

MINUTES

Autumn term 2018 meeting of the Finance, HR and Operations Committee

Held at Penketh South Primary School on Wednesday 17 October 2018, 6pm

Present:

Gemma Johnson
Howard Platt
John Monaghan
Linda Waterson
Matthew Grant
Steve Whatmore
Toby Macormac

GJ
HP
JM
LW
MG
SW
TM

In attendance:

Adrienne Laing (TCAT Operations Lead)
Angela Grace (Penketh South Primary School)
Bev Scott-Herron (Sir Thomas Boteler High School)
Damian McGuire (TCAT Chief Financial Officer)
Vicky Briggs (Great Sankey Primary School)
Kirsten Riley (Clerk)

AL
AG
BSH
DMc
VB
KR

Part One – non-confidential business

1. Welcome

HP (Chair of the Trust Board) informed the committee that S Titchard (Chair of the Finance, HR and Operations Committee) sent his apologies. HP advised that he was happy to chair the meeting. The committee **agreed**.

2. Absence/Apologies

Apologies were received from S Titchard, N Pearson, G Bratley, A Pailing, J Carlin, T Long and A Moorcroft.

The committee **accepted** the apologies.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 June 2018 were confirmed as a correct record.

a) Matters Arising

The committee were informed that Catering Academy won the tender to work with Priestley College, Bridgewater High School and Sir Thomas Boteler High School. This is going well and the Trust has benefited from the contract.

The investment that Catering Academy has put forward is substantial; Bridgewater will receive approximately £250,000 for a kitchen relaunch. AL highlighted that the relaunch is mainly due to kitchen compliance and work would have been required regardless. Further investment has been made for Sir Thomas Boteler's kitchens.

HP asked how long the contract will be with Catering Academy. AL confirmed the contract is for five years.

DMC advised that Catering Academy has invested in Priestley College and this will continue; Priestley is a lower profit share as the students have the option to go

elsewhere. DMc reported that since Catering Academy took over, there has been an increase in those purchasing food on site.

MG reported that Priestley College allocated a tender to 'Warrington's Own' Busses for the majority of its services, one went to Springfield. By tendering with Warrington's Own, a saving of approximately £80,000 has been made. This will make a significant difference to the students. Warrington's Own has offered all TCAT employees a 25% discount on annual bus passes.

HP highlighted that a document outlining the savings made will be significant. DMc advised that the list will be substantial; this document has not yet been devised.

MG reported that a Business Continuity Plan has not yet been completed. The monthly consolidated reports will be available in November 2018.

HP asked if each school has a disaster recovery plan. MG confirmed that each school has a plan, and the Trust will have an overarching statement. AL advised that the overarching statement will be robust due to the availability of other areas within the Trust.

HP asked if the investment policy has been devised. DMc advised that this would be available at the next Finance, HR and Operations Committee.

Action: DMc to provide Investment Policy at the next meeting of the Finance, HR and Operations Committee.

b) Action Log

The committee **agreed** that all actions are complete.

4. Review Terms of Reference

Committee members were satisfied with the roles and responsibilities of the Finance, HR and Operations Committee.

Action: Trust Board to ratify the Terms of Reference for the Finance, HR and Operations Committee

5. Finance Report

DMc informed the committee of the outturn for the year ended 31 August 2018 and highlighter the areas of deficits.

Beamont Collegiate Academy has had a growth in numbers however funding is lower than it should be as it is based on lagged student numbers. LW noted the issue however highlighted that there is £207,000 in Capital within the budget. DMc advised that there will be a transfer shown within the final accounts.

Due to income from the improvement fund, and a reduction in staff following the closure of the Sixth Form, the final deficit position at Bridgewater High School is likely to reduce.

Great Sankey Primary School was previously forecasting a deficit however following restructuring and controlling costs, the actual year has been brought in as a surplus.

Penketh South Primary School joined the Trust on 1 April 2018 and brought a surplus of £20,000. It will be difficult to balance the budget due to two year groups being low. This will be reviewed to minimise the chance of a deficit.

