

Minutes - Board of Directors Strategic Review Meeting

Version: Approved
Meeting Date: Monday 12th July 2021
Location: Microsoft Teams
Time: 4.00pm

Chair:	Paul Olomolaiye (PO)	Chair of the Board
Members:	Bethan Owen (BON)	Vice Chair of the Board
	Guy Keith-Miller (GKM)	Director
	Nicky McAllister (NM)	Director
	Adrian Coleman (ACO)	Director
	Debbie Atack (DA)	Director
	Suzanne Carrie (SCA)	Director
	Rachel Mortlock (RM)	Director
	Anthony Cherry (ACH)	Director
	Bryony French (BF) [part]	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
Observers:	Peter Price (PP)	Member
Apologies:	Nusrat Arshad (NA)	Director
	Su Coombes (SCO)	Director

Minutes

Item	Description	Action
1	Introductions, Administration, Apologies	
1.1	PO welcomed everyone and introductions were made.	
2	Declarations of Interest/Member & Director Declarations	
2.1	In relation to item 6e Lyde Green School EOI, RM reported that the DfE had approached her to ask her to do some work with the school, but she has declined. Therefore there is no conflict of interest.	
3	Minutes of Previous Meetings	
3.1	Minutes of the meeting of 24 June 2021 were approved subject to an amendment at 11.3.1 to reflect the funding received was '£0.25m more than last year'.	
4	Matters Arising	
4.1	<i>1.2 Risk Register - SCO asked if a risk around the increased levels of sexual violence in pupils had been added to the risk register. BG will check to ensure this is included. This matter</i>	

	has been completed – this was in the Risk Register at S30, unfortunately due to a printing issue it was not visible in the June pack.	
4.2	5.2.6 DN will speak to Principals to get a picture of the number of students engaging in learning at home. DN reported that academies are having a lot of positive cases across the trust and that last Friday there were 17 positive cases in one day. There are an average of 14 – 20% of pupils away at any one time, although academies have rarely sent an entire year group home. Engagement with home learning is variable but academies do track this robustly to ensure it is as high as it can be. Post 16 have aligned their remote learning model to that of primary academies where whole classes are in or out together; this provides continuity of teaching. Students advised to isolate are recorded as an X code and this does not get included in the attendance data and so does not count.	
4.3	7.3.1 IP to circulate draft guidance on Hybrid Working to NA and DA for comment. This item is complete.	
4.4	SCA joined the meeting.	
4.5	8.3.3 Strategic Plan - On 12 July 2021 ST will present a draft proposal to board regarding stakeholder consultation. This is included at item 6b.	
4.6	8.4.1 The proposal for refreshed HEART values will be brought to the board meeting on 12 July. This is included at item 6c.	
5	Governance	
5.1	Agenda for Members Review Day	
5.1.1	The agenda for the Members' Review Day is included at Flag B. The Director's questionnaire referenced in the document will be circulated by the end of term.	BG
5.2	Appointment of Chairs of Council	
5.2.1	ST spoke to the proposals at Flag C for Jon Gould to serve a further term of office as Chair of HWA, and for Dereth Wood to serve a further term of office for Post 16. ST reported that he and DN had considered these appointments carefully and were in full support of the proposals. – approve Jon Gould and Dereth Wood - approved	
5.2.2	The board approved the proposals.	
5.2.3	PO asked that a letter be sent to each to confirm the term of office extension, to assure them the board have full confidence in them and to thank them for their continued support.	WH
5.3	Training and Development 2021 2022	
5.3.1	AFL confirmed that the resources and methods for training and professional development for Directors and Academy Councillors will be the same as for this year. This involves access to the PD platform, signposting to resources specifically relevant to ACs and some updated start of year training on safeguarding and other mandatory items.	
5.3.2	Dedicated equalities training can be arranged on request to cover specific areas; there is some EDI content on Nimble. BG reported that the Director's questionnaire will include an area to capture any training needs.	
5.4	Governance Structure to support the focus on disadvantaged learners	
5.4.1	BG explained the context for this agenda item. Supporting disadvantaged learners remains key as reflected in the strategic plan. It has been highlighted that another trust arranges governance of this area explicitly and the board are invited to consider how it assures itself around the support and progress of disadvantaged learners and whether the current governance structure serves that purpose or needs revising. PO recommended that this item is discussed when considering the strategic plan at item 6b.	
6	Strategic Review and Reports	
6.1	Strategic Review reports from Directors (Flag D).	
6.1.1	Area A - BON provided the following summary.	

