

MINUTES

Autumn term 2017 meeting of the Members Board

Held at Priestley College on Friday 1 December 2017, 4.15pm

Present:

Steven Broomhead SB
Andrew Cannell AC
Jane Griffiths JG
David Mowat DM
Steve Whatmore (*Chair*) SW

In attendance:

Vicky Briggs (Great Sankey Primary) VB
John Carlin (Penketh High) JC
Angela Grace (Penketh South Primary) AG
Matthew Grant (CEO/Priestley College) MG
Andrew Moorcroft (Beamont Collegiate) AM
Damian McGuire (Priestley College) DMc
Kirsten Riley (Clerk) KR

Part One – Non Confidential Business

1. Welcome

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions took place.

2. Absence/Apologies

The attendance register was circulated. Apologies were received from T Long and B Scott-Herron. Members accepted the apologies.

3. Declaration of personal interests

Governors were asked to declare any interest they may have, pecuniary or otherwise, relating to this meeting. No interests were declared.

4. Minutes of the previous Members Board meeting – 17 March 2017

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 March 2017 were confirmed as a correct record.

a) Matters Arising

AM circulated the Memorandum of Understanding for TCAT and advised there had been an addition to the document. Members **approved** the amendment.

5. Minutes of the First Autumn Trust Board Meeting – 15 November 2017

Finance

A Member asked DMc to confirm if the finance system is ready for use. DMc confirmed that the system is now in place at all schools; there were some initial issues. The system will be housed at Priestley College and will operate across the academies.

A Member asked if each school will now use the same application. DMc confirmed that all academies now use the same accounting system that can be used standalone if required.

DMc advised that there was an issue with the Lloyds banking system, but this has been resolved and is updating regularly. **A Member asked** if each school has its own separate bank account. DMc confirmed that it is one legal entity but each school has a separate account and balance sheet. Each school must be identified individually under instruction from the Department for Education (DFE).

A Member asked if the deficit and surplus of each school will be easily identified. DMc confirmed that it will be identified and will also be monitored on a global basis.

Appleton College

MG reported that Bridgewater have submitted a fast track application to DFE in respect of the closure of Appleton College and the plan for the Teaching School to be located on the site. The Regional Schools Commissioner has advised that a 'Significant Change' Application Form may need to be completed.

A Member asked what the implications will be. MG advised that the business case is articulated within the consultation document.

6. Confirmation of external auditor

DMc informed Members of the tender process for the appointment of the external auditor. LW (chair of the audit committee), MG and DMc were involved in the selection process.

12 accounting firms (local and national) submitted an application. During the process a number of firms decided not to take part, and a number did not meet the tender requirements so were removed.

During the selection process it was found that two firms charged nearly £7,000 less than other firms. It was not felt that the price could be negotiated with the more expensive firms so the two firms were asked to complete a presentation.

During the presentation, Murray Smith advised that they have 30 years' experience in education audit. Members were informed that Murray Smith has been Priestley College's auditor for 3 years.

LW advised that Murray Smith's approach was effective. During the presentation the panel wished to determine the firm's insight of not just education, but the trust within the local environment; Murray Smith had a strong understanding.

A Member asked if the total audit fee is lower than it would have been under the old structure. DMc confirmed that the total fee, with everything included, is £23,000. DMc informed Members that other firms were charging up to £42,000.

MG highlighted that Members agreed to the appointment of Murray Smith via email however asked that Members confirm this decision at the meeting.

AC proposed the appointment of Murray Smith. DM seconded the proposal.

Members **agreed** the appointment of Murray Smith as the external auditor for TCAT.

Members thanked DMc for the work undertaken in the process.

7. Accounting Policies

The Members were asked to consider the accounting policies and approve them as the basis on which the Trust's Financial Statements are prepared.

A Member asked where the policy evolved from. Members were informed that the policies comply with all current accounting standards and recommended practices. They also comply with the Academies Account Directions issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

DMc outlined the differences between the two pension schemes (Teachers' Pension Scheme and The Local Government Pension Scheme).

A Member asked if the policies had been completed on the basis of what Priestley College currently use. DMc confirmed that the policies are similar to those of Priestley College.

Members **approved** the Account Policies.

8. Executive Report

MG advised that the Executive Report was discussed at the first meeting of the Trust Board on 15 November 2017. The report outlines the progress of

the MAT since its formation on 1 May 2017. The report provides an overview of:

- Quality of Provision
- Trust Wide Initiatives
- The Teaching School
- Funding and Finance
- Growth and Development

MG reported that a visit took place with pupils and students from each organisation to the Houses of Parliament on 13 October. Pupils and students travelled together on the train and were given a guided tour. On 20 October Lord Story visited Sir Thomas Boteler where pupils and students across TCAT were involved in an activity that sought to bring the House of Lords to life in the school.

