

Minutes - Board Briefing

Version: Approved
Meeting Date: Thursday 21st May 2020
Location: Teams
Time: 4.00pm

Chair:	Paul Olomolaiye (PO)	Chair of the Board
Members:	Airlie Fife (AFI)	Vice Chair
	Nicky McAllister (NM)	Director
	Su Coombes (SCO)	Director
	Bethan Owen (BON)	Director
	Debbie Attack (DA)	Director
	Suzanne Carrie (SCA)	Director
	Guy Keith-Miller (GKM)	Director
	Anthony Cherry (ACH)	Director
	William Liew (WL)	Director
	Adrian Coleman (ACO)	Director
	Nusrat Arshad (NA)	Director
Attendees:	Steve Taylor (ST)	CEO
	Dan Nicholls (DN)	Executive Director of Education
	Sally Apps (SA)	Executive Principal
	Susie Weaver (SW)	Executive Principal
	Kate Richardson (KR)	Executive Principal
	Alison Fletcher (AFL)	Director of CLF Institute
	Ian Payne (IP)	HR Director
	Bryony Green (BG)	Director of Corporate Services
	Sarah Lovell (SL)	Finance Director
	Andrew Joyce (AJ)	Financial Controller
	Andy Ling (AL)	Head of ICT
	Wendy Hellin (WH)	Clerk

Apologies:

Minutes

Item	Description	Action
1	Introductions, Administration, Apologies	
1.1	Introductions were made. PO thanked the Executive Team and staff across the federation for their hard work and commitment during the Coronavirus pandemic. PO reported that the regular communications to the board and all staff were particularly helpful and well received.	
2	Declarations of Interest/Member & Director Declarations	
2.1	No verbal declarations were made.	
3	Minutes of Previous Meetings	
3.1	Minutes of the meeting of 23 rd April 2020 were approved.	
4	Matters Arising	

4.1	5.2.6 Further consideration will be given to the questions raised around climate change and this will be an area that is revisited at future board meetings. <i>This will be considered in next year's strategic plan.</i>	
4.2	5.4.17 KR will add a link on Teams to the CLF Big Run fundraising page. <i>This has been completed.</i>	
4.3	7.2.1 Future data on sickness absence will include a break down by short and long-term absence and a budget number on the headcount chart. <i>This will be completed for the next board report.</i>	IP
4.4	7.2.6 Employee relations (Appendix A) there are some differences due to the ethnicity of all staff not being recorded, whereas age is. Baseline information will be added for clarity in the next report. <i>This will be corrected for the next board report.</i>	IP
4.5	11.1.2 An amendment will be made to item 11.2 of the Supporting Students with Medical Needs policy, and the addition of confirmation that an Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out. <i>The policy has now been published.</i>	
4.6	13.1 The clerk will circulate the proposed rescheduled date for the May meeting. <i>This action is complete.</i>	
5	Strategic and Educational Updates - CEO Briefing and Updates, including Covid-19 response	
5.1	Growth – confirmation and recent approvals	
5.1.1	Winterstoke Hundred Academy - SL	
5.1.1.1	Following the submission of a significant change application to the RSC, it was considered by the Head Teachers' board this week and has now been approved. The application is to expand WHA to a multi-site provision; the existing building and a new, second site, within a mile. The new build will be delivered with North Somerset Council in response to the demand for secondary school places. It is estimated that the second site will open either September 2023 or September 2024. PO thanked all those involved in the project.	
5.1.2	Uphill Village Academy - BG	
5.1.2.1	The transfer of Uphill Village Academy has been approved. Colleagues are working on the implementation of this project with a proposed transfer date of October 2020.	
5.1.3	Other Growth Opportunities - ST	
5.1.3.1	ST reported that the federation has been unsuccessful in its bid for the SEMH special school in Churchill. ST thanked both AFI and Brigid Allen, governors who gave a huge amount of time to support the bid, and to all colleagues involved, in particular SA. This will be an area that the federation will continue to explore in the future.	
5.1.3.2	ST reported that there were two further invitations for the federation to express an interest in: an alternative provision in Swindon; and a primary school in special measures in Gloucester. At this particular time both invitations were declined by ST in order that the federation can focus all its attention on the response to Covid-19 and the education and welfare of its existing pupils.	
5.2	Covid-19 Response	
5.2.1	Governance Role in Wider Opening of Schools	
5.2.1.1	ST reported that, as per the funding agreement, the board is the accountable body when making the decision to open academies further. The government will confirm next Thursday, 28 th May 2020, whether it considers the five tests (previously set out) to be met, and whether schools are to widen their provision from 1 st June 2020. Current planning is conditional upon the government confirming this and risk assessment has been done in this context.	
5.2.1.2	The Confederation of School Trusts have suggested a number of areas that boards might like to consider ahead of making the decision on the wider opening of	

