

MINUTES

Spring term 2018 meeting of the Trust Board

Held at Sir Thomas Boteler High School on Wednesday 14 February 2018 at 6pm

Present:

Matthew Grant (CEO) MG
Howard Platt (Chair) HP
John Monaghan JM
Linda Waterson LW
Maureen Mellor MM
Neil Pearson NP
Stephen Whatmore SW
Toby Macormac TM
Sheila Yates SY
Jane Griffiths JG
Stuart Titchard ST

In attendance:

Andrew Moorcroft (Beamont Collegiate Academy) AM
Beverley Scott-Herron (Sir Thomas Boteler High School) BSH
Damian McGuire (Priestley College) DMc
Tim Long (Bridgewater High School) TL
Vicky Briggs (Great Sankey Primary School) VB

Part One – non confidential business

1. Welcome

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Absence/Apologies

The clerk confirmed she had received apologies from G Johnson and P Hinds.

Trustees **accepted** the apologies.

3. Declaration of personal interest

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

4. Minutes of the Trust Board meeting - 13 December 2018

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 December 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the chair.

a) Matters Arising

BSH highlighted that her name was not on the attendance list from the meeting on 13 December 2018 however she did attend the meeting.

b) Action Log

Trustees acknowledged that all actions were completed.

5. Committee Minutes

a) Quality and Standards Committee – 30 January 2018

SY reported that the committee reviewed the score cards for each school in great detail and AM took the committee through the report from the 30 January 2018 meeting with V Beer the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC), A Large (from the RSC) and S Brown (from the Education and Skills Funding Agency).

AM informed Trustees that he, along with TL and MG met with the RSC to review each schools performance. The RSC queried the Trust's approach for Primary schools along with the Trust's response to certain issues. The meeting gave the central executive team a flavour of what will be expected in respect of school improvement on an annual basis.

Further discussion took place with regards to the prospect of growth within the Trust. Encouraging feedback was received about how far the Trust has come in a short space of time. The RSC were positive about the Trust's approach to growth for primary schools.

Members of the central executive team discussed additional funding with the RSC to support those schools that are facing the most challenge; it was made clear that there will be no financial support available.

SY reported that the RSC were keen to find out the impact of the Trust as a whole; two areas that members of the committee are working towards are pupil premium and SEND. These are two areas where the whole Trust coordination will work well. There is due to be a report from VB about pupil premium and AM about SEND at the next committee meeting.

A governor noted that it states within the minutes that Penketh High School will be repaying its money. MG explained that, at the Finance, HR and Resources Committee on 7 February it was decided that it may not be the right time to pay the money. It would be a better idea to invest in the school to make improvements.

A Trustee informed the committee that C Williams attempted to attend the meeting however she could not get into the building. She sent apologies after the meeting.

b) Audit and Risk Committee – 7 February 2018

Trustees were informed that given the timescale between meetings, the minutes were not available to be reviewed.

Action: Agreement of Audit and Risk Committee minutes from 7 February 2018 to be added to summer 2018 Trust Board meeting agenda.

LW reported that the meeting was chaired by A Farquharson as the chair was not available to attend. LW advised that the financial accounts and Auditor's Management letter were discussed. The Risk Management Plan was reviewed.

DMc explained that he presented the draft tender document for internal audit to the committee. The document will be sent out for tender as soon as Trustees availability for interview has been established.

c) Finance, HR and Operations Committee – 7 February 2018

Trustees were informed that given the timescale between meetings, the minutes were not available to be reviewed.

LW chaired the meeting and reported that the content was similar to the Audit and Risk Committee meeting. Final accounts were submitted on time with a clean bill of health. DMc provided an update and accounts are looking positive for the remainder of the year.

The following policies were received:

- TCAT Health and Safety Policy
- General Data Protection Regulations
- Disciplinary Policy
- Pensions Discretions Policy

LW advised that the meeting was very constructive and useful.

Action: Agreement of Finance, HR and Operations Committee minutes from 7 February 2018 to be added to summer 2018 Trust Board meeting agenda.

