



Minutes

Meeting	Trustees		
Date	21 March 2022		
Attendance & Apologies			
Trustees		Trustees	
Christopher Watt (Chair) CW	P	Amit Lakhani (AL) Co-opted Trustee	Ap
Jamie Clarke (JRC) CEO	P	Frances Craven (FC) Co-opted Trustee	P
Tim Foster (TF) Trustee	Ap	Gary Foote (GF) Co-opted Trustee	P
Jo Chitty (JC) Trustee	P	Members in attendance	
Thomas Schilling (TS) Co-opted Trustee	P	Martin Lawrence (ML)	P
Duncan Nicholson (DN) Co-opted Trustee	P	George Mystkowski (GM)	Ap
Trust representatives		Trust representatives	
Sue Wagstaff (SW) CFO	P	Lindsay Oake (LO) Principal Accountant	P
Tracy Routledge (TR) Estates Manager	P	Jamie Nairn (JN) Director of Primary	P

(key: P=Present, Ap=apologies received, A=absent)

In attendance: Katie Fell (Clerk) (KLF)

No.	Item	Action
1.	Welcome and apologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome to new TLT Trustees Gary Foote, and welcome to Martin Lawrence (Member). Meeting attendees introduced themselves. The meeting was held remotely via Google Meet due to Covid-19 restrictions and ongoing social distancing. 	
2.	Apologies given and accepted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apologies were recorded and accepted from Tim Foster (Trustee), Amit Lakhani (Trustee) and George Mystkowski (Member). 	
3.	Declaration of any personal or business interests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No interests were declared in connection with the items on the agenda. 	
4.	Minutes & Matters Arising from board meeting and AGM on 24 January 2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minutes were reviewed and agreed as an accurate record of the meeting. 24/1/22 Main board meeting - minutes were agreed and confirmed as an accurate record. SCA uplifts to be discussed in the meeting. 24/1/22 AGM minutes were reviewed and the following questions were raised by Martin Lawrence (ML). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>ML confirmed he had received a copy of the scheme of delegation and has emailed feedback and comments to the CEO and Chair of Trustees. The Chair thanked him for his feedback.</i> <i>ML asked for a progress update on monitoring the quality of education and student assessment across the trust, and whether a date has been set for Richard Cahill (RC) to present to the board. A date is being organised for RC to present later in the year.</i> 	JRC/KLF

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ML asked for any news about an external review of governance. JRC responded that GAC are receiving support to help them with their Ofsted RI judgement, and on the back of that they have a nominated NLG to do some work on that. ML offered support with finding an NLG if required. ○ ML asked if there was any further news on Ofsted inspections and will governors and trustees be prepared if there are any meetings. JRC confirmed that several training meetings have been delivered, and more are being done at GAD and GAS. No further inspections have occurred so far. ● The Chair signed the minutes electronically as a true and proper record of the meeting. ● Actions were reviewed and marked as completed. 	
5.	<p>TLT Estates Manager report to Trustees</p> <p>Approval of SCA Cladding projects for Rushden and Sponne</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussion regarding the School Capital Allocation (SCA) funding for condition and building improvements that should be paid for out of central funds. The priority list may change depending on the final sum awarded. ● For newly appointed Trustees it was clarified that this is external DfE funding explicitly used for capital estates and building improvements. ● Costs have escalated due to Brexit and Covid, and funding for the SCA cladding schemes has already been increased by £100K. The Estates Manager sought approval for an additional uplift to cover further increases in steel costs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Estates Manager presented a summary paper to trustees outlining three possible approaches to deal with the exceptional circumstances. ○ The Estates Manager is now asking for an additional sum of £179K in addition to the previous £100K uplift, making a total of £279K in addition to the original sum approved for the cladding schemes. ○ TR advised that if the scheme is reduced down it would be a lower level solution for the school and could cause issues in the future. TR advised trustees to opt for the full recommended works and possibly use some of the money from this year's SCA to cover the additional costs. ○ The CFO said we can afford to do both; either go for the part scheme or full scheme; however the impact is that some projects would be deferred from the list and be postponed to next year. ○ A trustee supported the recommendation to go for the full scheme now, since there have been some potential cost savings identified in the CFO report. The CFO advised that not all adjustments have been applied at this moment in time and the cost savings may be less than initially anticipated. ○ The Chair agreed to the Estate Manager's recommendation, preferring to get everything done in one go to avoid any further increase in costs, even if this means that some other projects may need to be deferred. JRC requested that if we proceed with the full scope of the project that the Estate Manager and CFO refer back to him to agree which projects should be deferred this year. ○ ACTION: CFO and Estate Manager to liaise with CEO regarding deferrals. ○ Trustees voted online and confirmed that they supported the full scheme being completed in full this academic year. (FC, GF, TS, TS, DN confirmed yes.) ○ SCA items listed in blue were raised for discussion to gauge a response from trustees so there is time to make progress in time for works to be started in the summer. ○ SW confirmed she supports TR's evaluation of the SCA schemes coded in blue, and reassured trustees that school sites have been visited or the viability of these schemes have been tested, and that the Estates Manager's assessment of the schemes has the full support of the CFO. The orange coded items could be deferred if there is not sufficient funding to cover them all. ○ Trustees raised the issue that some of them sit on LGBs and should not be biased in their decision making. The CFO explained that previously the list of SCA schemes were anonymous and the name of the school was not identified. 	SW/TR

