



Minutes

TCAT Trust Board

Wednesday 23 October 2019, 6pm

Present:

Trustees

Howard Platt (HP)
Jane Griffiths (JG)
John Monaghan (JM)
Neil Pearson (NP)
Sheila Yates (SY)
Stuart Titchard (ST)
Susan Richards (SR)

CET

Matthew Grant (MG)
Tim Long (TL)
Adrienne Lang (AL)
Damian McGuire (DM)

In attendance: Lisa Adams – Clerk to governors

Part one – non confidential business

1. Welcome

The trustees were welcomed to the meeting.

2. Absence/Apologies

Apologies were received from Lacy Muir and Steve Whatmore.

The Chairperson noted that attendance at recent meetings has been an issue.

Action: NP to speak to TM in relation to him continuing as a trustee

The Chairperson reported that GJ has resigned from the board. The RSC feel that the TCAT Trust Board is larger than they would like. A discussion took place around the current membership.

Agreed: trustees consented to the absences of Lacy Muir and Steve Whatmore

3. Declaration of personal interests and pecuniary interests

There were no declarations of personal interest.

4. Minutes

It was noted at the last meeting it was agreed that a deputy chairperson would be appointed. It was agreed that SW would act as deputy chairperson.

a) Committee membership/attendance

The Chairperson noted that the attendance at committees has been low.

Action: TL to speak to AP and GB about continuing on the board

It was agreed that SR would join the Quality and Standards Committee.

Action: Clerk to add SR to the distribution list

b) Structure of Local Governing Boards

It was noted that at the last meeting it was agreed that Local Governing Boards would consider having 2 full governing board meetings a term rather than committees. SR reported that Broomfields Junior have agreed to trial it for a year. NP reported that Great Sankey Primary have moved to this model. TL reported that Bridgewater High are retaining the committee structure but will be calling them advisory panels. ST reported that Sir Thomas Boteler are continuing with the committee structure. MG reported that Priestley College will also continue with the current meeting structures.

The Chairperson reported that a meeting is due to be held to discuss governance at Penketh South Primary.

c) Capital Budget

Action: AL to circulate capital budget report to all members

5. Executive Report

MG reported that the Executive report was written in this level of detail in readiness for the meeting with the RSC.

Outcomes

It was noted that the overall picture for the Trust is of improvement across all areas and phases. The outcomes have been discussed in detail at the Quality and Standards meeting. There were significant improvements in GCSE outcomes at Penketh High and Padgate. Priestley College received their best set of A-Level results this year but there has been a fall in the overall AS performance compared to 2018, though they do remain higher than

2017 outcomes. The Quality and Standards Committee have streamlined their approach and will focus on the schools where improvement is required. The Chair of the committee reported that it was good to hear from the Heads about how the schools have moved forward and what still needs to be implemented.

Budgets

The pupil/learner numbers have increased at Padgate, Penketh and Sir Thomas Boteler. Overall pupil numbers at Padgate are now 11% higher than this time last year and 9% higher at Sir Thomas Boteler. Attendance at this year's round of academy open events has been exceptionally strong.

As part of Padgate's re-brokerage negotiations the Trust have secured a guarantee of in-year funding. A case is currently being made for Sir Thomas Boteler and Beamont Collegiate.

The RSC were pleased with what was presented to them, however at times it was more due to the lack of criticism. HP felt that the approval of Broomfields Junior and Meadowside joining the Trust was evidence of their satisfaction of the Trust. **SR asked** if there were any comments about the applications for these two schools. It was noted that no specific comments were made which is credit to the people who completed the applications. HP noted that the RSC didn't have any reservations about the Trust wanting to grow.

It was reported that progress is being made in terms of the Bridgewater High split site funding issue. The Academies Financial Handbook 2019 refers to a School Resource Management Self-Assessment Tool (SRMSAT) which will be looked at in more detail at this meeting.

Growth plan

Broomfields Junior and Meadowside have received notification of approval to join the Trust from 1 December 2019. Assurances have been received from the Local Authority that the building works at Meadowside will be completed.

