

Minutes - Board of Directors

Version: Approved
Meeting Date: Thursday 25th June 2020
Location: Virtual via Teams
Time: 4.00pm

Chair:	Paul Olomolaiye (PO)	Chair of the Board
Members:	Airlie Fife (AFI)	Vice Chair
	Su Coombes (SCO)	Director
	Suzanne Carrie (SCA)	Director
	Guy Keith-Miller (GKM)	Director
	William Liew (WL)	Director
	Adrian Coleman (ACO)	Director
	Deb Atack (DA)	Director
	Anthony Cherry (ACH) [part]	Director
	Nusrat Arshad (NA) [part]	Director
	Bethan Owen (BON)	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
	Wendy Hellin (WH)	Clerk
Apologies:	Nicky McAllister (NM)	Director

Minutes

Item	Description	Action
1	Introductions, Administration, Apologies	
1.1	Introductions were made. ACH and NA have advised they would be joining the meeting late.	
1.2	The updated risk register is included for reference at Flag A*. This is a starred item. The Academy and Governance Structure chart is included for reference at Flag B*. This is a starred item.	
1.3	PO thanked ST, Executive Team colleagues and staff for their work over the last few months and for the regular and informative communications provided.	
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 21 May 2020 were approved.	
4	Matters Arising	
4.1	4.3 Ian Payne - Future data on sickness absence will include a break down by short and long-term absence and a budget number on the headcount chart. This will be completed for the	

	next board report. <i>This is now included in the HR report with the exception of the budget number on headcount; this figure is not yet available.</i>	
4.2	4.4 Ian Payne - 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. This will be corrected for the next board report. <i>This is included in the HR report.</i>	
5	Health and Safety	
5.1	Input from H & S Co – DA	
5.1.1	DA reported that there have been three meetings to date. The minutes of these meetings are available in the sub-committee folder in the CLF Board Team.	
5.1.2	PO thanked DA, BG and colleagues for their work ensuring sign off for each school. ST confirmed that, as part of the process, he had visited every site where CLF pupils are now attending. ST echoed PO's thanks to the committee who had considered every aspect of the H & S risk assessment process and who were fundamental to providing additional governance assurance around the wider opening of academies.	
5.2	H & S Briefing – Flag D	
5.2.1.	The Health and Safety Briefing (Flag D) was provided to the Health and Safety Committee ahead of their first meeting. This is provided for information.	
5.2.2	Questions from the board	
5.2.3	Can you comment on the extent to which you considered equalities in the risk assessment context?	
5.2.4	A specific equalities impact assessment was carried out for wider reopening. This took place at the same time that the report was issued. A detailed report is included in the HR Report.	
5.2.5	The government have asked that organisations with over 50 staff share their risk assessments with staff. Has this been done?	
5.2.6	Yes, once each school had fully customised the template risk assessment document it was shared with staff, unions and the Joint Consultative Committee.	
6	Education Report	
6.1	Input from Academy and Executive Scrutiny	
6.1.1	AFI reported that academy scrutiny was paused at the start of the initial school closure period. Executive scrutiny took place on 18 th June 2020, focusing on the education report prepared for this board meeting. As well as a thorough discussion on the report itself, areas of focus included: teacher wellbeing and workload; the wellbeing of the Executive Team and Principals; engagement of students; quality of distance learning provision; communications; CPD development; recovery curriculum; disadvantaged strategy; and learning that can be taken forward from this pandemic. Members of the scrutiny panel were impressed at the breadth and depth of areas covered. The panel requested that, at the next scrutiny meeting, data on exclusions for BAME students across the CLF be provided, as well as an update on the progress of the Racial Equality steering group.	
6.2	Key Stages EYFS to Post 16 report	
6.2.1	DN spoke to the 3 – 19 Education Report, highlighting key areas and invited questions from the board.	
6.2.2	Questions from the board	
6.2.3	What planning has been done to support students through the appeals process this summer?	
6.2.4	The arrangements for appeals is still not clear and this is one of the areas being discussed at meetings of the Confederation of Schools Trusts (CST). There are implications for subject access requests from parents and students and it could be the case that a school submits a grade to the exam board that is subsequently modified by Ofqual ahead of results day.	

