

Minutes - Board of Directors

Version: Approved
Meeting Date: Thursday 11 July 2024
Location: CLF Institute
Time: 4.00pm

Chairing this meeting Paul Olomolaiye (PO) Chair of the Board

Trustees: Adrian Coleman (AC) Director
Orville Lynch (OL) Director
Bryony French (BF) Director
Tim Spratt (TS) Director
Yvonne Beach (YB) Director

Attendees: Steve Taylor (ST) CEO
Dan Nicholls (DN) Deputy CEO
Sally Apps (SA) Education Director
Susie Weaver (SW) Education Director
Kate Richardson (KR) Education Director
Alison Fletcher (AFL) Director of CLF Institute
Rachel Mylrea (RMY) [part] Director of HR
Andy Ling (AL) IT Director
Martin Thomas (MT) Director of Estates and Facilities
Liz Tincknell (LT) Head of Governance
Sarah Lovell (SL) Chief Operating Officer
Wendy Hellin (WH) Clerk
Airlie Fife (AFI) Member

Apologies: Rachel Mortlock (RM) Vice Chair, Director
Suzanne Carrie (SC) Director
Mark Davies (MD) Director
Zarah Morwood (ZM) Director

Matters Arising

Action date and no	Relates to item no	Action	Owner	Update
02.05.24 01	5.8.3	MT to investigate potential for sale of CLF owned land.	MT	Update: MT advised that when considering sale of school owned land, the trust needs to ensure compliance with regulations including seeking approval from the Secretary of State. The trust also needs to ensure that the remaining land meets the minimal requirements for the school. As such, net capacity surveys are being carried out and the impact of any sale of land considered. Ongoing.
20.06.24 01	5.3.5	AFI has drafted a summary of that work, and this will be shared at the July board meeting.	SW	Included in board papers at Appx 5. This action has been completed and can be closed.

20.06.24 02	5.3.7	SW to provide an update at the July board meeting around the support in place for vulnerable students over the summer break.	SW	SW described the summer holiday offer for students. Where activities are being run on CLF sites, the DSLs have met to ensure appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place. SW has linked with all five LAs and with the trust lead for DSL. Communications have taken place with all Principals, so they have clear systems in place to monitor the safeguarding email. It is not yet known how many children will be involved in activities or supported in other ways over the summer break, but estimates are that it will be about 10% of all trust students. Each school has a database of vulnerable students and know the home addresses and family care arrangements. As term ends the safeguarding teams in schools, hand the baton over to the safeguarding teams in the LA who will have regular contact with the social workers of particularly vulnerable children. In terms of providing food over the holidays, that is a priority for the LA rather than schools, but staff support and signpost where they can, where they know there is need. This item is complete and can be closed .
20.06.24 03	7.2.2	SL and ST will consider introducing a policy on sponsorship and will consider engaging student voice to inform this.	SL ST	ST reported that the relationship with the proposed sponsor has ended. The policy work is ongoing .

Minutes

Item	Description	Action
1	Introductions, Administration, Apologies	
1.1	PO welcomed everyone and introductions were made. Apologies are recorded above.	
2	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	No verbal declarations were made.	
3	Minutes of Previous Meetings	
3.1	Minutes of the meeting of 20 June 2024 were approved.	
4	Matters Arising	
4.1	The action table has been updated above.	
5	Finance	
5.1	Approval of Budgets for 2024/25	
5.1.1	SL advised that the budget documents are included in the papers. The trust is in a good place in terms of the proposed budget, given the current climate. The budget prioritises funding where it is needed for school improvement. There are some assumptions included in the budget forecast that are not yet determined, around teacher pay. The budget for 2024/25 is a break-even budget. Year 2 is a surplus of £13k. Year 3 is a surplus of £635k. Reserves are forecast to end the year August 2025 at £10m or 6.8% of income (above the reserves policy target of 5%). This includes the estimated or final balances from the recent joiners.	
5.2	Questions from trustees	
5.3	In regard to the risks and opportunities, can you provide assurance around the use of reserves to support school improvement in certain academies due to growth? How will future growth affect the reserves, will there be a need to continue to dip into reserves going forwards?	
5.3.1	The trust has grown considerably over the last 12 months, and we have sought to expand the central team and school improvement capacity. Once the new schools have settled, they will need less support and we will revert to a business-as-usual scenario.	

