

THE CHALLENGE ACADEMY TRUST

MINUTES

Summer term 2019 meeting of the Trust Board

Wednesday 10 July 2019, 6pm at Bridgewater High School

Present (Trustees):

Matthew Grant
Jane Griffiths
Lacy Muir
Neil Pearson
Howard Platt (chair)
Linda Waterson
Stephen Whatmore
Sheila Yates

MG
JG
LM
NP
HP
LW
SW
SY

In attendance (Principals/Headteachers):

Angela Grace (Penketh South Primary School)
Tim Long (Bridgewater High School)
Andrew Moorcroft (Beamont Collegiate Academy)
Vicky Briggs (Great Sankey Primary School)

AG
TL
AM
VB

In attendance (TCAT representatives):

Adrienne Laing (Operations Lead)
Damian McGuire (Chief Finance Officer)

AL
DMc

In attendance (Observer):

Sue Richardson (Broomfields Junior School)

SR

Part One – Non-confidential business

1. Welcome

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Trust Board welcomed SR, a governor representative from Broomfields Junior School. The Trust is continuing to have discussions with the school.

2. Absence/Apologies

The clerk reported that apologies had been received from Gemma Johnson (Trustee), John Monaghan (Trustee), Stuart Titchard (Trustee) and John Monaghan (Trustee). The Trust Board **approved** the apologies.

3. Declaration of personal interests for the meeting

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 previous Trust Board meeting – 13 March 2019

The minutes from the meeting on 13 March were confirmed as a correct record.

a) Matters Arising

HP advise that GJ had joined the Quality and Standards Committee.

b) Action Log

The Trust Board **agreed** that all actions were complete or to be discussed as an agenda item.

5. Committee Minutes

a) Quality and Standards Committee – 12 February 2019

A verbal report had previously been presented to the Spring term meeting of the Trust Board. The Trust Board **agreed** that the minutes be received.

b) Quality and Standards – 11 June 2019

SY reported that there had been a detailed report on English where there had been a robust discussion on the progress in English. There had also been a full discussion on the progress of all academies.

AM said that TH will lead on Safeguarding across the Trust and that the recommendation is that the Safeguarding report should come to the Trust Board. It is **agreed** that there should be a link Trustee for Safeguarding.

AM said that the meeting had been very long and detailed and he and SY had discussed how to streamline discussions. He recommended that the committee should in the future focus on the highest risks looking in detail at academies by exception. The Trust Board **agreed** this recommendation.

The Trust Board **agreed** that the minutes be received.

Action: Trustees to point a Link Trustee for Safeguarding at the next meeting.

Action: The Quality and Standards committee to review its process and focus on highest risk academies for detailed review.

c) Audit and Risk Committee –26 June 2019

The audit plan for 2019-20 had been discussed and agreed. The internal auditor had discussed the need for training at Board and senior management level.

The Trust Board agreed that the minutes be received and recommendations approved.

Action: Risk Management Training to be provided for the Trust and Trust senior leadership.

e) Finance, HR & Operations Committee – 26th June 2019

LW reported that the meeting focused on the budget. There were a number of policies approved and a report on capital had been received with approval given for projects at Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England high School and potential expansion at Bridgewater High School.

The Trust Board **agreed** that the minutes be received and recommendations approved.

6. Membership

a) Committee Membership

HP said that the committee structure needs to be robust and that members need to attend regularly to ensure that the Trust is providing the challenge required both for robust governance and by Ofsted.

The Trust Board **approved** the following Committee Membership structure (* denotes Trustee) but recognised that it needs review.

