



MINUTES

**The Challenge Academy Trust
Trust Board Meeting
Tuesday 11 February 2020, 4.30pm**

PRESENT:

Howard Platt (HP)	Steven Whatmore (SW)
Jane Griffiths (JG)	Matthew Grant (MG)
Linda Waterson (LW)	Tim Long (TL)
Sheila Yates (SY)	Adrienne Lang (AL)
Susan Richardson (SR)	Damian Maguire (DM)
Lacy Muir (LM)	

IN ATTENDANCE: **Lisa Adams – Clerk to Governors**

Part One – non confidential business

1. Welcome, absences and apologies

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Neil Pearson and Stuart Titchard. It was noted that John Monaghan may be late.

2. Declaration of personal interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes from the previous meeting

Agreed: the minutes from the meeting held on 11 December 2019 were confirmed as a correct record

HP asked how Ben Logan had settled in. It was noted that he has only been in post for a week.

It was reported that in terms of capacity funding the trust have been informed it is has been unsuccessful due to the schools within the MAT being successful. A formal letter has not been received yet. This will be pursued further once the letter has been received.

HP reported that Penketh South are short of governors.

4. Appointment of Principal at Priestley

The trust were informed that the Principal position at Priestley was re-advertised. Following the shortlisting process 5 applicants were interviewed. Mr J Gresty, Vice Principal at St John Rigby in Wigan was appointed. He has been to the college on Monday for a briefing with staff and will attend the governor training later this month.

5. Update on Free School

AL, TL, SW and MG all attended a meeting where they were asked a number of pre prepared questions. **HP asked** if they felt that they were given a fair hearing. It was noted that they were. The final outcome will be known in March. It was noted that it was made clear that the trust didn't have a special school within the MAT but there are several schools with Designated Provisions.

6. Approval of Bridgewater Project Plan

A copy of the most recent funding agreement was circulated with the papers. It was noted that this is still in draft. The Local Authority have been contacted to answer outstanding queries but they haven't responded. A conversation has been held with Kate Guise who has given strong assurances that all the changes will be approved. One of the changes is in relation to the assumption that TCAT owns the site however it is leased.

AL reported that in essence the trust will receive £6.5 million. £4.8 for the new build and £560,000 for the refurbishments. **HP asked** if the Trust Board could see the final version before it is signed. SW noted that the £4.8 million has been worked out on £16k per place rather than what it will actually cost. E3cubed were asked what the school could have for £4.8 million as the Local Authority will not release any more funds. Members were informed that the funding is formula driven and then there is a lump sum for the refurbishment project. **SY asked** if the trust would be charged VAT. It was noted that they wouldn't as the new building will not be leased out. It was noted that it is both. **HP asked** if the proposal is that E3cubed are appointed as project managers. It was noted that it is.

AL informed members that a feasibility study will be carried out to validate if the trust can afford what is being built. The report will also state what can and can't be done. TL, DM and AL have met to look at best value and the fees have been benchmarked. It was felt that the fee quoted is reasonable. The proposal for E3cubed to manage the project has a 9.71% fee which equates to £424,205.00. **HP asked** if this cost covers their involvement from start to finish.

LW asked if anyone had seen a project of similar value. AL noted that that they had and that the fee they are paying is 10%. HP noted that when the building was built at BCA there was a shortlist of contractors and each one was asked to come and bid for the project. This included a presentation with a draft design and an indicative price. Eventually a preferred contractor was appointed with a fixed price who then submitted their plans to the Local Authority. **HP asked** why this process wasn't being followed for this project. MG informed them that this is an option but it was felt that E3cubed being the project managers is value for money. It was felt that the other option would take longer to get the project up and running. **SR asked** if the only part of this project which will go out to tender is the builder. It was noted that it is. **HP asked** if the experience of E3cubed and the fair percentage being charged is the reason for this proposal. SR noted that the time delay of the other option is not beneficial. TL noted that the aim is for it to be built by 2022. SY noted that if there is already an architect on board then there won't be many designs. TL noted that the preliminary meeting with E3cubed was very positive. **HP asked** if the trust will only be reimbursed for the money that it spends on the project. It was noted that it would. It was suggested that if additional money was required it could come from the capital budget. TL noted that some of the capital allocation for Bridgewater High could be covered with the funding for the project i.e. underfloor piping. This would have a knock on affect for the other schools in the trust with more money being available for them.

HP asked if E3cubed have convinced us that the plans and costs can accommodate the number of children. TL informed them that they feel that this is on the generous side. The plan is to add 12 classrooms to the building.

JG asked with regards to the new build how much sympathy is needed on the look of the building. AL noted that this will be detailed in the planning report.