6. Committee Membership

The clerk explained that the current chair of the Audit and Risk Committee (G Johnson) is having difficulties making the meetings. It has been recommended that she move to the Finance, HR and Operations Committee as it is a later meeting.

LW offered to no longer chair the Finance, HR and Operations Committee and agreed to chair for the Audit and Risk Committee.

Trustees **agreed** for LW to be the chair for the Audit and Risk Committee

The clerk asked for volunteers to join the Audit and Risk Committee.

SW agreed to be join the Audit and Risk Committee.

Trustees **agreed** to the changes to the committee membership.

Action: Clerk to arrange chairs election for the summer 2018 Finance, HR and Operations Committee.

7. Executive Report

a) Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) Review - 30 January 2018

MG presented his second Executive Report since TCAT was formed.

MG highlighted that members of the central executive team attended the first annual review with the RSC. At the meeting, the RSC advised that two Warrington schools had formally expressed an interest in joining TCAT.

b) The UTC

Trustees were informed that the UTC opened a consultation on changes to its admissions arrangements, most notably the admission of Year 9 pupils from September 2019. The week before the Christmas break in 2017, the local authority and schools became aware that the UTC had written to 55 Year 9 pupils to offer them a place to start at the UTC on 8 January 2018. The Audit and Risk Committee discussed this at their meeting on 7 February 2018.

The Trust continues to be concerned about this on behalf of Warrington secondary schools, who want to work together for the benefit of all young people in Warrington.

During a meeting on 8 February 2018, TL and MG met with L Barber (from the UTC), together with H Smith and K Guise (from the local authority) to discuss the support required to ensure that the 55 children who joined the UTC will not be disadvantaged. The UTC made it clear that the proposal to admit Year 9 pupils in the future has been abandoned.

The local authority highlighted that only 4 out of the 55 pupils admitted by the UTC fitted the definition of 'gifted and talented'.

A Trustee asked if the 55 pupils will remain at the UTC. MG advised that some pupils may return however there are no firm plans other than to provide support to those pupils.

TL reported that there are plans to conduct an SEND review of the 55 pupils. TL hopes that the UTC will take advantage of the networking available to them.

MG reported that the 55 pupils are likely to commence their GCSE's in September 2018 and the UTC are not seeking to progress to Post 16 education at the end of Year 10. **A Trustee asked** what the pupils will be doing for the next two terms. TL advised that, as a free school, there should be an appropriate curriculum to meet the pupils' needs.

c) Learning @ TCAT

MG reported that the Teaching School has begun to hold interviews for Initial Teacher Training (ITT) places for 2018/2019.

TCAT academies are beginning to benefit from the Teaching School's programme of professional development with 15 leaders undertaking the Specialist Leaders in Education (SLE) programme. 30 colleagues have also signed up for the Learning Coach programme.

TCAT are seeking to submit a bid for SSIF funds for a Science project (led by B Dunne) and is also working to develop a bid for work in English (led by TL). AM is working with the local authority to develop a bid around transition from KS2 to KS3.

TCAT are looking to redevelop the Appleton Sixth Form Centre into the hub for 'Learning @ TCAT' activities.

d) Finance

MG reported that TCAT will shortly be looking to tendering for the following in order to make savings:

- Internal auditor: the draft tender document was approved by the Audit and Risk Committee on 8 February 2018.
- Catering for Bridgewater High School, Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High School and Priestley College.
- HR
- Legal Services
- Insurance
- Utilities
- Stationery/educational supplies

The Trust is working on the development of a number of finance Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for individual academies and for the Trust as a whole.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) has recommended 70% for staff costs as a percentage of income. Given the current funding constraints on income and rising wage costs this is an unrealistic expectation.