6.1.2	Under DN the Executive Team have reviewed their strand and strategic areas regularly and thoroughly and have been able to keep BON and the team well informed around where each work stream is in terms of progress at the end of each term. The pandemic has effected every work stream and some aspects of work carried out in the first review have had to be re-imagined. The report details what work the team felt would be realistically covered by the summer and shows that a couple of items are moved to next year. All those areas agreed to be complete by April have been actioned. BON congratulated the team on achieving so much during a very challenging time.	
6.1.3	Area B - NA	
6.1.4	The review of Area B is included at Flag D2. DA confirmed that she was aware of progress in this area due to the People and Wellbeing Executive Group meetings and confirmed that she supported the report.	
6.1.5	Area C - ACO	
6.1.6	ACO provided the following summary.	
6.1.7	ACO has met with ST, BG and SL three times during the year. Each year there is an ambitious programme and this is tracked and monitored via a matrix with a robust method of measuring if it has been achieved. Colleagues have made good progress and are on track to complete the majority of actions this academic year; there are just one or two where progress has not been as hoped and these projects may be rolled over to next year. It is important to note that some important and urgent challenges arose this year due to Covid-19 that quite rightly took priority and some aspects of the revision of standards became less of a priority. In conclusion, colleagues have performed very well to achieve this much this year.	
6.2	CLF Draft Strategic Planning	
6.2.1	ST noted that there was challenge from the board at the last meeting around how high performance is maintained and how staff are supported through formal processes to do well. The key concept of the plan for next year will be how to improve standards by ensuring strong professional development. There are already a range of mechanisms in place to help support staff to do well, including a robust series of events to support their own professional development. The number of people on formal capability procedures is low. This is mainly due to the exceptional circumstances of the pandemic but it is also quite rare to get to a formal capability stage as there are many other actions and support systems to drive up performance and encourage continued professional development.	
6.2.2	ST shared slides on draft strategic planning with the board. These are included on Teams.	
6.2.3	Five key measures will be introduced to provide assurance that progress is being made and standards are improving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The progress of disadvantaged children • The attainment of disadvantaged children • The attendance of disadvantaged children • Quality of Teaching • Quality of Middle Leadership It is anticipated that an increased number of children will be considered disadvantaged from September as many children will have had difficult experiences throughout the pandemic.	
6.2.4	SA provided an overview of the disadvantaged strategy, which spans 3 years. Year 1 centres around gaining a trust-wide understanding of what it means to be disadvantaged and includes regular and robust student voice and training for lead staff and others. Year 2 focuses on a whole trust approach to the disproportionate effect felt by people with disadvantage, leading into year 3 when it is expected there will be some shifts in terms of outcomes and school experience for those students. The golden thread running through	