5.4	Can you clarify why the budget shows reduced figures under costs, when the trust is now bigger than last year? The education fees and education supplies budgets have both reduced overall, compared to last year.	
5.4.1	The overall income has increased by 50%. Supply costs and education supplies are linked to what happens in the year. There may be vacancies that are not covered, or flex capacity available from within the teaching teams. We will keep a tight control on these spends but need to be able to flex to meet the needs of the cohort and that tends to mean a flex in the education fees and education supplies budgets. Additionally, this year we have had a period of growth, but next year, all the new academies would have been in the trust that bit longer and the finance teams will have a better picture of their spend patterns. There are now 40 budgets and each of the academy budgets has been reviewed thoroughly with the Principals, some of whom have indicated they will spend more in front line staffing than in other areas. The FEG looked at the budgets closely, especially in primary schools where the numbers are falling due to low birth rates. The group also asked for the data to be cut in multiple ways so that they could exam actual cost by pupil numbers etc and they were happy with the proposals.	
5.5	How have you considered energy prices in the proposed budget? Prices spiked and then came down but may be ready to go up again. Is that a risk you have considered?	
5.5.1	Yes, we are monitoring this closely and it also feeds into the environmental sub-strategy work around using less energy to drive down the cost.	
5.6	Of the £353k identified to be used from reserves, how many school improvement projects does that represent?	
5.6.1	There are a number of projects, of various size. The money will support our Executive Principal capacity and the School Improvement Team capacity for a further year as we seek to support the newer academies into the trust.	
5.7	ACTION: PO stated that there was a list of school improvement projects, shared at FEG, and asked that SL share this with TS.	SL
5.8	The Board is asked to approve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the break-even budget for 2024-2025 the submission of the 3-year figures presented in table 3.2 to the Education and Skills Funding Agency Use of up to £353k from reserves for one year to support school improvement capacity as the trust seeks to improve the recent joiners. <u>Decision:</u> The board approved these proposals.	
5.9	Approval of Service Based Contracts	
5.9.1	General Waste, Recycling and Food Waste Contract This contract is for an initial term of 3 years with the option to extend by 2 additional 1-year terms, subject to annual review. The value of the contract is estimated as £139k per annum; approximately £695k for the full potential 5-year term.	
5.9.2	Questions from trustees	
5.9.3	Does the proposed budget include the cost of this contract?	
5.9.4	Yes	
5.9.5	The contract is for a total of £695k for the 5-year term. Does that include annual inflation?	
5.9.6	The contract is procured through a trusted framework and there will be annual inflation increases but these will be appropriate. For approval purposes the inflation rates have not been added to the £695k total.	
5.9.7	<u>Decision:</u> The board approved the General Waste, Recycling and Food Waste contract be awarded to Veolia ES (UK) Ltd.	
5.9.8	Grounds Maintenance	

	This contract is for all trust sites, except for those 3 managed under PFI or Local Authority Maintained. The contract to be awarded is for an initial term of 3 years with the option to extend by 2 additional 1-year periods subject to annual review. The new contract, if approved, is due to start 01 November 2024. Our spend before growth is circa £220k per annum. The estimated 5-year value based on the current contract plus an estimated amount for the recent joiners is £1.4m.	
5.9.9	<u>Decision:</u> The board approved the Grounds Maintenance contract be awarded to CPS Grounds Ltd.	
6	Governance	
6.1	Renewal of TOO of Chairs (WFA)	
6.1.1	<u>Decision:</u> The board approved the renewal of the term of office, for four years, for Michael Small, Chair of WFA.	
6.2	Appointment of new Chairs (BMA)	
6.2.1	<u>Decision:</u> The board approved the appointment of Laura Walder as Chair of BMA for a four-year term of office.	
6.3	Proposed CLF Meeting Schedule 2024/25	
6.3.1	The board noted the schedule of board and sub-committee meeting dates for the next academic year.	
6.4	CLF Board Results and Strategic Review– draft programme	
6.4.1	The board noted the proposed agenda for the CLF Board Results and Strategic Review meeting.	
6.5	Policies for Approval	
6.5.1	Safeguarding Policy	
6.5.1.1	SW advised that the policy had undergone its annual review; there were minimum changes, which include some additions in line with KCSIE and some emphases on online safety.	
6.5.1.2	Questions from trustees	
6.5.1.3	Is there a policy on children having smart phones?	
6.5.1.4	The use of mobile phones is included in the individual academy behaviour policies.	
6.5.1.5	<u>Decision:</u> The board approved the Safeguarding Policy.	
6.5.2	Positive Handling Policy	
6.5.2.1	SW advised that this policy has been reviewed, with advice from an expert, particularly as the trust moves further into the special provision space.	
6.5.2.2	<u>Decision:</u> The board approved the Positive Handling Policy.	
7	Education Updates (verbal)	
7.1	KS2 SATS and other primary outcomes.	
7.1.1	DN provided an overview of the initial KS2 SATs and other primary outcomes, detailing that these represent the work of the trust over a decade, with a focus on shared curriculum, assessment and pedagogy. The results focus on the 10 pre-growth academies; the 8 new joining academies will not yet be considered by the DfE within the trust results.	
7.2	Disadvantaged There are 155 disadvantaged (PP) pupils in the 10 primary academies. Of those, 61% achieved combined. Last year this was 50%, in 2022 this was 49% and in 2019 46%. 61% is the national average for all combined; this is the first time disadvantaged pupils in the CLF have achieved this. The national average for disadvantaged (PP) students is 44%; the trust is 17% up on this figure. The gap between PP and non-PP is now 5% (to 66% non-PP combined).	
7.3	All Pupils	