The central executive team believe that 1% levy from partners will allow the Trust to continue with school improvement activities led by AM and the Teaching School.

e) General Data Protection Regulations

A group of staff from across the Trust, led by A Laing have worked hard to develop a Trust wide response to this topic. When seeking to appoint a Data Protection Officer the central executive team believe that there is no need to appoint an external body or person to fulfil this role. It is felt that there is a group within the Trust who have developed their skills and knowledge to undertake this role. The preference would be to appoint a number of Data Protection Officers who could act for the Trust. Job Descriptions would need to be amended but there would be no need to increase remuneration.

f) Growth of the Trust

Conversations continue to be held with a number of Primary Schools across Warrington. Penketh South Primary School and Great Sankey Primary School are heading up wider conversations. The Governor Open Seminar on 14 March 2018 will be an opportunity to engage with other interested parties.

The Trust are awaiting the Secretary of States final decision with regards to the former 'Future Tech Studio School' building and Beamont Collegiate's bid to have it become part of its estate for STEM related activities.

g) Student Activities

Representatives from TCAT and United Utilities have been meeting on a regular basis over the last 12 months, looking into the possibilities of getting young people involved together in industry.

The Student Council is in the process of developing its priorities for a project and at this stage it is expected to be around recycling.

Discussions continue to take place with Oxbridge. Oxbridge was keen to talk with Year 9 pupils within TCAT. Dr Clause from Oxford University and Dr Sumnal from Cambridge University discussed the development of an action research based project involving TCAT schools and students.

Trustees were invited to the launch of SPARK at Penketh High School on 16 February 2018; the first Makerspace based in a state school that will provide opportunities to enhance the experience for pupils in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths (STEAM) related activities.

h) School/College Improvement Activity and Scorecards

Since the November report of the Central Executive Team a lot of school improvement work has taken place. Trustees were provided with the updated Scorecards.

Work undertaken at TCAT was reported to the RSC who was impressed by the amount achieved in a short space of time.

The work that AM and the team of lead practitioners have put together has given the Trust a great head start for the next academic year.

DMc assured there are no issues with finance in terms of the current years budget and it will be balanced moving forward.

All schools within TCAT have now been subject to a full peer review. The reviews have been conducted professionally and schools continue to learn from each other while also being held accountable

MG informed Trustees that the ESFA have arranged a validation visit on TCAT's Financial Management and Governance. MG explained that the ESFA will spend two days with TCAT, a day with DMc and will then visit two of the schools. MG reminded colleagues that the Member, Trustee and Governor Profile and Declaration of Business and Personal Interest 2017/18 forms that are late should now be completed by 28 February 2018 and returned to the clerk.

Trustees thanked MG for the Executive Report.

8. Finance Report

a) TCAT 2016/2017 End of Year Accounts and Financial Statements

Trustees were provided with the TCAT 2016/2017 End of Year Accounts and Financial Statements. DMc advised that the final set of accounts have been signed and submitted to the Department for Education (DFE).

b) Comparison of Financial Statements

A comparison of financial statements was also provided to Trustees. In discussing the figures, DMc advised that the only changes from the last meeting were the inclusion of valuation of properties.

c) 2016/2017 Audit Management Letter

DMc reported that the External Auditors were happy with the accounts and consequently issued a clean audit report. Trustees noted the 2016/2017 Audit Management Letter that outlines their position in relation to the Trust.

The chair thanked DMc on behalf of the Trustees for the fantastic work he has undertaken; the clean audit is a real achievement.

d) Finance Related Key Performance Indicators

DMc delivered a presentation to the Trust Board.

DMc explained that there are three main finance related key performance indicators:

- i. Student Numbers
- ii. Liquidity
- iii. Finance Performance

Student Numbers

DMc highlighted that the key driver for every school is student numbers as they will drive funding. He presented the below table as an example of the different ways to review student numbers:

	BCA	BRI	PEN	STB
PAN	900	1522	1200	825
Students on roll as a % of PAN	94.44%	100.07%	79.33%	61.70%
CAPACITY				
YR 7	-6	-1	67	73
YR 8	-16	4	21	69
YR 9	-2	-11	46	66
YR 10	53	0	78	55
YR 11	21	7	36	53
TOTAL	50	-1	248	316

The percentage of students on role provides a good indicator of where there is capacity within the Trust. Those schools that have a lower percentage give the Trust an idea of where income will be affected.