	year 3 of the plan will be trust wide oracy. At Year 3 the changes need to be substantial and systemic so that academies do not revert back to previous strategies.	
6.2.5	ST shared a slide on networks across the federation. There are a wide range of networks running across the trust, both within academies, across the trust and some in the community. These networks drive forward strategic work and opportunities for colleagues to collaborate continue to grow.	
6.2.6	ST introduced Area D which will be a bridge to the future and will include three elements: voice, digital and environment.	
	Questions from the board	
6.2.7	There is a strong correlation between disadvantaged students and those with disabilities, however, how do we ensure we don't lose focus on those children with special educational needs and disabilities?	
6.2.8	We have thought carefully about how we measure disadvantage and vulnerability and the crossover is important to us. It is clear that most disadvantaged students have some SEND needs. We already have a range of strategies to support those students. We have a mature SEND high level strategy and over the last 12 months have made improvements in a deeper way, including training, SEND reviews etc. and are confident in the robust approach to SEND.	
6.2.9	In terms of underperforming teachers, are you concerned that after 18 months of teaching through the pandemic, teachers are de-skilled or feeling de-skilled, particularly those new to the profession?	
6.2.10	This has worked both ways in that some teaching has become stronger through the pandemic, due to the use of technology and the different pedagogy required to teach students virtually, and some has weakened. This is a unique time for teachers who are having to maintain Covid-19 safe procedures in the classroom and have been less close to books and to students.	
6.2.11	You have said that the number of disadvantaged students is likely to increase. Is there an intention to specify what constitutes disadvantage? Or are is it deliberately vague for a specific purpose?	
6.2.12	We are targeting a range of vulnerable groups and when looking at data we currently use PP as one measure for the headline figure, but we are working on a much broader definition of disadvantage and use an additional filter to encompass a greater number of children. The key strand aims to support all children in every class all of the time meaning we will not miss children that we do not know or ordinarily recognise as disadvantaged. The strategies used will privilege any child experiencing disadvantage due to the nature of what we have chosen.	
6.2.13	What percentage of pupils are currently classed as disadvantaged and how are we sure we are not alienating the rest of the pupils?	
6.2.14	Nationally the figure has risen over the last year from 18.1% to 20.4%, however, in the federation it is higher at over 30% for PP. The PP figure represents the students we are held accountable for under that measure, but do not include all vulnerable students across the trust and there are many local variations.	
6.2.15	One of the five measures you have chosen is the Quality of Middle Leaders. Why have you chosen that as an important measure?	
6.2.16	One of the key determining factors for disadvantaged students will be the quality of teaching they get. There is a big drive on getting teaching right every day and on professional development for staff. A key factor in the quality of teaching is the level of strength of middle leaders. We looked to find five measures that feel hierarchical so that if they are in place, we know the provision beneath them is strong.	
6.2.17	In terms of the approach chosen, to what extent is it bespoke to the federation? Is it a common approach in other trusts?	

6.2.18	The federation has a higher than national number of disadvantaged students and we deliberately work with schools that sit close to our HEART values, choosing schools in challenging communities where we can make the biggest difference. Before the pandemic the trust's outcomes were largely in line with national benchmarks, however, for disadvantaged students we did better than others nationally. The challenging times over the last 18 months have affected disadvantaged children the most and so the priority will be ensuring those children make progress, and in doing so, we will also support our non-disadvantaged children to do better.	
6.2.19	If you consider the lowest 20% of pupils in terms of attainment, that don't meet expectations, how many of those pupils are also disadvantaged? Do we know who those students are? Equally, if EYFS students do not make good levels of development, do we know how many are disadvantaged?	
6.2.20	Yes, we are alert to the data for the lowest 20% of students and do cut the data several ways to ensure no students are missed. We are tracking these students and working closely with EYFS networks.	
6.2.21	What impact should we expect to see this time next year as a result of the disadvantaged strategy? What will have changed?	
6.2.22	We will change the language we use so that colleagues no longer talk in terms of percentages but instead refer to actual numbers of children to remind us that these are all individuals. We are focused on drilling down and creating strong success criteria in the four areas of the plan and will have quantitative and qualitative data from the five measures of impact we have implemented.	
6.2.23	In terms of voice, we do not currently have one coherent voice when engaging with stakeholders as a trust. We will take the opportunity over the year to set up those links and ensure they are sustainable. The first item for discussion with stakeholders will be the next five year strategy, to assist our thinking over the next 12 months. A report is included in the papers detailing the kind of stakeholder groups we might engage with and a working title for the five year plan: Equity Through Education.	
	End of Questions	
6.3	Recovery	
6.3.1	DN and SA provided an update on the Recovery Curriculum. The main focus will be to do the job well, to teach well and to lead well. There is some sophisticated recovery work going on in individual academies and it always includes a deep assessment of need. A key part of recovery will be to really know the children well and ensure they have a sense of belonging. A lot of work is taking place in primary academies around holistic assessment and raising attainment for key year groups. Another theme being explored is around using the maturity of the trust; the infrastructures and systems in place are an advantage. There is capacity in the Principal Team and the Executive Team and they add real value.	
6.4	Post 16	
6.4.1	SL provided an update on the temporary accommodation for Post 16 on the site of JCA. The accommodation will consist of ten classrooms, a meeting room, staff kitchen and toilets. Planning permission has been granted and the project is on track with just a one week delay anticipated. Delivery will take place during September and the lease will run for 6 years. The project steering group is led by Heidi Clement (Head of Projects and Estates) and meets fortnightly. The project is likely to go slightly over budget, however, there is no plan to use reserves. Some of the unspent funds from this year will be deployed. The final budget is now around £1.6m. Running alongside the project is continued discussions to secure a permanent site for Post 16 on the fire station site adjacent to BBA.	
6.5	Heart Values Refresh	
6.5.1	The board approved the proposals for the HEART Values refresh as at Flag F.	
6.6	Considering the case for Growth	

