VOST and strategic plan. The Trustees **agreed** the format of the session and a 2.00pm start.

ACTION: SGR to share dates with Trustees during September/October.

i. Board Effectiveness tool – the Trustees agreed to adopt the tool for use by the Trust Board to review skills, training and board effectiveness.

j. Gender Pay Gap Report – the Trustees noted the report had been published on the Trust Website.

Q: (RHA) Could we have the previous year's data for comparative purposes?

A: (CPA) Yes, we sought legal advice to ensure the format was compliant.

6. PERFORMANCE REPORT

a. The CEO's report was considered under the confidential part of the meeting.

b. Infrastructure - considered earlier in the meeting.

c. HR -- considered earlier in the meeting.

d. School Improvement - considered earlier in the meeting.

7. BUDGET

a. Finance – the Trustees received the Exec. CFO's Report including Management Accounts.

b. The Trustees reviewed the budget for 2025 - 2026 and the 3 year budget forecast for submission to the DFE by the 31st August, 2025.

PMA provided a brief overview of the management accounts, budget and forecast. The Management Accounts up to period 9, show a healthy position with a surplus of £1,400,000. PMA had started to draft period 10 accounts which were showing a £600,000 reduction, but this was still a positive in comparison to the earlier forecasts. A decision was made earlier in the year that any monies over and above the funding required to support the pay awards (the budget already included the contribution of 3%), would be ring fenced and moved into reserves as the current levels were 4% but should be 5% . The Trusts business case for in year funding relating to age range change for Ivanhoe had been rejected, as Trustees were aware the RISE advisor at Countesthorpe was working with the Trust. So if the Trust was able to end this year with a favourable variance to budget that would be a huge positive.

CPA explained this was the year where had the Trust continued to roll over the expenditure this would have led to a deficit of £2,600,000 so this was a positive outcome. The Trust has lost £1,600,000 of income over 3 years from Ivanhoe. The rationale for proposing a deficit, despite the fact that the reserves were below 5% was to allow us to invest £280,000 into Countesthorpe, funding would also be needed to invest into Ibstock and Ivanhoe, to cover the lost funding. The Trust will need to look at the in year funding application again, the legal advice received was to pursue the matter through a judicial review, serving notice may be enough to prompt the LA/DFE to move on this

matter.

The Trustees agreed that the 3 year forecast reflected a much more positive position, ASM confirmed the budget and forecast had been reviewed in depth at the Finance Committee.

RESOLVED: the Trustees approved the budget and 3 year forecast for submission to the DFE by the 31st August, 2025.

- c. The Trustees reviewed the Top Slice Statement 2025 -2026. The Trustees noted the statement would be retitled to Trust Investment Contribution. PMA confirmed there had been a minor amendment in relation to governance.

RESOLVED: the Trustees approved the statement for 2025 – 2026.

8. STRATEGIC WHEEL incl. KPI's

The Trustees received the draft KPIs for consideration, approval and sign off by the Trust Board. The document was shared on screen and CPA provided an overview of the document and each section. The steering wheel had been in place for a number of years and Trustees were part of the co-construction process for this steering wheel. Each of these 4 quadrants had their own VOST, vision, objective, strategy, tactics. For each spoke there was a lead who was responsible and accountable for both writing the planning statement and the outcomes for the spoke. These outcomes would feed into the trust report in terms of review against the KPI's. The next section covered the rating system which would be used, all staff were familiar with this process and Headteachers used that to evaluate their own strategic planning wheels. This was an example of a VOST with the vision, objective, strategies and then the tactics, the blue areas were the KPI's, co-constructed with the Headteachers so that they understand how their strategic plan fed into this. This had resulted in a greater alignment around the strategic wheels that could be seen for each of the schools. The overall trust statement feeds into the trustee report, which includes each of the schools reports, and how it feeds against one consistent strategy.

CPA thanked those Trustees who had commented on the document.