	academies. The federation’s response in these areas and a number of others will be reported at this meeting and questions will be invited from the board in order that they can satisfy themselves about the approach the federation has taken and the safety measures put in place. The board needs to assure itself that risks are being assessed, mitigated and managed. All presentation slides used in the meeting will be shared by email and published in Teams.	
5.2.1.3	ST reported that there will be four stages to the sign off protocols for this decision for each academy or provision: the Health and Safety expert; the Principal; the CEO; and the board. It is proposed that a board Health and Safety Committee is formed to oversee this stage of the sign off, providing additional governance oversight and assurance for the board. This will be discussed later in the meeting.	
5.2.1.4	BG shared a slide showing the wider opening preparation timeline. Advice, guidance and resources are available nationally, at CLF Central level and at academy level, and all have been considered when preparing wider opening plans. BG described how the federation’s Health and Safety team have drawn up a risk assessment framework. This is designed to be a live document that will continue to be refreshed as different scenarios are worked through upon wider opening.	
5.2.1.5	There are a number of determining factors including the number of staff available, pupil numbers and the space needed to ensure the hierarchy of controls (as detailed on the slide) is observed. BG shared a slide describing protective bubbles; small groups of pupils that do not mix with other groups and have minimum contact with adults.	
5.2.2	Pupils and Parents – General Education Introduction - DN	
5.2.2.1	DN described how the focus of educational thinking is changing and shared detail of the priority work streams both for the current landscape as well as preparations for the next academic year.	
5.2.3	Place allocation - KR	
5.2.3.1	From the week beginning 1 st June 2020 pupils will be invited back to the academy. It is proposed that the first three days are used for staff training, with pupils invited to attend from 4 th June 2020. The process of place allocation was considered with the guiding principles in mind. Pupils will be categorised in priority order according to need; there are four categories. Those in categories 1 and 2 will be those students that currently have a place in one of the hubs: extremely vulnerable pupils (category 1) and children of keyworkers (category 2). Category 3 students are vulnerable pupils assessed by the education provider or the Local Authority and in need of continued education provision (these will include those pupils on the edge of social care services, adopted children and young carers). Category 4 is for students in nominated year groups (nursery, reception, Years 1, 6, 10 and 12). It is expected that category 4 students in primary academies will be invited to attend 4 days a week, allowing for mid-week cleaning, training, PPA time and support for distance learning that continues throughout this period.	
5.2.3.2	The Executive Team are working hard to support Principals and DSLs to implement this. The provision will include opportunities for students to reconnect with specialist teachers, socialise with their peers, access the recovery curriculum and re-engage with their learning.	
	Questions from the Board	
5.2.3.3	What has been the feedback from teachers and from unions about wider opening?	
5.2.3.4	The official position of unions differ slightly from each other. The NEU are reported to be discouraging members from being available to work and discussing plans for wider opening until the government satisfy them that their own five point scale of safety indicators are met. A number of people have filled in the staff survey to say that they	