When looking at capacity, Trustees can see that, in Penketh High School, Year 7 is 67 lower than the PAN whereas Year 8 is only 21 lower than the PAN. This breakdown provides an opportunity to look at what is happening in local areas and how this could have had an effect on numbers.

DMc explained that as the information presented is an example, the two primary schools were not included into the assessment, as they were not comparable to the student numbers for high schools. DMc confirmed that as a sixth form college, Priestley College does not have a PAN.

Liquidity

DMc presented the below table as an example of the three financial ratios:

	BCA	BRI	GSP	PEN	PRI	STB
Cash in Hand – Days	121.06	57.59	24.13	17.07	85.32	18.61
Current Ratio	6.43	1.44	1.37	1.24	3.23	0.85
Quick Ratio	6.09	1.28	0.35	0.96	2.85	0.31

In explaining 'Cash in Hand', DMc advised that this is the amount of days that a school could meet its liabilities with the amount of money currently in the bank. The current ratio includes debtors and cash against creditors. DMc explained that it would be hoped these ratios are never negative; ideally the current ratio would be above 1.

DMc explained that the quick ratio is based on money and liabilities. This figure should be above zero; the higher the figure the better.

Financial Performance

DMc presented the below table as an example of financial performance:

	BCA	BRI	GSP	PEN	PRI	STB
EBITDA as a % of Income	-4.42%	7.88%	-8.35%	10.21%	20.58%	-9.76%
Staff Costs as a % of Income	88.47%	89.15%	92.29%	85.82%	72.76%	83.68%
Leadership staff costs as a % of staff costs	9.40%	11.85%	12.55%		5.98%	12.68%
Admin costs as a % of Total Expenditure	13.77%	9.07%	13.50%	16.33%	11.88%	18.04%
Premise Cost per m ²	£ 9.07	£14.53	£2.84	£14.35	£14.54	£14.33

DMc explained that EBITDA is the standard used in the Department for Education. It is education specific as the impact of Pension scheme charges are removed. This figure focuses on the operations of the school. DMc advised that this will improve when the Trust has had 12 months of operation.

DMc explained that staff costs as a percentage of income is the Trust's largest expenditure. The Department for Education recommend that this percentage should be 70%. Staff costs will be monitored on a monthly and annual basis.

DMc advised that the Leadership staff costs and Admin staff costs are useful to use during benchmarking exercises across the Trust. It was understood that those schools who lease IT generally have higher admin costs.

DMc highlighted that Premise Cost per m² also includes premises staff and overheads in relation to the running of the premises. Trustees noted that four schools are close in terms of spend on premises however the sizes are very different. These costs are also useful to use during benchmarking exercises.

A Trustee asked what the breakeven point would be in relation to the PAN and staffing numbers. DMc explained that it would be difficult to set a breakeven point as staffing levels are variable and will fluctuate.

A Trustee made a recommendation to provide Members with the Finance Related Key Performance Indicators on a regular basis to provide reassurance and to highlight any issues that are being addressed.

MG explained that the Finance Related Key Performance Indicators will be a useful tool when other schools wish to join the Trust. The data could be presented through the due diligence process to understand if schools are on an upward or downward trajectory in terms of finance.

A Trustee noted that it is a useful and consistent approach to provide an overall indicator for finance.

A Trustee suggested that a 12 month version would be useful when available.

DMc highlighted that the tables are an example of how information could be presented to determine what elements need to be improved.

TL explained that it would be difficult to benchmark data given the differences in income for schools across England; the ratio would be radically different.

A Trustee expressed that eventually it would be useful to have national information to undertake benchmarking exercise.

A Trustee felt that the Finance Related Key Performance Indicators were a great piece of work and it would be beneficial to map this information against the Score Cards.

A Trustee asked if there was a target for pupil numbers at Priestley College. MG explained that Priestley is 27 students below target. In theory the college can accommodate 2,500 students which will be useful as the Trust continues to grow.

AM made a recommendation for a column for 'overall' statistics to be added given the conversation with the RSC.

A Trustee expressed concern that if this information was provided to another audience, they may pose questions. DMc confirmed that this is a Trust document and would not be circulated to outside parties.