Audit & Risk	Finance, HR & Operations
Philip Dyke Alan Farquharson Claire Findlay Matthew Grant* Howard Platt* Gary Stuart Linda Waterson* Stephen Whatmore*	Graham Bratley Matthew Grant* Toby Macormac* John Monaghan* Anita Pailing Howard Platt* Stuart Titchard* Linda Waterson* Stephen Whatmore* Neil Pearson* Gemma Johnson*
Quality & Standards	Remuneration Committee
Jane Griffiths* Paul King Neil Pearson Howard Platt* Claire Roper Carolyn Williams Sheila Yates* Avril Topping	Howard Platt* Linda Waterson* Sheila Yates* John Monaghan* Stephen Whatmore*

b) Appoint Deputy Chair of Trustees

HP said that it had previously been agreed that a Deputy Chair of Trustees is required. He proposed SW for the post.

The Trust Board **approved** the appointment of SW as Deputy Chair.

It was agreed that all committees will also appoint a deputy chair.

Action: Committees to appoint Deputy Chairs.

c) Local Governing Body guidance and focus for 2019-20

AM presented the guidance to Local Governing Bodies. The guidance provides recommendations on best practice and are for consideration by each LGB. LGBs have discretion to adopt governance models which they feel best suits their circumstances.

It is suggested that LGBs consider moving to a model whereby meetings are held half-termly with a different focus at each meeting, which would enable the scrutiny, which is required under the delegated powers. In this model, the role of Link governors becomes very important and LGBs could consider the number and focus of Link Governors. It was noted that LGBs have to follow the Scheme of Delegation, which indicates that LGBs should have between 5 and 15 members

The Trust Board **approved** the guidance and recommendations.

Action: Trustees to request al LGBs consider adopting the guidance and review their structures.

d) Trustee and Governor Training

AM said that there are three governor training sessions proposed for next year with one per term. The first session in the autumn term would be focused on Ofsted preparation and effective governance.

d) Members Board

HP advised that SE and JG have stepped down from their roles as Members. The Diocese have been asked to advise on the replacement for JG and Oxford University have agreed to provide a nominee for the remaining vacant post.

7. **Executive Report**

MG provided a report on the life and work of the Trust.

a) Priestley College Ofsted Report

MG said that the Ofsted Report is very positive and reads very well. There are many positive strengths identified as well as areas to work on. A plan is being set up to address the issues raised, which are mainly around self-assessment. **The Trust Board** congratulated MG and the staff at Priestley College on the result and asked MG to pass on their thanks to all staff on what had been a long and gruelling experience.

b) TCAT Times

A copy of the TCAT Times highlighting achievements and events from every school in the Trust was provided to all Trustees. MG said that it represented the breadth and depth of going on activities across the Trust.

c) Broomfields and Meadowsides Consultation

MG reported that the public consultation meetings have taken place at Broomfields and Meadowside. There had been no written feedback and there were very few attendees at Broomfields although attendance was higher at Meadowside. The process now continues with TUPE meetings scheduled for September. The transfer request goes to the HTB in September with a conversion date of 1st November targeted.

d) Finance

MG gave an overview of the trust financial position. The issue of Bridgewater's funding continues to be progressed with the LA. MG said that legal advice on the position is being sought from Browne Jacobson. The issue of The Boteler Trust funding is also being progressed by The Boteler Trust with the LA.

MG confirmed that the four cluster finance managers have been appointed and will be in place by the September. The HR manager post will be advertised next term.

e) Oxnet

Training on the project took place last week and the implementation is going ahead for the September term. It is hoped that the Vice Chancellor will open the PDC centre in October.

f) Scorecards

The scorecards are presented for information. AM said the picture presented is very positive with the primary schools SATS results being very positive. AM said that the scorecard would be changed for next year to provide more comprehensive information and clear benchmarking information.

MG reported that discussions with Oxford University continue. An information session has been arranged for staff across the Trust. The official launch of 'OXNET Schools Partnership' will be September 2019. The aim of the project is for professional development activities for staff and learners across the Trust. A coordinator will be appointed in the near future to run the programme based in Warrington.

The first debating competition took place on 1 March 2019. Learners have fed back that they would like to do this more. Primary Schools have also expressed an interest.

g) General information

MG reported that the acquisition of the Roger Hund building by BCA (funded through the school's reserves) was going ahead at a cost of £296k with the current 17 year lease being merged into the school's existing 125 lease. It will be converted into a new STEM Learning Centre.