	are (under advice from their unions) not able to work. The proportion of staff that have indicated they are willing to come in is around 60 – 65%. If 20% of the student population returns to school there will be sufficient staff. Discussions between unions and the government are ongoing.	
5.2.4	Curriculum and timetabling – Secondary phase - SA	
5.2.4.1	The Executive Team have been considering how best to serve the needs of Year 10 and Year 12 pupils and how to balance that with the needs of other year groups that will continue with distance learning.	
5.2.4.2	SA shared the current timeline. Students currently attending hubs will continue to attend from 1 st June 2020 but will attend their home academy. From 8 th June 2020 it is planned that academic mentoring will be offered to all students in Year 10. This will be mostly on site; some will be remote. The aim of this is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • help students understand the areas they are struggling with and direct them to specific content; • ensure they have the right habits for independent study; • ensure they are doing work of value; • prioritise vulnerable students. 	
5.2.4.3	From 16 th June there will be subject specific input. This will include the introduction of live learning experiences that will complement the distance learning offer. For some students this will be on site in the form of two taught lessons; for other students this will be broadcast via Teams and will link in to distance learning already taking place. For students unable to access this from home, a number of computer suites are being re-purposed within academies to meet social distancing measures.	
5.2.4.4	Live lessons will take place across 9 secondary sites which will give students access to 18 broadcast lessons a day, across the federation.	
5.2.4.5	Alongside this work, colleagues are planning the recovery curriculum and its implementation.	
	Questions from the Board	
5.2.4.6	What quality assurance processes are in place for the live learning?	
5.2.4.7	During the first week of Term 6 colleagues will be working with Helen Angell (Director of School Improvement) to determine with leaders in the academies which teachers will be invited to deliver the live lessons. When live lessons are being delivered, other teachers will be invited to be part of the audience so that the experience can be used as part of professional development.	
5.2.5	Parental contact - KR	
5.2.5.1	KR reported that she and SW met with Principals on Monday and agreed a suggested survey and script. All families were surveyed to gauge interest and uptake. Direct contact was made to families as needed. Further communications will go out to all families after the board meeting.	
5.2.6	Signposting - KR	
5.2.6.1	There has been regular signposting and communications through the DSL network. A wellbeing blog has been created for students and staff to access many resources in one place, and this includes bereavement guidance. It is acknowledged that this is a difficult time for many families and this will be reflected in the recovery curriculum work.	
	Questions from the Board	
5.2.6.2	Is there an indication of what percentage of parents across the federation will send their children back to school?	

5.2.6.3	We have information by academy and there is a strong uptake. Some families would like further questions answered before committing and we are still answering those. We will have a better picture tomorrow.	
5.2.6.4	What provision is in place for managing unstructured time, especially for those in Early Years Provision that follow a play based curriculum?	
5.2.6.5	Processes are in place to ensure the bubbles do not mix. This includes staggered lunch times, staggered drop off and collection. Within the bubble itself staff and students will remain 2 meters apart when sat at tables, and there are strong protocols that will be followed when people come into contact with each other and with resources. There will be a focus on continued staff training.	
5.2.6.6	There will be around 80% of children that continue to complete distance learning. Is there the capacity to deliver that as well as to teach those attending in person?	
5.2.6.7	Yes, current indications are that we will be able to do this.	
5.2.7	Workforce and HR - IP	
5.2.7.1	IP shared the results of the staff survey that took place this week; 1200 responses were received. Academies are now using the data to inform their planning. From the survey 3500 lines of feedback have been received and these are now being reviewed.	
	Questions from the Board	
5.2.7.2	Do you have the responses split by teaching staff and non-teaching staff? Is it envisaged there will be any issues for the operational side of things?	
5.2.7.3	Every academy has sight of the individual responses so have that information. Every academy has the right balance of teaching and non-teaching staff needed to widen provision.	
5.2.7.4	There is quite a high proportion of staff that have indicated they are not willing to work at sites other than their home academy. Is it in their contract that staff should work across sites if needed?	
5.2.7.5	The approach has been to invite staff to tell us how they feel. We would not insist staff work at other sites. Some are frightened for various reasons and we would want them to feel able to let us know without fear of punitive measures.	
5.2.7.6	Colleagues met with BAME staff today. Can you share some of the reflections from that meeting?	
5.2.7.7	It was not a meeting with BAME staff. We opened up the agenda for anyone to talk about the impact of the pandemic on BAME staff and students. While there is insufficient science from which to draw concrete conclusions we wanted to learn what people are thinking and feeling about this issue and we have a suite of agenda items for future meetings.	
5.2.7.8	What can we take from this to drive improved flexibility for the workforce and to update and inform the HR policy going forward?	
5.2.7.9	There has been feedback around improving the use of technology for ways of working remotely meaning less travel. Lots of teams do not need to be in an office to do their jobs. We are looking to capture those possibilities. One of the things we are taking forward is the way we carry out professional development and performance management. A central platform has been developed for signposting high quality professional development and resources; some internal and some external.	
5.2.8	Primary Phase and Safeguarding - SW	
5.2.8.1	SW reported that colleagues are focused on ensuring that the hierarchy of controls can be met and that any widening of provision allows a meaningful and valued educational experience. There has been a lot of learning from the hubs and much of that can be scaled up.	