The expansion plan at Bridgewater High is ongoing. A draft plan has been put together and the Trust is waiting the approval from the Local Authority to start the project.

The application for the ASD Free School has been submitted. The application was completed by Harry Zinman with support from Paul King. The Trust should find out in the new year if the application has been successful and the team may be required to attend a panel meeting. Thanks were expressed to all colleagues involved in this process.

MG informed the Trust Board that the Principal of the UTC has approached the Trust to start conversations about them joining TCAT. MG, AM and TL have met with the Principal to discuss this further. It was noted that the UTC

are in significant difficulties and it is felt that in its current form is not a viable option. A discussion took place about UTCs and the viability. HP felt that it is worth having ongoing dialogue around this and to keep a watching brief.

SR asked if UTC had approached any other Trusts. It was noted that they have but they have been ruled out. HP noted that TCAT is the logical model however if any further action is taken it needs to be on our terms. A discussion took place about the current curriculum offer at UTC.

Capital works

Planning permission for the re-development of the Priestley site and adjacent land into housing and a park area has been submitted.

Work at Padgate has started on fire safety and roofing refurbishment and electrical and gas safety works. It is anticipated that significant progress will be made over the half term break.

Board members were updated on the school condition allocation. It was noted that during 2018/2019 Trust financial year £1.3 million was invested towards academy improvements. A further £0.9 million has been earmarked to projects for 2019/2020. The work for the fencing at Sir Thomas Boteler has come under budget.

SY asked how much funding is the trust losing following the decision from the DFE to withdraw funding for teaching schools. It was noted thus current year there are no loses.

Staffing and HR

Misia Barclay, Headteacher at Padgate Academy, has started her maternity leave. Ibrahim Syed will take on the role of Acting Headteacher with support from Andy Moorcroft.

In the Sixth Form College sector a national offer of 1% was declined by the trade unions. MG informed members that less than 35% of staff went on strike on 17 October. A further day of strike action is due to take place on 5 November which is the day of the GCSE maths re-sit. It is not anticipated that the action will affect this.

An internal audit of HR processes and systems has been carried out. Thanks were expressed to all those involved. A report will be presented to the audit and risk committee.

Computing Hub

BCA and Priestley submitted a joint bid to host the North West Hub and were awarded a 3 year contract. The hub will be based at the new STEM and Computing Centre at BCA.

Oxford University Partnership

Work with this partnership continues to make progress and a joint management meeting was held early in September. A formal agreement has not yet been signed as it is currently with the Oxford University Legal Team.

Ofsted

MG reported that he has met with inspectors and fed back on a number of issues regarding the inspection at Priestley and the pilot inspections. It was noted that the RSC was not aware that Priestley had an inspection or even the outcome.

Safeguarding

Tracy Hatton presented a detailed Safeguarding report to the Quality and Standards Committee on 8 October. SY reported that she is really pleased with the work that Tracy Hatton has done in terms of safeguarding across the Trust.

Strategy Booklet

A copy of the strategy booklet has been circulated to members.

RSC review

SR asked if the Trust will receive a report. It was noted that they did last time and it was only 4 paragraphs long. A copy of this year's report will be shared with Trustees once available.

6. Feedback from RSC

It was reported that the report went well however it was more to do with the absence of any criticism.

SY asked about the time scale for the free school. MG noted that the RSC hadn't seen the application. A TCAF bid has been submitted for £100k. **LW asked** if this was part of the growth model. MG informed them that it was for the central team and to look at governance. Eileen Mulgrew will be providing a training session for governors in February. **HP asked** if those governors who attended the previous training found it useful. It was noted that they did.

MG reported that financial issues were raised and support was requested in terms of the split site. A request was also submitted for support with the rebuild at Penketh High. They promised to put someone in contact with the Trust.

HP noted that they asked us about the scope of accepting schools outside of Warrington. They were informed that TCAT wishes for it to remain as

schools in Warrington. The number of Trustees was defended and the RSC agreed that the number could stay at 13.