	72% of all pupils achieved combined, compared to 66% last year, and 64% the year before. National will be 61%; the trust is 11% above national. The gap has narrowed from 15% in 2022, 16% in 2023 to 11% in 2024.	
7.4	The combined figure for the newest 8 academies is 54%. The figure for all 18 academies together is 65%.	
7.5	Phonics 72% of disadvantaged children passed the phonics test, compared to 83% of all children. This is marginally up on last year.	
7.6	Year 4 multiplication check The average score for all children out of 25 was 22.8. PP children scored an average of 21.9.	
7.7	Good Levels of Development (GLD) PP children achieved 52%, compared to 72% for all children.	
7.8	Questions and comments from trustees	
7.8.1	Congratulations on the excellent results. What, as a leadership team, will you do to celebrate?	
7.8.2	The pupils will celebrate, as will teams in school. We celebrated with the team in Leadership Forum this week and we will have individual conversations with Principals.	
7.8.3	How do you ensure complacency does not follow such strong results?	
7.8.4	We do not see complacency across the trust, but it is a good challenge. We will focus on the next cohort of children and continue to drive improvements for those children. There are some key individual successes such as Summerhill Academy that have now performed extremely strongly for two years in a row; this was a school that used to be in the bottom 5 in Bristol. Yet we are careful and cautious in the way we celebrate. Some colleagues will have found the results for their settings challenging and will need support from the Executive Team and their colleagues in the next academic year.	
8	Strategic Review and Reports	
8.1	CEO Report including Draft Strategic Planning 2024/25	
8.1.1	ST provided the following update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The paper reflects on where the trust is, as it comes to the end of Year 2 of the strategy and considers whether the strategy is still right for a trust that has grown from 22 to 35 academies. • The paper details some tweaks proposed to the strategy around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The age range being amended to 2 – 19 years. ○ The trust to operate within the South West only, and not beyond. ○ Changing the phrase to ‘school is trust, and trust is school’. ○ Confirmation that Storytellers 2 is being developed. ○ Removing the World Bank Organisation definition of disadvantaged, updating the concept of what it should be, and that it should include SEND. <p><u>Decision:</u> The board approved the changes to the strategy.</p>	
8.2	Questions from trustees	
8.3	Some students are disadvantaged in terms of time. Do you categorise children that are primary carers for family members as disadvantaged?	
8.3.1	We are alert to the vulnerabilities of children emerging in our schools and are not seeking to describe all these in detail in this definition. We recognise, for example, that some families that do not qualify for PP funding are experiencing poverty. We provide support to young carers in a range of ways in our academies and track them as a group, as we do for a range of groups across the trust.	
8.4	On page 6 of the strategy document, there is a list of stakeholders with which the trust should proactively seeking strong relationships with. In that list, should you include local	

	business, or national businesses that operate in Bristol? Is it important that we have those business connections included?	
8.4.1	Thank you for that feedback, we will consider that as part of the amendments.	
8.5	ST shared the conference video with the board.	
8.6	Year 3 disadvantage: fulfilling promise 24 25	
8.6.1	DN gave a presentation on Year 3 of the strategy, looking at the journey of the trust over the last 2 years and looking forward to 2024/25. The slides are shared in Teams with the papers for this meeting. Each academy will complete a top sheet on their AIP that details the indicators of success by 2030 around the attainment, progress and attendance of disadvantaged learners.	
8.7	Questions from trustees	
8.8	If you widen the meaning of disadvantage, have you looked at what that does to the statistics and numbers?	
8.8.1	If we change what we mean by disadvantage as we work through the strategy, and it consequently has an adverse consequence for the way in which trust performance is measured, we need to accept that as being secondary to the positive impact on children, whilst being mindful of the overall impact on the trust.	
8.9	Education Plan 2024/25	
8.9.1	DN shared the draft education plan for 2024/25; this links to the previous work that has taken place, focuses on honouring the right things, the CLF school improvement model and the things that are standardised. The vision is for 'Great schools, Meeting need, held in a Strong Trust'. This focus will create the conditions for leaders to secure high quality teaching and learning, seeking to improve attainment and realise the potential of all children. The final plan will be shared at the October board meeting.	
8.10	Professional Services Plan 2024/25	
8.10.1	SL presented the draft Professional Service Plan for 2024/25. The working title of the plan is Streamline 2024/25 and the plan seeks to consider the operation of the professional services area of the trust. The plan forms the third year, in a three-year professional services strategy.	
8.10.2	The plan aims to streamline operations, processes and procedures to allow leadership teams and staff to focus on what happens in the classroom. The three main strands are: improving processes; investing in systems; using data better.	
8.10.3	Following feedback from Principals, four or five processes and systems have been identified that need to be improved. In addition the general theme of streamlining will be run across the team improvement plans.	
8.10.4	<u>Decision:</u> The board approved the draft Professional Services Plan 2024/25.	
8.10.5	RM joined the meeting.	
8.11	Sub-Strategy Review Report 2023/24	
8.11.1	SL thanked all the link trustees who have supported the Executive Leads by monitoring the delivery of the sub-strategy areas. Successful objectives completed over the last year include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The delivery of 2 eco-conferences and some carbon neutral plans in place. • Review of local governance procedures. • A developed approach to pupil oracy. • A successful trial of teacher laptops at BBA. • The induction of new academies into the mental health and wellbeing programme. PO invited the link trustees (or Executive Lead in their absence) from each area of the sub-strategies to share one of the key successes from the year.	
8.11.2	Digital	