8. Finance

DMc reported on the budget forecast for the year and said that the Trust has a forecast surplus of £115,000 which is an improvement over the original Trust budget of £28,000.

He presented the proposed budget, which has an in-year deficit of £560,000 and an overall cumulative surplus of £2,652,000. Issues in the budget include the Bridgewater split site funding issue where there is a loss of 3297,000 in 2018-19 and 2019-20, the ending of the teacher pay grant in March 2020 which has led to additional staffing costs and the new teacher pension employer rate. DMc said that a 3 year forecast will be prepared.

HP asked that the forecast be prepared taking into account the worst case scenarios.

SW asked if all three schools with budget concerns had plans in place to improve their finances. DMc said that he and the finance team were working with the schools.

NP asked if the schools realised that any savings made to in-year budgets should be used to repay the historic deficits. DMc said this was the intention.

HP proposed the budget be approved as presented.

Trustees **approved** the budget presented for 2019-20.

Action: DMc to provide a 3 year budget forecast.

9. Capital Projects

a) Capital Projects and Approvals

MG presented the Estate Management Strategy plan. He gave an update on the projects in progress and an overview of the projects proposed for 2019-20. He said that projects under £50,000 were able to be approved by the CEO but all projects over £50,000 needed to be approved by Trustees.

HP proposed that the works as listed in the plan be approved by Trustees.

Trustees **approved** the plan.

b) Sir Thomas Boteler Project Options Appraisal.

AL presented the proposal for the works at Sir Thomas Boteler, which consists of creating a link corridor between two parts of the building, which are not currently connected at first floor level. This is required to enable good DDA access to the Art curriculum area. The HR, Finance and Operations committee have seen the full detail and agreed that appraisal option 2 providing for the creation of a link corridor and classroom at a cost of £336,000 should be put forward to the board for approval.

HP noted that the full appraisal document was not available to the board in the papers.

HP requested that the full document be available and proposed that email agreement be sought once trustees had been able to consider the full document.

Action: AL to circulate the full document on the options for the building work at Sir Thomas Boteler to trustees.

Trustees **agreed** to give email approval to the project once the documents had been circulated.

c) Bridgewater Expansion Project

TL briefed the Trust board on the proposal from the LA to expand Bridgewater's PAN to 360 pupils per year. This would give the opportunity for the school to move year 9 to the upper site with 720 pupils on the Lower school and 1,080 on the Upper School. The LA want the Trust to manage the build process. In the first instance, information would need to be provided to the LA to validate the costs of the additional accommodation required including both new build and refurbishment. In order to do this, a feasibility study and proposal is required. E3 Cube have been approached and the likely cost of the study is between £30,000 - £40,000.

HP asked if the growth would impact on the use of the TCAT Development Centre. MG said that the development centre would be removed from the school's overall building area.

SY asked if it would impact on the financial provision of split site funding. TL said that the school would remain as a split site school.

SY said that the new build and expansion of PAN would need to be carefully managed to avoid any impact on pupil numbers at Sir Thomas Boteler.

Trustees **agreed** that the expansion at Bridgewater was very desirable and to fund the costs of the feasibility study required to present robust proposals to the LA.

10. ASD Free School

MG presented the paper on the proposed ASD Free School and asked for approval to go ahead with the bid. Trustees debated the proposals in details.

Trustees **agreed** that a bid should be prepared and submitted for the Trust to run the ASD Free School in Warrington.

11. Appraisal Policy

MG presented the Appraisal Policy for final approval. The policy has been presented and discussed in draft form previously.

Trustees **approved** the policy.

12. Proposed future meeting dates

The trustees noted the future meeting dates. It was **agreed** to set up a provisional additional Trust Board meeting in anticipation of the approval from the HTB for the conversion of Meadowside and Broomfields.

Action A meeting of the Trust Board to be set for late October. The Clerk to circulate and agree a date.

The meeting closed at 8.00pm