LW asked if this is something that will happen every year. It was noted that it is. Trustees were informed that the CET report formed the basis of the meeting. **SR asked** if the RSC had the statistics in terms of the outcomes. It was noted that they had the primary and secondary but not the 6th form, as this isn't published until January.

7. Committees

Curriculum and Standards Committee

SY reported on the discussions from that meeting. It was noted that it was a good meeting. The meetings have been streamlined to focus on areas of improvement. Tracy Hatton provided a valuable presentation on Safeguarding in all the schools.

AM presented the score cards. Queries were raised with the Headteachers in attendance about the detail in the score cards and the length of time in completing them. The committee were assured by the Headteachers that the first time of completing it was time consuming but ongoing it will be easier to complete.

Finance, HR and Operations

ST reported on the discussions from this meeting.

The committee were provided with an update on the capital works and health and safety issues. Investment has been made in the areas which have been deemed a priority.

The support staff appraisal policy is to be reviewed and agreed at Local Governing Board level.

The central finance team is now in place and they are now working on ensuring a consistent of approach in terms of financial reporting.

The remuneration committee are due to meet in January.

LW asked when the risk management training would be taking place. It was noted that it would be held before the audit committee in December.

8. Annual Review of Terms of Reference and committee membership

The committee membership was covered earlier on the agenda.

The Trustees agreed the terms of reference.

9. Annual Review of the scheme of delegation

There are no proposals to amend the scheme of delegation. Any changes would be required to be presented to the Members Board. HP noted that this is a debate that is held when schools join TCAT.

ST raised a query about the section on page 4 about constitution of Local Governing Boards. He noted that as a faith school the constitution is required to have more foundation governors than other governors. It was felt that the statement 'where possible' covered this. It was also felt that as a MAT with different phases it would be difficult to cover all options. It was noted that clause 3.1.2.4 should make reference to 3.1.11 and not 12.

10. Finance report

- **Outturn 2018-2019**
- **3 year forecast**
- **Academies Financial Performance and ongoing action plans**

The finance report was presented to the finance committee last week. It was reported that in terms of revenue there is a projected £12k surplus. The DFC money has been set against expenditure but there is an element of capital work that has taken place.

It was reported that there are 3 academies with deficit budgets. The focus is on these 3 academies and a strategy will be in place so that repayments can be made against the deficits. There is also a focus on how these budgets can be improved.

The 2019/2020 budget and 3 year forecast was presented to governors. Governors were informed that the pension grant is in place for another year but anything after this has not been confirmed. The 3 year forecast is assuming that all the funding remains the same. DM reported that the Trust has received all the VAT money. **NP asked** how late the VAT money was. MG informed them that it dates back to 2017. **MG asked** how much had been received. It was noted that it was £2.5 million. HP thanked DM for all his work on resolving the VAT issue. **HP asked** how much the Trust had in terms of cash. DM reported that it is £6 million. **HP asked** how much surplus there is. It was reported that there is £3 million. **HP asked** how the Trust is going to invest the £6 million. DM reported that he is currently speaking to different Banks to discuss options. **HP asked** if he had looked into Brewin Dolphin.

Action: DM to look into the Brewin Dolphin information provided by HP

It was noted that a lot of work has been put in place to ensure that there is consistency of reporting across the academies. **SR asked** if there will be additional support for schools who are transitioning in terms of the changes to reporting. DM reported that the accounting system has been ordered

and will be ready to use come 1 December. Sarah Messenger is overseeing the work at all the primary schools. The plan is for her to be in each primary school one day a week. AL informed the trustees that Sarah Messenger is an experienced School Business Manager. **SR asked** if there are significant changes in terms of finance reports following conversion. DM informed her that the income will be presented at the top and the expenditure will be at the bottom.

In terms of the 3 year forecast the main focus is on those academies with a deficit budget. The main concern going forward is the lack of information about funding. **NP asked** why the amount in donations drops. DM explained that it is related to the trust of Sir Thomas Boteler which has not been confirmed yet. **LW asked** if the in-year surpluses/deficits included the in-year funding. DM reported that it includes the funding for Padgate and Sir Thomas Boteler.