- **Trustees checked understanding that the orange items are potentially the ones to be deferred not the blue. This was confirmed.**
- **DECISION: Trustee agreed to proceed with items coded in blue.**
- TR left meeting 17:25

Feedback from TLT Estates Strategy Meeting

- Feedback from the TLT Estates Strategy Meeting was discussed and the minutes of the meeting were shared in the classroom.
- A representative group of trustees met on 3/3/22 to discuss the procedure for using and allocating contingency and reserve funds and how best to apply these principles in the SCA funding allocation.
- The trust will be working towards the carbon agenda and plan to use the reserves to help lower carbon usage across the MAT.
 - The Chair asked to have another Estates Meeting to focus on this issue and suggested that having more regular and focused Estates Meetings would be beneficial.
 - The CFO recommended that trustees wait for the actual SCA funding to be confirmed this year before holding another meeting.
 - **DECISION:** Trustees agreed that having a more frequent Estates Meeting due to the significant sums of money being discussed and approved was the best approach, rather than setting up a separate sub-committee. This would enable trustees to have an Estates Focus meeting to take decisions on an ad hoc basis to make decisions.
 - Trustees' comments noted below (shared via Google Meet chat comments):
 - *Thomas Schilling 17:29:* I would agree with you Chris about dedicated Trust Estate meetings based on the previous meeting.
 - *Frances Craven 17:30:* makes sense to me. No objections to using the reserves for carbon reduction schemes.