5.2.8.2	A high quality distance learning provision has been built up as a trust wide offer to ensure capacity is built in to the system. Members of the School Improvement team and the CLF Institute lead the recovery provision. A reading spine is in place that speaks to recognising the pandemic and the effects of it. There is phased planning of the return of students based around the guiding principles and a staggered approach to moving children around the site safely.	
5.2.8.3	SW shared a slide showing safeguarding considerations. These considerations underpin every decision made about widening provision.	
5.2.9	Health and Safety Committee Proposal	
5.2.9.1	It is proposed that a temporary board Health and Safety Committee be established to provide an extra layer of assurance for wider opening, reviewing the process for sign off and supporting this decision on behalf of the board. DA, NA and ACO agreed to join the committee. Minutes from the meetings will be circulated regularly to the board. <i>The board approved the proposal.</i>	
5.2.10	Supply Chains and Contracts	
5.2.10.1	SL assured the board that conversations are taking place with key suppliers to ensure continuity of service during the pandemic. The federation is complying with the Procurement Policy note issued in April. Supply staffing has ceased. Plans are being reviewed to ensure academies have the right resources in place to open further to students.	
5.2.11	Communications Plan	
5.2.11.1	AFL described the sequence of communications to various stakeholders advising them of the phased reopening process. A letter has been written to parents from the trust describing the rationale for reopening and a follow up letter will be sent explaining the detailed arrangements for each academy. There have been lots of surveys and communications around which children will take up places offered.	
5.2.12	Financial Impacts	
5.2.12.1	SL reported that the financial regulations have been reviewed and amended slightly to ensure the federation can make the appropriate financial decisions over the next three months.	
5.2.12.2	SL described what is being done to safeguard the financial position of the trust. There are three financial principles: Strong Internal Controls Framework; Protecting the trusts financial position; and Achieving Value for Money.	
5.2.12.3	The financial risks that have been identified (as per slide) were discussed. To mitigate these risks a new financial approach for the period June to August has been put in place; the detail of this is included in the presentation. Management Accounts to the period 7 th April 2020 were shared with the board.	
5.2.12.4	The reserves position is forecast to be just below £5m at year end. The federation continues to review estates and other projects and intends to continue with the Schools Condition Allocation projects. Draft budgets for 2020/2021 have been completed and are now being reviewed. SL has recommended that access to reserves are paused for anything other than the response to Covid-19. The federation is exploring its eligibility for the EFSA exceptional costs grant.	
	Questions from the Board	
5.2.12.5	How will the revised risk assessment and additional expenditure on things like cleaning and PPE affect the budget?	
5.2.12.6	Spending in other areas has been capped. The situation will be monitored over coming weeks but it is expected that the overall costs and savings will balance each other out.	
5.2.13	Educational Impact – Distance Learning Update	