6.6.1	ST presented Flag G (Growth Strategy 2021 / 2022), a paper outlining the broader context of, and proposing an appetite for, the growth of the federation. In addition to growth by the addition of one academy at a time, the RSC has encouraged MATs to consider mergers. It has also recommended the CLF consider growth outside of its current geographical area. ST confirmed that the Executive Team has sufficient capacity to manage the next phase of growth without need for additional capacity.	
6.6.2	The board discussed the benefits of growth for the CLF as well as the potential challenges.	
6.6.3	The board approved the principle of continuing to explore growth options in the manner outlined in section 5 of the growth paper at Flag G, with a view to securing growth during 2021-2022 which is line with our stated ambition to grow to be a MAT of 30 academies or 18,000 pupils by 2023.	
6.7	Lyde Green School Expression of Interest	
6.7.1	ST and SL presented Flag H. The deadline for the submission of interest for Lyde Green School was 9am this morning and so was submitted. The Board are asked to approve that the trust accepts the invitation to open a new secondary academy free school should the EOI be successful; if the Board are not supportive of the proposal the EOI can be withdrawn immediately.	
	Questions from the Board	
6.7.2	The paper indicates the school is likely to open in temporary accommodation under the build has been completed. Where is that likely to be situated?	
6.7.3	The Council are hopeful that the temporary accommodation will be close to the planned permanent site. The design of the permanent site is already quite advanced.	
6.7.4	The Board approved that the trust accepts the invitation to open a new secondary academy free school in Lyde Green, should the EOI be successful.	
6.7.5	BF left the meeting.	
6.8	Health and Safety Annual Report	
6.8.1	The Health and Safety Report is included at Flag I for information only. BG reported that previously, at this point in the year, a compliance report would be submitted to the board including data on Freedom of Information Requests, Subject Access Requests, complaints etc. However, this will now be included in the October board Operations Report going forward in order that a full year's data can be included.	
7	Any Other Business	
7.1	a) CLF Meeting Schedule 2021/22. This is included at Flag J for information.	
7.2	b) CLF Governance Results Review. This is included at Flag K for information; this has previously been a Saturday morning event and this year be held during an evening via Teams.	
8	End of Year Round Up and Appreciation of Colleagues	
8.1	ST reported that Guy Keith-Miller is resigning as a Director. Guy will remain as a member of the trust and on the Education Scrutiny Committee. Guy was presented with a gift to thank him for his significant contribution spanning 14 years.	
8.2	The meeting closed at 18.13 hrs.	