CPA explained that whilst delivery was measured the calculation was not based on a numerical measure. An example was improving attendance, the data was accessed through ARBOR which provided details of the children who have significant absences, but this is too simplistic, schools should not create perverse results as there were so many factors to be considered.

The Peer Review Quality Assurance framework which had been introduced, initially at Countesthorpe, and with slight amendments, had now been introduced in other schools. The review looked at the school's own strategic wheel and each of the quadrants, and which ones would be measured. It would also cross-reference the Headteacher's views against the particular areas in the review. All of these processes now align with each of the schools strategic plan and the trust steering wheel and feed into the KPI's.

Q: (SDU) LHA has introduced a very good assessment format for a very difficult process which was extremely good. She has managed to get the schools to look at their data in a very positive way?

A: (CPA) Those reports should also be read in conjunction with the new peer review systems. Schools will cross reference with the peer reviews, so everything aligns.

LWA felt this was a more cohesive approach across the trust rather than a number of different schools. CPA explained that this work had been paused due to the work created by the high levels of Ofsted's and other significant school improvement issues.

Q: (LWA) The KPI's which are used to measure, are we confident they will work, ultimately it's only one part of the whole boards remit?

A: (CPA) Some KPI's may need adjusting, we're expecting the national curriculum review and the new inspection framework which may have an impact, we need to ensure our schools are safe.

RESOLVED: the Trustees approved the KPI's.

9. COMMITTEE & LGB ASSURANCES

a. The Trustees received the summary reports from the following committees –

- i. Infrastructure, 6th May, 2025
- ii. School Improvement, 20th May, 2025
- iii. Audit & Risk, 11th June, 2025
- iv. School Improvement, 18th June, 2025
- v. Pay & People, 30th June, 2025 see confidential folder
- vi. Finance, 1st July, 2025

LWA had found them very useful and supported by staff attending the meeting, this had provided a good overview. Trustees were invited to ask questions/make comments on the contents/format.

Q: Where are we in terms of the AI strategy, Ofsted are stating they will be looking at AI as part of their visits?

A: (CPA) BWH had undertaken a piece of work with Ask Kira as a starting point, the system learns about LiFE MAT strategies and policies as we upload copies.

JBA advised there was due to be a Trust to Trust collaboration webinars, one is on AI and impact on quality of education, it should have been held on the 9th July but had now been rescheduled to the 2nd week in September.

RHA agreed the summaries were helpful but was concerned about duplication, do we need the reports from the staff or just have the summaries. LWA agreed and felt the reports should go to the committees and the summaries to the board. ASM thought the summaries were easy to read.

Q: (SDU) Were the summaries checked by chairs of the committees?

A: (SGR) Yes, they were alongside the minutes.

CPA queried whether staff should attend the committees and not the Trust Boards, this should give Trustees additional assurance as they could ask the same question of the staff and the CEO, there should be consistency in the responses. LWA was happy to look at covering one section at each Trust Board but for the Autumn just have the reports without staff having to attend.

b. The Trustees received assurances from the LGB's covering matters included in the agenda planner. LWA felt there was further work to be undertaken to streamline the process/responses.

10. FOCUS TRUSTEE UPDATES - not covered

- a. To note any Trustee visits undertaken since the last meeting and review any follow up actions – reports to be uploaded in advance of the meeting.
- b. To note work undertaken with Chairs of the LGB's at the Strategy Day.

11. POLICIES

- a. For approval -
 - i. Complaints (Trust) Policy, SGR explained there were a number of changes highlighted in yellow.
 - ii. Trust & LGB Code of Conduct 2025 - 2026 to incl. process for dealing with any breaches of the code.
 - ii. ICT acceptable use Policy, new policy.

RESOLVED: the Trustees approved the policies listed above.

- b. Investment Policy.

RESOLVED: the Trustees ratified the policy following review by the Finance committee -

- c. The Trustees noted the following policies may change, dependent upon new guidance etc, published during July/August. Trustees agreed that the amended policies could be reviewed and approved via Governor

Hub/Google drive and the approval recorded at the September board – SEND; Safeguarding and Attendance.