6. Director of Primary Report (JN)

- Jamie Nairn (JN) Director of Primary was invited to present an overview of the primary arm of the trust.
- JN shared a summary paper outlining the history and background on the three primary schools currently in the MAT, which accounts for just over 1000 pupils.
- Attendance has been a significant issue this year due to Covid, and there has been a huge reliance on parents being well and being able to get their children to school.
- There has been persistent absence in some schools, and there has been a small core of families who have been finding it hard to engage with education, although in some cases it is suspected they are using Covid as an excuse.
- Key data for the primaries was shared, highlighting the significant number of disadvantaged students, SEND and LAC pupils on roll.
- The number of fixed term exclusions at Knowles Primary and Water Hall Primary have been quite high and the impact of lockdown on pupils' mental health and wellbeing was noted as a contributing factor.
- Current challenges for the primaries in the trust:
 - Covid is still having a major impact on the day to day running of the schools, with cover in particular being a concern and availability of supply teachers an ongoing issue. On occasion classes have had to close due to safety and this has had an impact on children's education.
 - Although primary schools have made progress against their school improvement plans this has been less than anticipated in 'normal' times.
 - Primary schools have had to respond to the challenges of Covid and lockdown and support pupils with the return to education in schools, as well as focusing on mental health and wellbeing to help pupils re-engage with their learning.
- Nationally birth rates have been falling, but MK is a growing city due to new housing, but the overall picture is masking the birth rate decline in some areas.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● JN works closely with the CFO and School Business Managers to monitor individual school budgets and consider school admissions numbers and local conditions. Natural wastage has been a bonus in proactively managing staffing budgets. ● JN shared key successes within the primary schools ● Knowles Primary is going from strength to strength: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ofsted has shifted the focus from reading, writing and maths, and previously there was less focus on other subjects. At the time of their inspection they were more focused on specialist subjects and the goal posts have since moved. ○ Knowles has a large focus on improving pupils' mental health. ○ There is now greater consistency across all year groups and quality teaching is now happening. ● Wootton Primary School (WPS) has a clear intent in all subject areas, and clear implementation of quality teaching and learning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There is a strong focus on middle leaders driving their subjects forward and enabling CPD and time to develop and monitor their own subjects. ○ WPS celebrates its 150th anniversary this year. The school is very involved in the local community, and has been nominated by parents for local awards. ● Water Hall Primary has developed a much improved culture around behaviour, but it is recognised there is still a long way to go with evidencing progress and improvements in the data reported. Progress is harder to report on, with a bell curve and standardised range of scores. ● Water Hall and Knowles have come from very challenging areas with local communities and in a very deprived area, and significant progress has been made even during the lockdown. ● Primary school data can be more subjective than external exams in secondary education. Data reported at the end of March is largely more reliable as an indicator of performance. JN will share this with JRC at the end of the month. ● The Director of Primary is working hard to grow the primary phase in the MAT. Primaries tend to be more parochial in their thinking and less inclined to want to join a MAT. There have been limited opportunities to pursue this during lockdown, but JN is progressing conversations with two potential targets identified in Northants. ● ML thanked JN for an excellent overview and for the informative report. ● <i>ML asked about the interrelationship between the Headteacher/ Director of Primary/ and the SID lead if a teacher in primary was under performing. If a teacher requires subject specific support the SID is called on to provide expertise on SoL etc. RC and JN are working closely on this and trying not to overlap.</i> ● <i>A recently appointed trustee found the presentation very useful and it brought the primaries to life. The Trustee asked about persistent absence at Knowles and whether it was known how many families and pupils this might be, and what steps are being taken to support it. Also how to track pupils in care and how they are making progress? KP has 2 family support workers who have a huge focus on safeguarding and ensuring safety. Some family medical conditions have had an impact on attendance. Children's Social Care in MK has not been fully effective in supporting schools with education and attendance - but Knowles has not held back on this. JN offered to provide further data on this if required.</i> ● JRC commented that persistent absence was not out of line with secondary patterns, and these were not unusual numbers, however some further intelligence would be valuable. ACTION: Supply further data on persistent absence in primaries. ● Primaries are now using Arbor MIS which is more accurate and instant for data. ● JN left the meeting 17:59 	JN
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7. CEO Report

- The CEO report was shared with Trustees.
- JRC met with trustees Jo Chitty and Frances Craven to discuss safeguarding / SEND at trust level and outlined the following recommendations:
 - We need to be clear at trust level that we are assured safeguarding is good in all MAT schools and therefore we propose to introduce a new Link Trustee role with safeguarding responsibility.
 - The trust also wants to ensure the same for SEND provision across the trust and JC and FC have agreed to share the Link Trustee role. They will link with SID SEND and potentially a new SID Safeguarding role to be appointed.
 - The purpose is to help trustees feel more knowledgeable about safeguarding and SEND across the MAT. Thanks were made to JC and FC for agreeing to take on these joint roles.
- *Confidential update:* Jane Burton has decided to step down from the Headteacher role at Rushden. Communications with SLT, governors and staff are taking place this week. An external recruitment campaign is running from 27 March to 27 April with interviews planned for 12/13 May. Trustees were asked if they would like to participate in the interviews in May.
- KPI data and radar charts were shared with trustees. Feedback was sought regarding the graphs, which are designed to focus on key areas of the SEF and help the Executive Team to know where to focus support and where improvements are required. The intention is to start rolling these out in lesser detail with LGBs from next term onwards.
- ***A trustee suggested including a shadow line to show the previous indicator to show progression.***
- *Feedback shared via Google Meet chat:*
- *Thomas Schilling 18:27: 1) I like the radar diagram in your report 2) SAM HR Software - Would you like me to review the preferred software and implementation proposal? 3) I really like the idea of the risk software that has been put forward.*
- Trust growth plans were shared. Trustees are aware of support being given to The CE Academy over the past few months, and due to pupil placement numbers now being confirmed by both West and North Northamptonshire Councils for 2022-23, Trustees were informed of the intention to proceed with a dull due diligence review in preparation for trustees to take the final decision of whether or not CE should join TLT in September 2022.
- Two primary schools in Northamptonshire are also showing an interest in joining TLT.
- The DfE has approached TLT regarding Huxlow School potentially joining the MAT. The secondary school is in a formal partnership with Rushden Academy for the sixth form provision via TENC, and TLT is committed to supporting this arrangement to retain excellent post-16 education in the area.
- WNC is continuing to work up a business case for the new special school at EWS North, likely to be awarded through a presumption bid, but TLT trustees would have the final say if a different provider were chosen since the school is to be located on our land.