5.2.13.1	DN provided an update on distance learning. In order to ensure the quality of learning, distance learning has been stress tested. Distance Learning has been further developed and is moving from a position of work being set for the students to more direct teaching of work to the student. Over time the element of live teaching will increase and this is a large part of the programme being rolled out for Year 10, as is academic mentoring.	
5.2.14	Educational Impact - Devices	
5.2.14.1	AL provided an update on the support given to students without devices or access to the internet in their homes. Over 250 devices have been loaned to staff and students. The DfE have a support scheme for disadvantaged Year 10 students. Under this scheme the federation requested 551 devices and were allocated 209 laptops plus 91 4G dongles. These are expected to arrive in around three weeks' time. In addition to this, and to support further need, the federation has ordered 75 laptops and 50 4G dongles. These are expected to arrive within two weeks. Devices and dongles are not issued to students until the necessary safeguarding measures have been put in place.	
	Questions from the Board	
5.2.14.2	Once this support is in place will there still be further students that have no access to distance learning?	
5.2.14.3	Yes. A survey was carried out some weeks ago and we have particularly focused support for the most vulnerable students but there is still further support needed. This is one of the reasons we are looking to open up IT provision within some of the academies to provide access to those students.	
5.2.15	Regulatory Environment	
5.2.15.1	SL provided detail of the recent 'Accounting Officer Letter' from the EFSA. Contact from the EFSA has been kept minimal during the pandemic to allow trusts to focus on their response. The SRMA final report is outstanding, however, the report has been seen by SL and it is positive. There are two cases for estimate based funding for CAB and MPA still ongoing. The settlement figure for IFT has been received and is within the expected forecast.	
5.2.16	Accountability Environment - Centre Assessed Grades	
5.2.16.1	DL shared an update on the Centre Assessed Grades process for Year 11 and Year 13. Ofqual have said that the grades given to students must reflect a 'fair, reasonable, and carefully considered judgement'. Grades have been determined by schools and have been submitted to the federation for analysis. The next deadline is 24 th April 2020 where academies will resubmit the centre assessed grades to the federation so that colleagues can check for outliers. The final deadline is 12 th June 2020.	
5.2.16.2	The grades submitted have allowed the federation to produce a table of headline figures for the trust, as well as attainment profiling. The detail of both are included in the slides.	
5.2.17	Proposal	
5.2.17.1	It is proposed that the Executive Team continue with plans for wider opening from 1 st June 2020 for primary academies, and 15 th June 2020 for secondary academies. ST asked if the board is as satisfied and as assured as it can be, in order that the Executive Team can continue with plans for wider opening. This is subject to any further announcements from government and from advice and guidance received from the recently established Board Health and Safety committee. <i>The board approved the proposal.</i>	
6	Finance	
6.1	City Academy Bristol Trading Ltd – letter of financial support	
6.1.1	SL requested that (as per the briefing paper previously circulated) the board approves the extension of financial support from CLF to CABTL up to the financial year 2021/22.	

	<i>The board approved the proposal.</i>	
7	Any Other Business	
7.1	BG confirmed that the third report from link Directors on the strategic plan will be added to the Strategic board meeting in July.	
7.2	Furlough	
7.2.1	Board approval is sought on the recommendation that the federation commences the application of a furlough scheme, for the period to the end of the academic year, for those employees specifically identified as being linked to commercial income schemes. Employees would not be financially impeded; the federation would pay 20% of the salaries to top up the employee's earnings to their regular amount. Staff identified include breakfast club and afterschool staff and those involved with lettings. It has been confirmed that the federation is eligible to apply under this scheme. WL confirmed that SL and IP shared a detailed paper on this with him earlier in the week.	
	Questions from the Board	
7.2.2	Has redeployment for these staff been considered ahead of the decision to furlough?	
7.2.3	Yes. These staff are involved in operations that are not currently taking place anywhere across the federation. The application of the furlough scheme is purely a cost saving exercise. It will mean the federation can utilise this funding to support students across the federation. The period of furlough will continue to be reviewed.	
7.2.4	In fairness to colleagues it will be essential to set our clear expectations and communications. How many staff are involved?	
7.2.5	It affects mainly part-time workers; between 30 to 40 staff.	
7.2.6	Has the federation looked at the equality characteristics in relation to groups? It may be that a group are disproportionately affected by this.	
7.2.7	This is not a management of change process; no roles are at risk. It is a financial exercise and no colleagues will be financially impeded. However, the federation is happy to carry out an equalities impact assessment before putting the scheme in place if the board are happy to approve the proposal subject to this condition.	
7.2.8	<i>The board approved the proposal subject to an equalities impact assessment being carried out.</i> It is noted that one Director objected to the proposal.	
7.3	Chairs action – it is proposed that Chair's action is extended by three weeks to 22 nd June 2020. <i>The board approved this proposal.</i>	
7.4	The meeting closed at 19.00hrs.	