	Further details will be shared with the board when known. [WL suggested extra staff are available on results day to support students in understanding the process].	
6.2.5	Where settings are monitoring the level of engagement with learning for year 10 students, are there processes for feedback to parents and students where engagement is poor? Are settings monitoring the quality of feedback given to students about their online learning?	
6.2.6	There is a lot of monitoring of the online offer, however, this sometimes is more whether a student has accessed the work. There are some very good examples across the trust around feedback to parents and students. At HWA all year 10 students were seen on site for a 20 minute academic mentoring session, and parents and carers were invited to that. HWA will copy that model across years 9, 8 and 7 ahead of the end of term.	
6.2.7	There are different solutions in other academies. In some academies upto 25% of students access learning via paper packs; schools monitor what is given out to students but it is less easy to monitor the quality of work completed. There are pastoral systems in place to make contact weekly, and more frequently where needed. The level of engagement for each student has driven how students are selected to attend on site. A range of things are being planned across secondary provision to provide feedback to families, including online parents evenings and other formal reporting arrangements.	
6.2.8	With regard to Black Lives Matter, is there anywhere on site where we have a statue of John Cabot, or any other person of interest?	
6.2.9	No, there is no statue, but we do of course use the name Cabot. We have had two groups approach JCA about the use of the name. We have engaged with both groups and have provided them with reassurance around how we educate students in each year group on this matter and have shared some detail around curriculum content, particularly relating to the history of Bristol. Further detail will be provided later on the agenda, within the CEO's report.	
6.2.10	NA joined the meeting.	
6.3	CLF Institute	
6.3.1	AFL highlighted the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is really good recruitment to SCITT for next year with 53 trainees (19 primary, 34 secondary phase) plus an additional 41 School Direct partner trainees. There will be some challenges around placements with such a large cohort and it has been decided to delay the start date for training in order that schools can get the beginning of the year underway first. • NPQ courses continue to run online; • A memorandum of agreement with Ambition Institute has been signed allowing CLF to work jointly with them on the early career framework; • School to school support work paused due to school closures but is now starting to resume • In place of the summer conference there will be a week long professional development programme for staff. 	
6.3.2	Questions from the board	
6.3.3	Your report indicates that a lower number of new NQTs have managed to secure a first post. Is there anything the federation can offer to support them until they do so?	
6.3.4	It is a concern and one that is reflected regionally and nationally. There is less movement of teachers onward and NQTs then struggle to find appropriate vacancies. Discussions are taking place around whether the federation can use them as volunteers or for tuition work through the summer and autumn to keep their skills live. This would continue their development and extend their training so they are not some months without classroom practice when they do secure a post. Further information will be provided to the board as this develops.	AFL