Penketh High School continues to make changes to the staffing to help improve the financial position of the school. The ESFA are scheduled to be repaid by the due date. MG reported that a claw back occurred at Penketh High School as it became clear that the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) had overpaid Penketh High School. The overpayment was made due to historical sixth form figures.

TM arrived at 6.14pm

DMc advised that while the forecasted final positions are slightly different than the original budget, the Trust is financially strong.

DMc informed the committee that Sir Thomas Boteler High School is currently in a dispute with the local authority over the opening position and transfer at time of conversion. The local authority is seeking to recover £100,000 in relation to the position. This is currently having an impact on this year's figures. The dispute is ongoing.

DMc advised that he has not presented the position for September 2018 as it has been too short a period.

DMc reported that the interim external audit took place in July 2018; final work will begin after the October half term. Internal auditors have also commenced their work. The draft report from the external auditors is pleasing; there are two recommendations.

MG advised that the overall conclusions are strong; there is a lot of best practice across the Trust and there were no recommendations for Governance.

BSH arrived at 6.22pm

HP asked if DMc is happy with the financial position of the Trust. DMc confirmed that he is comfortable with the position.

HP acknowledged that it is pleasing to see a summary of the final positions at this stage in the year.

AL informed the committee that a management report for each individual school will be produced to reflect the overall Trust budget. This is being drafted and will be ready from November 2018.

7. Health and Safety Audit Report

MG reported that the Trust has commissioned A Partridge to complete a Health and Safety Audit that has identified 41 items of specific work, 6 of which are on the list of high priority projects. The report outlines the priorities and provides a summary page for each Academy. Behind this report, there are individual health and safety reports for each school.

JM acknowledged that there were a number of urgent matters to address. MG advised that those in section 'Priority 1' will be addressed first. A Partridge has devised a timeline. The main priorities are regarding fire safety; the school condition improvement fund will cover the identified areas.

LW asked if this will be monitored at a local level, or at Trust level. AL advised that it will depend on the scale of the work. DMc advised that any work that is funded through the school condition fund will be monitored and checked at Trust level. Given the amount of work planned, AL has compiled a central log of all works. DMc advised that the Trust must report back on how the grant is being used.

HP asked if the grant will be used for all the work identified. DMc advised that if the work meets the requirement of the grant, it would be sensible to use it.

LW highlighted that some priorities were not included. HP identified the faulty electrical isolation at Bridgewater High School is faulty. DMc advised that this is a repair; this is the individual academy's responsibility.

AL confirmed that the larger health and safety works will be audited however individual academies hold the responsibility of monitoring the day to day operation.

MG acknowledged that it is beneficial that AL has created a central log of works being undertaken within the Trust. A Partridge will continue to provide updated information in order for the Trust to have an external review of health and safety.

AL highlighted that this central log will be useful when fairly distributing future work for the academies within the Trust.

AL reported that A Partridge is now the Health and Safety Adviser for each school within the Trust. A Partridge is supporting the Trust in developing a Health and Safety Hub for all representatives to come together.

HP asked if A Partridge's function would have previously been performed by the local authority. AL confirmed that the local authority undertook the role previously.

HP asked if this will come at a cost. DMc confirmed that the cost is the same as previous. AL confirmed that the two schools that were still using the local authority were charged a small amount to pull out of a three year agreement. AG, BSH and VB informed the committee that the service is more thorough and much better value for money. AL confirmed that A Partridge will be completing bespoke Trust wide training in January 2019.

MG reported that if another organisation is looking to join the Trust, A Partridge will undertake a health and safety audit as part of the due diligence process. Any issues

that arise from the audit will need to be resolved before the organisation joins the Trust.

HP acknowledged the excellent work that has been undertaken.

8. School Condition Allocation

a) E3 Cube Report

The committee were provided with E3 Cube's report that sets out their costs to undertake work across the Trust over a term of 5 years. Work will commence in January 2019.