8.	<p>CFO Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The CFO report for trustees was shared in the classroom. ● Work on budgets for 2022-23 is underway although some SBMs have been absent with Covid recently. A list of budget assumptions have been shared with schools and are available in the Finance Committee classroom in preparation for the draft budget presentation meetings taking place in May with the headteacher, Chair of Governors and SBM. Lots of work is ongoing between now and May. There will be spot checks then fine tuning in June before the formal sign off by trustees in July. ● Salary increases will also have an impact on budgets, noting that quite steep increases on salaries are expected next year. ● The CFO has completed a review of the finance reporting from SBMs to LGBs. They are expected to report on finance at least three times a year in October, January and May/June. The findings will be reported at the Finance Committee on Wednesday 23 March and shared with Trustees. ● Management Accounts are available up to the end of February 2022. There are high variances reported at present but a lot of that will be applied to support staff pay awards and teachers pension indexation payments. £1.9m variances will be applied elsewhere. ● Stantonbury and LGA look like they are significantly over budget (prior to variances being applied). ● <i>A trustee asked for further clarity about Stantonbury budgets and whether there are any concerns? They are currently showing £600K as a potential surplus, but we know at least £300K of this needs to go back to GST. Estimated £200K surplus but we will have a clearer picture at the end of March. Trustees thanked the CFO and felt reassured by the response.</i> ● Internal scrutiny is looking at risk assurance this week, testing the pupil census data and ensuring accuracy of pupil numbers that are used to generate income funding for schools. ● School Resource Management (SRMSAT) is an annual return required by the DfE each March. LO has prepared it for TLT this year, but ESFA will pull this together by the end of March. ● Trustees were asked for comments or questions on any of the further items in the CFO report to trustees, but there were no further questions for SW or LO. 	
9.	<p>Safeguarding Report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The new joint Link Trustee role for Safeguarding and SEND was discussed within the CEO report above (see item 7). 	
10.	<p>TLT Central Risk Register</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Risk Register has been updated but no new likelihood or impacts have been identified and nothing new to bring to Trustees' attention. ● <i>Trustees were asked whether there was anything from the agenda tonight that needs to be added? There are no substantive changes from last time.</i> 	
11.	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The following TLT Governor appointments were approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Paul Goddard, EWS Chair of Governors, TLT Appointed Governor ○ Tim Foster, Rushden Academy Chair of Governors, TLT Appointed ○ Chris Youngman, Rushden Academy, TLT Appointed Governor ○ Robert Knell, Rushden Academy, TLT Appointed Governor ○ Adrian Winkle, Rushden Academy, Parent Governor ● Due to there being no further business the meeting was declared closed. 	
9.	<p>Dates of next TLT Board meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 16th May 2022 ● 18th July 2022 	

Meeting closed at: 18:31 Next Meeting: as above



Signed:
Chair of Trustees

Date 16/05/2022

ACTIONS from this meeting		
ACTION	BY WHOM	BY DATE
Confirm a date for Richard Cahill to present to the board on the quality of education and student assessment across the trust.	JRC/KLF	To present 16/05/22
Refer back to the CEO to agree which projects should be deferred this year as a result of the full cladding scheme being approved.	JRC/SW/TR	April 2022 Completed
Share further data on persistent absence in primaries.	JN	31/03/2022 Completed