7	Finance Report	
7.1	SL provided an update on 4 key areas as detailed on the slide presentation shared.	
7.2	<p>1) EFSA communications</p> <p>There are three key updates from the EFSA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounts Direction 2019/20 - updated with increased reporting requirements in several areas; • Exceptional costs guidance – updated information about recovering some of the costs of managing the pandemic; • Academies Financial Handbook – updated in readiness for implementation in September 2020. Updates include an increased focus on the role of internal auditor and external auditor, renewed focus on the CFO role being held by an accountant, disclosures published on websites and related party transactions. 	
7.3	<p>2) Financial position year to date</p> <p>Some additional costs have been incurred during the pandemic; but savings have also been made to offset some of these. It is expected that the budget will come in as forecasted at year end. COVID related costs are forecast to be in the region of £300k, of which £200k has already been spent.</p>	
7.4	3) Budget 2020/2021	
7.4.1	The budget for 2020/2021 has now been set and was reviewed at the last FEG meeting with PO and WL. There are 17 provisions meeting the 1% surplus target; the remaining 5 provisions are proposing a surplus of under 1% or have forecast a deficit budget in order to provide some additional capacity. Total income has increased to £82m for next year. The majority of the increased income has been allocated to staffing expenditure. Reserves are predicted to end the year at £4.7m. Detailed budget information is included in the Finance Report.	
7.4.2	Two of the academies forecasting a deficit budget are DSSB and EPA. DSSB has a slightly improved position on previous years, however there is a downward trend in relation to the next couple of years. EPA has challenges in student recruitment and a number of initiatives are underway to improve the numbers.	
7.4.3	Since the paper was issued it has been announced that year 7 catch up funding has been withdrawn. This will be a loss of around £180k across the trust. Allocation details for the governments' £650m Covid-19 fund have not yet been confirmed, however, it may be in the region of up to £80 per student. There is a risk around teachers' pay awards, in part due to the suggested £26k starting salary for teachers. Support staff pay award is proposed at 2% but will be confirmed in April. It is hoped that commercial income streams can be increased through opportunities from lettings and at the CLF Institute.	
7.4.4	WL confirmed that the detail of the budget had been heavily scrutinised at the FEG meeting. Appropriate time was devoted to the high risk areas, including DSSB, and WL confirmed that the group will be keeping a close eye on the sustainability of DSSB going forward. HWA and JCA were also discussed in detail at the FEG meeting.	
7.5	<p>4) Reserves Policy</p> <p>SL confirmed that the reserves policy has not been reviewed since 2018 and confirmed that it will be reviewed ahead of September.</p>	
7.6	Questions from the board	
7.6.1	The DSSB budget has been of concern for some time. Are you able to share the scope of the review project with the board?	
7.6.2	We will do. As yet thinking is in the very early stages and includes a broad range of options.	
7.6.3	It has been indicated that most of the additional income is used for increased staffing costs. It is a large sum; is this all due to salary increases?	

7.6.4	Yes, much of it is. The government recommended a starting salary of £30k for teachers in 2 years' time. Moving the starting salary to £26k is the first step in this. It has meant the remaining teaching grades also increase in line with this starting point. There is also a slight increase in headcount due to increased student numbers.	
7.6.5	It is good to hear everything that is being done to support pupil numbers at EPA. Is there anything in the predicted child birth rate data for Bristol that might indicate increased primary pupil numbers?	
7.6.6	The data is available but shows a predicted fall in birth rate rather than any increase. The pupil numbers issues is not limited to EPA.	
7.6.7	ACH joined the meeting.	
7.6.8	It is proposed that the board approve the 2020/2021 budget. <i>The board approved the proposal.</i>	
7.6.9	In regards to the request to access £200k from reserves as a contingency for any required response to Covid-19, how is this money different from the share of the £650m the federation will receive from the government?	
7.6.10	The share of the money from the government is likely to be allocated on a per student basis and be in the region of £70 - £80 per student; resulting in a payment of around £50k per academy (depending on student numbers and how the allocation is weighted). There are a number of things we wish to do as a trust. The proposal is that the board approve access to up to £200k should it be needed. There is no firm plan in place to spend the money. The proposal provides the federation with flexibility to access those funds should they be needed.	
7.6.11	<i>The board approved the proposal.</i>	
8	HR	
8.1	HR Report	
8.1.1	IP reported that, as requested, sickness absence data has been split into long term and short term absence in the report. Also included is a breakdown of employee relation cases by ethnicity.	
8.1.2	In relation to the latest government announcements, guidance is being produced for clinically vulnerable and extremely clinically vulnerable staff. A survey of those staff that have already returned to work is also being considered to capture feedback about how that went.	
8.1.3	IP proposed that the board delegate authority to the P & W executive group to approve employee related policies. Negotiations are underway with trade unions on the latest changes to some of these policies; all changes are relatively minor. <i>The board approved the proposal.</i>	
8.1.4	The board requested that where grievance data is included in the HR report, information is also provided about the size of the cohort this relates to. IP will add this to future reports.	IP
9	Strategic Developments	
9.1	CEO Report	
9.1.1	The CEO report is included at Flag I. ST provided the following additional updates.	
9.1.2	Attendance Student attendance today is the second highest seen since the start of the pandemic, with 1241 students attending across the trust. The figure has grown as more families become confident to send their children to school. ST reported that all staff he had spoken to said they felt confident to be back in the academy, that the training provided had been useful and that the risk assessment had provided them with assurance. All also said how great it was to see children back in the academies.	
9.1.3	JCA Name	