LW asked if the Trust will receive a discounted rate. AL confirmed that a discounted rate will be applied.

LW asked if a 10 year review will be likely after the current term. AL advised that this has not yet been decided.

b) Capital Management Outline Programme

The programme provides information on the Capital Works in Progress and also outlines the Capital Improvement Fund Criteria, and the Healthy Pupils Capital Grant Criteria.

E3 Cube has been appointed to prepare a detailed condition survey of the Trust properties in January 2019. The recommendations of the report will be matched onto the Capital Works in Progress.

The Capital Works in Progress table highlights those works that are an academy concern, E3 Cube concern or a Health and Safety concern. The table also outlines the estimated and actual cost of works.

The table enables high level monitoring of the works. There will be reports and various project management plans for each academy.

HP highlighted the total allocation of funding to date is £611,253. AL advised that part is from the Healthy Schools Capital Grant and part from the Condition Improvement Fund. AL reported that the Healthy Schools Capital Grant will need to be spent by March 2018 as it is allocated once a year.

HP asked if figure for the Health Schools Capital Grant has been provided. DMc advised that this figure would be available in May or June 2019. **HP asked** what drives this money. DMc advised that it is student numbers however a calculation has not been provided. It is likely to be a similar amount for the next academic year.

SW wished to note that the Capital Management Outline Programme was a beneficial document.

9. Pay

a) Pay Policy

MG reported that the Trade Unions have confirmed they are happy with the policy. The policy has now gone to consultation to all employees within TCAT (excluding Priestley College). The Government have provided extra funding for Teacher's pay for 2018/2019.

MG recommended that the committee approve the policy subject to any further points that may be raised by colleagues. If agreed, the new pay scales will be implemented as soon as possible.

The committee **approved** the Pay Policy.

Action: Pay Policy to be ratified at the next meeting of the Trust Board.

10. Personnel

There were no personnel items reported.

11. Policies Update

a) Disciplinary Procedure

A draft policy was previously provided and minor amendments have been made. AL informed the committee of the changes.

The committee **approved** the procedure.

b) Grievance Procedure

AL highlighted that there was an addition to the procedure regarding the process for when a disciplinary and grievance occurs at the same time.

The committee **approved** the procedure and **agreed** that this would remain in place unless a change is initiated by the Trust.

c) Health and Safety Policy

MG confirmed that the Health and Safety Policy had been out for consultation and no changes were made.

The committee **approved** the policy.

Part one of the meeting closed at 6.55pm

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Part Two – confidential business

12. Any other business

a) TCAT Update

Following a series of meetings, it has been decided that TCAT will not take on the historical deficit that is linked with University Academy Warrington. Due diligence work has been undertaken. A Health and Safety Report has been completed by Adele Partridge and a School Condition Report has been undertaken.

AL is supporting University Academy Warrington in applying for urgent capital funding to address some of the health and safety issues that have been identified before TCAT begin to sponsor the school.

MG advised that there has been a substantial amount of communication with the Education Skills Funding Agency and the Regional Schools Commissioner. MG has provided the Internal Audit Report and Schedule and performance information for the Trust. It is hoped the start date will be 1 December 2018.

The University Academy's health and safety issues will not be addressed until the capital funding has been confirmed.

It is likely the Trust Board will come to a decision regarding University Academy Warrington when they meet on 7 November 2018.

MG will be visiting University Academy Warrington on 19 October 2018 to advise staff that TCAT are the nominated sponsor Academy Trust and that work is taking place to support the school.

MG has also spoken with the headteacher about the name of the school as it can no longer use 'University' in its title. It is likely this will revert back to Padgate. Uniforms will not be changed and a letter has been prepared for parents.

HP asked if there were any further updates regarding Sandymoor Free School. MG informed the committee that as Sandymoor is a standalone academy there is less urgency. MG confirmed that it is still a possibility; the school will not have the same condition issues as it is a new building.

Part Two of the meeting closed at 7.10pm