	ACO reported that he had been impressed with the trial of laptops given to teachers at BBA. This has had a positive impact on their daily working lives, saving hours of time per week so that they can concentrate on being teachers in the classroom.	
8.11.3	Environment MT was proud of the 2 very successful Eco-conferences that had taken place. There were 11 – 15 schools at UWE with good keynote speakers. The following day the CLF’s own eco-conference took place, with a range of pupils and workshops.	
8.11.4	EDI The leadership of EDI has been prioritised so that there is now a trust lead in place, as well as an EDI lead in each setting.	
8.11.5	Exceptional Trust Leadership Roles and responsibilities are now clearly defined across the Education Executive Team. The programme of fortnightly development for principals demonstrates that the trust is properly investing in key leaders.	
8.11.6	Operating Effectively at Scale The success of the recent period of growth is tribute to the hard work of the teams across the trust. There is still work to do, with the newer academies having only joined 4 months ago, but there are plans in place to support their continued induction. The work carried out by LT on local governance is a real step forward and the trust will reap the benefits of that as it moves into next year.	
8.11.7	Voice YB noted the richness of conversations that now feed into the Voice programme and how this has shifted over the past year.	
8.11.8	Wellbeing KR said that the focus for wellbeing over the last year has been around standards and expectations. For example, the trust now expects a colleague to be asked at least three times a year about how they are.	
8.11.9	The Board signed off on the successful delivery of the sub-strategy plans for 2023-2024.	
9	Election and confirmation of Chair and Vice Chair for 2024 / 2025	
9.1	Election of Chair	
9.1.1	The clerk advised that SCA could not be present at the meeting but had provided a written nomination for YB for the role of Chair. PO seconded the nomination. The clerk asked if there were any further nominations. None were received. YB left the meeting, and a vote was taken. YB was elected as Chair of the Board. YB was invited to rejoin the meeting.	
9.2	Election of Vice Chair	
9.2.1	The clerk advised that RMO has indicated she is happy to continue in the role of Vice Chair should trustees wish her to do so. The clerk asked if anyone would like to nominate RMO. PO nominated RMO for the role of Vice Chair. This was seconded by ACO. The clerk asked if there were any further nominations. None were received. A vote was taken and RMO was elected as Vice Chair.	
10	Any Other Business	
10.1	TS asked that the area within the strategic review for Community and Partnerships be discussed in more detail at the October board meeting. ACTION: Community and Partnerships will be added to the October board meeting for discussion.	ST WH
10.2	Trustees and the Executive Team thanked PO for his work and support as Chair over the last 4 years.	
10.3	The meeting closed at 7.10pm.	

Actions to take forward

Action date and no	Relates to item no	Action	Owner	Update
02.05.24 01	5.8.3	MT to investigate potential for sale of CLF owned land.	MT	Update: MT advised that when considering sale of school owned land, the trust needs to ensure compliance with regulations including seeking approval from the Secretary of State. The trust also needs to ensure that the remaining land meets the minimal requirements for the school. As such, net capacity surveys are being carried out and the impact of any sale of land considered. Ongoing.
20.06.24 03	7.2.2	SL and ST will consider introducing a policy on sponsorship and will consider engaging student voice to inform this.	SL ST	ST reported that the relationship with the proposed sponsor has ended. The policy work is ongoing.
11.07.24 01	5.7	PO stated that there was a list of school improvement projects, shared at FEG, and asked that SL share this with TS.	SL	
11.07.24 02	10.1	Community and Partnerships will be added to the October board meeting for discussion.	ST WH	