	There have been some queries received from staff and from ex-students about the use of 'Cabot' within the name John Cabot Academy, as described by DN at item 6.2.9. There has also been contact from the media and some coverage about the different roles played by Cabot and Colston in the city. The federation has responded to these queries by explaining the importance of allowing students the opportunity to understand Bristol's history. At present it is felt that it is sufficient to keep the situation under observation. If any negative evidence emerges about the history of Cabot, or if public mood changes, further discussions will take place about the use of the name. ACH suggested there might be an opportunity to consider subtly moving branding away from using the full name Cabot Learning Federation and instead simply using CLF.	
9.1.4	ST confirmed that the Ofsted Report for HMA is now live.	
9.1.5	ST thanked the board and Academy Councillors for proving robust governance during the pandemic, and for continuing to provide the support and challenge required.	
9.1.6	Questions from the board	
9.1.7	Will there be discussions and wider consultations with parents, students and the wider community to take this forward?	
9.1.8	There is no pressing need to take any further action at this stage. If we do progress this, there would be a wider consultation.	
9.2	Racial Equalities Steering Group	
9.2.1	The purpose of this group is to meet the strong appetite to engage with the Black Lives Matter agenda across the trust and to create content for the equalities strand of the strategic plan for next year. There are around 24 members currently and the Terms of Reference allow for up to 30, providing some flexibility to secure further representation in due course. In order to keep the profile of the group high, there are four members of the Executive Team that are members of the group, including Sally Apps and Susie Weaver who are both Vice Chairs of the group. Once the model has been embedded, it will be used for other protected characteristics.	
9.2.2	The group have allocated responsibilities for different work streams to members of the group, including curriculum and research.	
9.2.3	Questions	
9.2.4	What is the federation's position on staff taking holidays abroad and then returning to the country and needing to quarantine?	
9.2.5	Clarity will be provided to staff ahead of September following discussion with the JCC and with unions.	
10	Governance	
10.1	Report from Chairs of Academy Council meeting	
10.1.1	SCO provided a verbal annual report of the COAC group, highlighting the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was very positive feedback from Chairs who attended the CLF Board and Council Results and Strategy Review in September 2019; it was a great opportunity for joint planning; • Early in the academic year the group looked at the new Ofsted framework, with a particular focus on curriculum; there was excellent support from the central team on the new framework and the role of the Academy Council; Chairs felt very supported; • The skills audit continues to evolve and is fed into by Chairs and Councillors; • Online training has been a regular agenda item; • Feedback provided after Ofsted inspections has been invaluable; • Raising achievement across the federation was a focus for the group over the year and continues to be so; 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Executive Team and central colleagues have provided excellent quality of information to the group, particularly during the pandemic and more recently with regard to wider opening; ST has provided regular communications as well as showing appreciation for the focus and support of Chairs and Councillors during this unprecedented time; AC meeting were postponed before Easter due to the school closure, but were quickly rescheduled and the COAC meeting was arranged ahead of those meetings which greatly benefitted Chairs; There have been requests from Chairs for phase development opportunities and these will be explored by the central team; There has been good recruitment of Academy Councillors over the year; The move to Office365 for communications has been invaluable, especially over the last few months; Paperwork for Academy Councils were reviewed at the start of the year and used throughout the year; a small task and finish group has been put in place to review existing documentation and ensure it fits with the delegated authority framework; Clarity has been requested around Academy Councillor's involvement in the ARV and ARMs; Attendance and engagement has improved over the year (including from Chairs ahead of the COAC meetings) especially with the use of virtual meetings via Teams. 	
10.1.2	PO thanked SCO for the report. PO thanked all Chairs and Academy Councillors, on behalf of the board, for the support and challenge they offer to academies across the federation.	
11	Other Operational Issues (including PSGs, H&S, ICT, Safeguarding)	
11.1	Operations Report	
11.1.1	BG provided a verbal update on progress since the Operations Report was written.	
11.1.2	Good progress has continued with the Uphill Village Academy project. Discussions have taken place with the LA, RSC and with solicitors. The transfer date is still on track for October 2020. BG proposed that a project steering group is set up to manage the project, with Bethan Owen as Chair. It is also proposed that the board delegate review and approval of documents relating to the transfer to Bethan Owen and one other Director. The board approved the proposals.	
11.2	Information Security Policy	
11.2.1	The board approved the revised Information Security Policy as at Flag L.	
11.3	Data Protection Policy	
11.3.1	The board approved the revised Data Protection Policy as at Flag M. The policy has been removed from the Employee Handbook to become a standalone policy.	
11.4	Records Retention Policy	
11.4.1	The board approved the revised Records Retention Policy as at Flag N.	
12	Report of the Sub Groups	
12.1	Audit Committee	
12.1.1	The audit committee met on 17 th June 2020 and focused on the external audit, internal audit and risk register.	
12.1.2	External Audit The new auditors, Bishop Fleming, have made a few minor changes to approach and processes compared to the previous auditors. This is common when an auditor changes and these have all been taken on board by the federation.	
12.1.3	Risk Register The committee reviewed the risks relating specifically to the audit committee and governance. The committee also had sight of the entire corporate risk register in order to seek assurance that the approach taken to risk was appropriate in light of the pandemic.	