11. Policies for approval

- Complaints

Trustees were informed that the complaint policy is based on guidelines from the DFE. The policy is trust wide and the process cannot be delegated to Local Governing Boards as TCAT are the employers. **ST asked** if there is a chart of policies which details those approved by the Trust and those that are for Local Governing Boards.

Action: AL to share her policy log with Trustees

Trustees **approved** the policy.

- Health and Safety

The Health and Safety Policy has been written in conjunction with Adele. The policy is much more in-depth than previous. It was noted that all academies will have their own policy which will sit at the back of the Trust policy. **ST asked** if Adele would be supporting the schools in writing their policies.

Trustees **approved** the policy.

- Pay

The Pay Policy is for all academies with the exception of Priestley College. There have been no changes to the policy other than the 2.75% pay increase.

Trustees **approved** the policy.

HP reported that the appointment of a HR Manager is imminent and that this should relieve the pressure from AL.

12. Accounting policies – Depreciation

DM reported that a new category has been added to the accounting policy in terms of depreciation. Any improvements new buildings and freehold will be required to have an expected life recorded.

Trustees **approved** the accounting policies.

13. Formal approval of Broomfields and Meadowside application to join the trust

It was reported that the due diligence process for Broomfields Junior and Meadowside to join TCAT is ongoing. It is anticipated that they will join on 1 December. TUPE meetings and letters have been issued. All policies approved by the Trust will be automatically adopted by these schools on conversion.

NP asked what the feedback from parents had been. SR informed the Board that the attendance from parents at the consultation meeting had been surprisingly low, with the main attendees being from the Governing Body of Cobbs Infant School. The HR consultation process had run smoothly as far as she knew. In response to a question from JM regarding the feelings of the staff SR was not aware of any issues, but would check with the Headteacher and staff representatives at the next Governing Body meeting.

14. Any other business

a) Self-assessment checklist

It was reported that all academies are required to submit the self-assessment by 15 November 2019 which has to be signed off by the Chair of Trustees. **HP asked** if this applies to Priestley. It was noted that it doesn't. DM reported that when the data is inputted in the form and highlights the statements in either red, green or amber. He also reported that there were no surprises. **LW asked** if this is benchmarked against similar schools. AL noted that it is. HP noted that the point of this checklist is to help Trustees understand their schools however the trust already know the schools well.

HP gave his consent to use his electronic signature to submit the self-assessment.

15. Proposed future meeting dates of the trust

Board/Committee	Date	Venue/ Comments
<i>Autumn 2019</i>		

Members Board	Tuesday 3 rd September 2019, 4pm	<i>Deferred from July 2019</i>
Quality & Standards	Tuesday 8 October 2019, 6pm	Beamont Collegiate Academy
Finance, HR & Operations	Wednesday 16 October 2019, 6pm	
Trust Board	Wednesday 23 rd October 2019 6pm	<i>Provisional date</i>
Trust Board	Wednesday 6 November 2019, 6pm	Cancelled
Audit & Risk	Wednesday 4 December 2019, 4.30pm	
Finance, HR & Operations	Wednesday 4 December 2019, 6pm	
Trust Board	Wednesday 11 December 2019, 6pm	
Members Board	Monday 16 December 2019, 4pm	
<i>Spring 2020</i>		
Quality & Standards	Tuesday 12 February 2020, 6pm	Beamont Collegiate Academy
Audit & Risk	Wednesday 4 March 2020, 4.30pm	
Finance, HR & Operations	Wednesday 4 March 2020, 6pm	
Trust Board	Wednesday 25 March 2020, 6pm	
Governor Seminar	TBC	
<i>Summer 2020</i>		
Quality & Standards	Tuesday 9 June 2020, 6pm	Beamont Collegiate Academy
Audit & Risk	Wednesday 1 July 2020, 4.30pm	
Finance, HR & Operations	Wednesday 1 July 2020, 6pm	
Trust Board	Wednesday 15 July 2020, 6pm	
Members Board	Monday 20 July 2020, 4pm	