Members were informed that since the report was published Penketh South Primary School received an academy notice and are likely to join on 1 April 2018.

Members noted the termly score cards that provide an overview of performance for each academy.

Since writing the report, MG advised that he has been invited to a meeting with the Regional Schools Commissioner on 25 January 2018 to discuss the progress of the trust and to review the academy performance of the last academic year. A Self-Evaluation Form (for primary and secondary schools) and Self-Assessment Report (for the college) will be submitted along with the Executive Report and the Growth and Strategy Plan.

Members were provided with a copy of each academy's score card. **A Member asked** who has ownership of the score card. AM advised that he will review the score cards, and this will be incorporated into each headteacher's self-assessment process. The local governing body will also have the opportunity to review the information.

AM visits each academy and holds a peer review; AM will offer challenge to the headteacher to validate the judgements.

A Member asked how self-assessments will be completed in the same way. AM advised that there are a number of documents that inform the score card.

A Member asked if bids are being made for further funding. AM advised that bids will be made after January 2018.

A Member asked if there is a timeframe for welcoming new schools into the MAT. MG understood that the process could take up to 6 months.

9. **Growth and Strategy Plan Document**

MG presented the Growth and Strategy Plan document to Members and outlined the five strategic objectives for TCAT's ambitious expansion programme.

MG advised that the Growth and Strategy Plan is a working document, and Trustees have been encouraged to share this, and the Executive Report, with their local governing boards to ensure they have a clear sense of what is happening within TCAT.

Appleton College (Bridgewater High School's sixth form college) will be closing; this is a fantastic opportunity for the centre to be developed into a hub for teacher training and professional development.

A Member asked if planned housing is likely to have an effect. MG advised he would like a detailed conversation with the local authority in respect of this.

Action: MG to arrange a discussion with the local authority with regards to the plans for new housing.

A Member questioned how they should measure themselves against the objectives. A Member noted that in order for the five objectives to become tangible, metrics could be produced in order to portray a journey. This would make it easier for Members to understand that TCAT is moving in the right direction.

MG advised that the conversation with the Regional Schools Commissioner will give an indication of what is expected of TCAT.

A Member asked how objectives can be measured. AM advised that a long planning session has taken place to look at the objectives and how they can be achieved. A meeting will take place to discuss the implementation of the plan and impact measures will follow.

A Member asked if the objectives will change over time. Members were informed that the objectives will remain for some time.

A Member asked if the document is separate to a business plan. MG confirmed that there is not a business plan in the traditional sense, other than what was compiled within the original application form.

A Member acknowledged that TCAT is now a coherent unit and effectively everything that was set out has been achieved. A huge amount of work has gone into the Central Executive Team and this has been very much appreciated by the Trustees; things can only get better with regards to adding new schools and improving the academies already in place.

A Member recognised that the next meeting of the Members Board will take place in July 2018; it is felt that this is some time away and the Member questioned whether it would be useful to have a meeting before then in order to stay informed.

A Member requested that the Executive Report be circulated to Members routinely.

Action: Clerk to circulate updated Executive Reports to Members, Trustees and the Central Executive Team.

Members were invited to attend the joint local governors meeting on 14 February 2018.

A Member noted that Members have the ultimate legal responsibility and accountability. A Member noted that a main responsibility of Members is to appoint the External Auditors and to appoint the right Trustees who will continue the ethos that were set for the Trust. A Members role is to ensure that the Trust continues to run on the foundations that were set.

A Member asked if they are content that their role can be fulfilled with two meetings per year. Members were informed that, of the 5 Members, 2 are Trustees; Members should have comfort that they are routinely attending meetings.

Members were informed of the origin of the structure of Members and Trustees that relates back to charity law. MG advised that the Academies Financial Handbook provides information with regards to the role of Members.

Action: Clerk to circulate Academies Financial Handbook to Members.

AM advised that the scheme of delegation clarifies the Members' role.

Action: AM to forward the Scheme of Delegation to Clerk for circulation to Members.

A Member asked if there is a simple set of key performance indicators to adopt.



AM understood that Browne Jacobson could provide advice on this.

Action: MG and SW to discuss key performance indicators

A Member asked if an Ofsted review at TCAT level would require Member involvement. MG advised that Ofsted may wish to speak to a representative of the Members Board. Members were informed that the procedures are evolving over time due to issues arising nationally.

10. Any Other Business

Members were informed of the changes in membership at local governing body level.

Members were informed that the previous Vice Chair at Great Sankey Primary School has a Pecuniary Interest as he is now the Chair of the Omega Multi Academy Trust.

A Member recommended that a database of all governors within the local governing boards be created in order to give them an opportunity to offer their skillset elsewhere within TCAT.

11. Proposed future meeting dates of the Members Board

- a) Summer 2018 – Friday 6 July 2018 at Bridgewater High School.

Part one of the meeting ended 5.06pm

SIGNED

Chair

Date