12.1.4	Internal Audit The committee received five internal audit reports at this meeting due to a previously postponed meeting as a result of the pandemic.	
12.1.5	The internal audit of IT Data and Network Security was able to provide only limited assurance over both design and operational effectiveness. ACH reported that this is not pointing to an existing failure with the infrastructure or team, but is about ensuring that the capability of the team and infrastructure matches the strategic ambitions of the federation. The Audit Committee were largely satisfied with what they heard at the meeting but have asked for an item on the next agenda to review progress against recommendations made. Some contingency time has been earmarked for internal audit to revisit this area in the next academic year.	
12.2	Finance Executive Group	
12.2.1	The Finance Executive Group met on 8 th June 2020.	
12.2.2	As reported the Finance Executive Group reviewed the budget in detail. The group also discussed a new finance system that the federation is considering to replace the current system. The new system will bring many benefits to the finance team and wider federation, and it is hoped it will be able to be integrated to the HR system. In due course a business case will be proposed. Draft minutes of the meeting are available in the sub-committee folder within the CLF Board Team.	
12.3	Premises, Projects and ICT Group	
12.3.1	The PPI group met on 22 nd June 2020.	
12.3.2	The group reviewed the major risks in this area and have no concerns to report to the board. It was expected that the FRA at HWA would have been completed. However, this was postponed and is expected to take place next month.	
12.3.3	Projects were reviewed and are on track despite the disruption from Covid-19. One or two are still out for tender. The group looked at the estates information and those projects expected to be required next year in order to inform budget planning ahead of time.	
12.3.4	ICT projects were reviewed. The IT infrastructure is being updated and standardised to ensure maintenance and improvements are simpler going forward. Draft minutes of the meeting are available in the sub-committee folder within the CLF Board Team.	
12.4	People and Wellbeing Group	
12.4.1	The P & W group met on 8 th June 2020 and the meeting took the form of an extraordinary meeting in order that members could help shape the 'people' element of the strategy for the next 2 – 3 years. This executive group has school leadership representation in Jon Jones (Principal, BBA) and Vicky Counsell (Principal, EPA) and this provides a very good perspective on issues.	
12.4.2	In order to consider the strategy, the colleague life cycle was considered in its entirety and the group produced a SWOT analysis to capture thoughts around what the federation is doing well and what it needs to do to make it 'best in class' as a MAT. This strand of the strategy will be shared with the board when it has been finalised.	IP
12.4.3	There was also a good discussion on EDI. Draft minutes of the meeting are available in the sub-committee folder within the CLF Board Team.	
13	Any Other Business	
13.1	The draft agenda for the strategic board meeting of 13 th July 2020 is attached at Flag O.	
13.2	EDI - This item of other business has been covered at item 9.1.3.	
14	Close of Meeting	
14.1	The meeting closed at 18.30hrs.	