9. MAT Update

a) Looking ahead 2018/2019

MG reported that the central executive team have discussed the possibility of a central contribution from all schools of least 1.5% in order to support school improvement and the central function of the Trust. Local Governing Boards will need to be aware of this central contribution for budget setting.

Action: Central Executive Team to present the possibility of a central contribution to their Local Governing Boards.

A Trustee asked when this will be levied. MG confirmed it would be the next financial year.

A Trustee understood that as things progressed and developed, there would naturally be a levy; their Local Governing Board is already aware of this.

AM advised that it is important that the Trust is transparent about what the contribution will go towards.

The central executive team will work on a model that can be distributed to Trustees and the Local Governing Boards.

10. Pay

a) Update

MG presented a paper on School Teachers Pay Update for Trustees.

Following initial advice from Warrington BC HR the majority of schools in Warrington agreed to increase pay as follows:

- 2% on the minimum of the main pay range
- 1% on all other pay points

The Teaching Trade Unions have begun a campaign locally for a 2% increase across the whole of the main pay range. The central executive team have discussed this with other local schools and feel it would be beneficial to follow the School Teacher's Pay Review Body's (STRB) advice:

- 2% on the minima and maxima of the main pay range
- 1% on all other pay points

This will cost TCAT approximately an additional £4,000. Another meeting is due to take place for a decision to be finalised. Trustees were informed that to provide 2% across the whole of the main pay range would cost £29,000 and could potentially put three schools into a deficit position. The STRB have made it clear that any recommendations should be made based on affordability.

This remains a decision for Local Governing Boards. MG informed Trustees that the Unions may ballot for strike action.

MG reported that an update with regards to Sixth Form colleges is to offer 1% uplift. The Teaching Unions rejected this and asked if Priestley College would be prepared to increase the offer. **A Trustee asked** if the pay scales are the same as those in Primary and Secondary Schools. MG advised that the scales are slightly different. MG agreed to keep Trustees informed of further developments on this matter.

11. Admissions

The clerk explained the process that schools will need to go through to confirm their admissions arrangements with the local authority.

Each TCAT school can agree their own admission arrangements however the arrangements must then be agreed by the Trust.

MG confirmed that all schools across the Trust are maintaining the admissions arrangements currently in place.

Action: Clerk to email C Thompson at the local authority to confirm that all schools across the Trust are maintaining the admissions arrangements currently in place.

12. Policies Update

a) Beamont Collegiate Academy (BCA)

The clerk advised that the following policies were provided by Beamont Collegiate Academy:

- BCA Admissions Policy
- BCA Pay Policy
- BCA Performance Management
- BCA Managing Performance – Capability
- BCA Disciplinary

MG confirmed that while Trustees are happy to have sight of the documents, they are not for agreement by the Trust. The agreement of these policies will continue to be made by local governing boards.

b) General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

The General Data Protection Regulations were reviewed within the Finance, HR and Operations Committee on 7 February 2018. A Laing will continue to feedback to the central executive team.

b) Draft TCAT Health & Safety Policy

The policy was approved at the Finance, HR and Operations Committee on 7 February 2018 and will go out for consultation with Trade Unions. Trustees noted the policy.

c) TCAT Disciplinary Policy

The policy was reviewed at the Finance, HR and Operations Committee on 7 February 2018. MG asked that Trustees accept the policy.

Trustees **approved** the TCAT Disciplinary Policy.

13. Any Other Business

TL wished for Trustees to be aware that Penketh High School's PAN is a concern when taking into account that a local High School has chosen to increase their numbers.

A Trustee suggested that TCAT write to the OMEGA Trust to make them aware of the affect this would have. A Trustee expressed concern about naming a school within the Trust.

14. Proposed future meeting dates

Trustees noted the date for the Governor Seminar on 14 March 2018 (6.00pm). Prospective school governors will be invited to the evening along with TCAT governors.

MG encouraged governors and Trustees to sit on more than one local governing board.

Summer 2018: Trust Board Meeting, Wednesday 4 July 2018 (6.00pm)

Part One of the meeting closed at 7.27pm