AL noted that the alternative to E3cubed not project managing is that this is then tendered out which will cause delays. TL felt that the benefit of having E3cubed project manage is that they know the site. HP felt that it is important that this is debated by the trust board members.

Members were informed that the Padgate project which is being managed by the same company is due to be completed on time and in budget.

Members unanimously agreed that E3cubed could project manage the build.

Members agreed the funding agreement in principle on the proviso that they are informed of any amendments. **SW asked** if there could be clarity of how the trust will receive the money. AL informed them that the final document will go through their legal team.

A discussion took place in relation to a proposal from Livewire in terms of the Broomfields leisure centre. It was felt that these proposal will have an impact on the access and that there may be objections from the neighbours.

LW asked if the plan includes toilets. It was noted that there is provision for additional toilets within the plan.

AL informed the members that the aim is to move Year 9 which will relieve the pressure. It was noted that there is sufficient classrooms but the circulation around the school is an issue. The school is not designed to have 900 children and was originally built for 600. HP noted that the message to the neighbours will be that there will be less children at the upper site. AL noted that there will not be many more children than when the college was on this site.

TL and AL left the meeting at 17:39

7. Proposal regarding Padgate Academy

The trust were informed that Padgate Academy are facing a number of issues including a negative financial position. The Headteacher at Padgate Academy has returned from maternity leave. They are currently receiving a significant level of support in terms of financial management and school improvement. It was reported that the current governing body is inadequate which is not helping the school to move forward. It is therefore proposed that an interim executive board is put in place and that there is representation from this board. **HP asked** how many governors are there currently. MG informed them that there are 11 and the proposal is to have 3 governors including the parent governor. JM and AM are already governors. **HP asked** if the proposal is for the trust to select the governors. MG proposed that an expression of interest is requested from all current governors and then selection is made. It was noted that the view from AM is that the parent governor is willing to sit on the executive board. **HP asked** for two volunteers from the trust board. **SR asked** if the reason for disbanding the governing body is because they aren't challenging enough. MG informed them that not only are they not challenging the Chair doesn't set the agendas. HP noted that it is clear that the trust needs to step in, however there will be some upset caused from the changes. **JG asked** if the governing body are aware that it isn't working. It was noted that some do. **SY asked** that despite the debts being written off if there is still a deficit. It was noted that there is and steps are not being made to reduce the deficit. HP felt that if an interim board is to be put in place it needs to be done properly. He asked if members were in support of the proposal. LW noted that given that the current governing body have been given the opportunity to improve she supports it. She felt that part of the ethos of the trust is for schools within the MAT to have their own Local

Governing Boards. HP informed members that legally there doesn't need to be a Local Governing Board in place. LW noted that Padgate has a history of not performing in so many ways and the reason the trust agreed to take it on board was to turn it around. HP felt that the financial situation is useful to use as a reason for removing the governing body. MG informed them that the visibility of governors is minimal. HP stressed that it is an interim situation and that it is the intention to have a Local Governing Board in place. MG stated that there is a timeline for putting the interim executive board in place.

Trustees agreed to implement an interim executive board. HP expressed an interest in being on the interim executive board but feels that he would have to relinquish his role on BCA. SW also expressed an interest on sitting on the board.

8. CEO appointment

Trustees were informed that a suggested route forward with the CEO position has been discussed at the remuneration committee. It was felt that the position should be internally advertised.

SR felt that the document lays out the pros and cons however she questioned if the role is achievable on a part time basis as the MAT grows. MG felt that it is achievable. The issue was that as principal of the college and CEO the role was becoming unmanageable. It was felt that a conversation will be required with the new CEO around which aspects of the trust they want to be involved in.

SR stated that the view from Broomfields governors is that the fact that this trust isn't spending thousands on a CEO is valued. There are concerns around the calibre of people externally available for this kind of role. She noted that on balance she is supportive of the recommendation. **SR asked** if there would be a recruitment process. It was noted that there would be and there would also be time to review it if it wasn't working. She felt it was important that the role isn't just awarded to someone.

HP felt that the ethos of the trust is to look within for a replacement. He noted that he shares the same concerns about it being a shared role. The proposal is that the CEO will have other responsibilities.

LM expressed concerns that as a growing trust and by recruiting within it will put further pressure on the Heads within the CET. **JG asked** if there is capacity within the CET and if there would be any additional costs to back fill rolls. MG informed them that there are already teachers from the schools who are running the hubs so there are some savings.

SR asked what the recruitment process would be. HP noted that it will depend on who applies. He assured trustees that the process will be competitive and fair even if only one person applies.

9. Any other business

BCA admissions criteria

Trustees were informed that there are no proposed changes to the admissions criteria. Trustees approved the criteria.

The meeting closed at 6pm