- d. to develop a Trust Volunteer Policy - transferred from Chairs Group. LWA raised a concern about retention of Governors and suggested looking at policies from other charities which covered the benefits of becoming a volunteer.

ACTION: LWA to source some policies and share with Trustees.

12. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETINGS

- a. The Trustees noted the date and time of the next Board meeting on the 22nd September, 2025.
- b. Meeting dates 2025 - 2026

RHA asked if it was possible to have a better spread of in person meetings, currently the strategy day and the in person board meeting were during the same half term. LWA explained the meetings in the winter could be problematic but as the ERG meeting would be in person this would accommodate the request for the next year.

DATE	MEETING	START TIME	ONLINE/IN PERSON
AUTUMN TERM STARTS - 26.08.2025			
Mon 22 Sep 2025	Trust Board	5.00pm	Online
Tue 30 Sep 2025	Infrastructure	5.00pm	Online
Wed 1 Oct 2025	School Improvement	5.00 pm	Online
Thu 2 Oct 2025	Chairs Group	6.00 pm	Online
Tues 14 Oct 2025	Finance	5.00pm	Online
AUTUMN HALF TERM - 20.10.2025 - 24.10.2025			
Mon 3 Nov 2025	CEO call with Trustees	4.30pm	Online - googlemeet
Wed 5 Nov 2025	Chairs Group	6.00 pm	Online
Tue 25 Nov 2025	Pay & People	1.00pm	Online
Wed 26 Nov 2025	Audit & Risk	4.00 pm	Online
Wed 3 Dec 2025	School Improvement	5.00pm	Online
Mon 8 Dec 2025	Trust Board	5.00 pm	Online
CHRISTMAS - 22.12.2025 - 02.01.2026			
Mon 12 Jan 2026	CEO call with Trustees	4.00pm	Online - googlemeet
Mon 19 Jan 2026	LiFE MAT Services Board	5.00pm	Online
Mon 19 Jan 2026	Members - AGM	5.30 pm	Online
Wed 21 Jan 2026	Chairs Group	6.00 pm	Online
Wed 28 Jan 2026	School Improvement	4.00 pm	Online
Tues 3 Feb 2026	Infrastructure	5.00 pm	Online
Tues 10 Feb 2026	Finance	5.00 pm	Online
SPRING HALF TERM - 16.02.2026 - 20.02.2026			
Mon 2 Mar 2026	CEO call with Trustees	4.30pm	Online - googlemeet
Thu 5 Mar 2026	Audit & Risk	4.00 pm	Online
Thu 12 Mar 2026	Chairs Group	6.00 pm	Online
Tues 17 Mar 2026	Pay & People	1.00pm	Online

Wed 18 Mar 2026	School Improvement	5.00 pm	Online
Mon 23 Mar 2026	Trust Board	5.00pm	Online
EASTER - 30.03.2026 - 10.04.2026			
Mon 20 Apr 2026	CEO call with Trustees	4.30pm	Online - googlemeet
Tues 21 Apr 2026	Infrastructure	5.00pm	Online
MAY DAY BANK HOLIDAY 04.05.2026			
Thu 14 May 2026	Chairs Group	6.00 pm	Online
	School Improvement	4.00 pm	Online
HALF TERM 25.05.2026 - 39.05.2026			
TBC - June	Trust Strategy Day	All Day	In person
Tues 16 Jun 2026	Audit & Risk	4.00 pm	Online
Wed 17 Jun 2026	School Improvement	5.00pm	Online
Tues 23 Jun 2026	Finance	5.00pm	Online
Thu 25 Jun 2026	Pay & People	1.00pm	Online
Mon 29 Jun 2026	Trust Board	5.00 pm	In person
SUMMER - 07.07.2026			

The meeting closed at 7.31pm following the conclusion of the confidential business.