



## LAURUS BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Date: Wednesday 03.02.2021

Time: 10.00am

Venue: Microsoft Teams

Clerk: N Burgess

Present: C Nevin, R Kumar, L Woolley, T Little, L Elias, P Benton, C Fisher, J Crombleholme, D Brown, W Mason and D Kershaw

In attendance: L Magrath, M Vevers and M Stewart for part of the meeting

Action	Initials
Trustees Register of Business Interests to be updated	NB
Provide an update on recruitment and interviews to the next meeting	LM
An offline conversation to take place around Teams engagement going forward	MV/RK
Update of the document what is working well and how can we harness going forward to be updated for TBM5	Exec Team
To liaise with P Moss with regards to funding for Sixth Form refurbishment or rebuild costs	TL
To meet to discuss IT priorities going forward	WM/LM
Trustees to receive an update on mass testing in schools	WM

Agenda – Part 1				
Category	Item	Notes	Action	
1	Apologies	Apologies were received from V Horsfield.		
	AOB items	There were no other items of business to raise.		
	Register of interests	VH record to be amended to reflect that HGHS Ltd is no longer an active company.	NB	
	Part 1 minutes	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p><u>Actions arising:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There were no changes required to the Register of Business Interests following the meeting</li> <li>Work is ongoing in producing a bundle of documents for Trustees and Governors to complete at the start of the academic year</li> <li>The Training plan was circulated to</li> </ul>		

			<p>Trustees and Governors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• User guides for email access and Microsoft Teams was circulated to Governors</li> <li>• GDPR training reminder was issued</li> <li>• A Compliance report is on the agenda for this meeting</li> <li>• An update regarding the IT provision will be presented at this meeting</li> </ul>	
		Scheme of delegation	<p>Following completing a masterclass with Confederation of Schools Trust (CST) L Woolley reviewed and made some suggested amendments to the Scheme of Delegation. Changes in the document circulated were highlighted. The Executive Team were happy to recommend the changes and Trustees approval is sought prior to the amended document being published on the Trust website.</p> <p>CN queried the appointment of Parent Trustees and Parent Governors. Trustees appoint Parent Trustees to the Trust Board and Academy Committees appoint Parent Governors. LW will make the required changes. Following the change Trustees <u>approved</u> the updated Scheme of Delegation.</p> <p><b>Q – JC asked how often the Trust Board Chair review takes place?</b></p> <p>A – Bi annually is best practice and LFET appoint the Chair. The Chair reports back on how the Trust Board are performing.</p>	
2		Membership and succession planning	<p>C Nevin gave a verbal update of recruitment of Governors across the Trust.</p> <p>There has recently been a new Governor appointed to the Academy Committee of LCH who brings experience of Property and Renovation management. There had also been the resignation of a Parent Governor from LCH. There has also been a resignation from a Governor at CHHS.</p> <p>CN had sent information regarding the Trust to J Singleton at MMU to advertise Governance vacancies and invite expressions of interest. There is also the continuing advert on Inspiring Governance.</p>	

			<p><b>Q – TL asked if there was any pattern in the resignations from the Academy Committees?</b> A – It was confirmed that there was no pattern. The Governor at CHHS was a long standing Governor who, due to personal circumstances was no longer able to commit.</p> <p>JC asked for the information on Governor recruitment to be sent to enable her to advertise to colleagues at University of Manchester.</p> <p><b>Q – TL asked how many more new Governors would be needed across the Trust over the next 3 years?</b> A – It is anticipated that there will be 8 – 10 new Governors to appoint.</p> <p><b>Q – CF asked if there was a need to make the role of Governor clearer?</b> A – The description of the role is clear and reflects the change of responsibility of an Academy Committee Governor within a MAT.</p> <p>It was noted that there have been some really good Governors appointed recently who bring with them a variety of skills and experience.</p> <p><b>Q – RK asked if the register of interest was advertised on the Trust website?</b> A – Yes the details are on the website and this has generated some interest.</p>	
3		Governance Teams channels	<p>The Teams training guide was uploaded to the papers for this meeting for Trustees to refer to.</p> <p>Thanks were offered to L Woolley and the IT for producing the comprehensive guide and also for the recent training which had been delivered.</p>	
		Interviews	<p>The current process for recruitment was discussed at length due to the lockdown restrictions. The current DfE guidelines are that interviews should not be done face to face where possible.</p> <p>Currently the first stage is the advert is placed on TES and a social media push is done. Selected candidates are then invited to an informal Teams meeting where the role and expectations of the Trust are presented and there is the opportunity to ask questions about the candidates experience</p>	

			<p>and ask safeguarding questions. Further shortlisting then takes place before successful candidates are invited to do a teaching observation to a selected panel before a formal interview.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that observing on Teams was far from ideal but was better than not observing candidates at all and that recruitment plans will be adapted ongoing as the guidance and restrictions change. If schools reopen in March it may be possible to consider candidates teaching socially distanced lessons to 8 or 10 students in school.</p> <p>DB reiterated that in terms of safeguarding it is absolutely vital that there is no compromise on safer recruitment checks. There are at least 2 members of SLT on every interview panel and safeguarding is a top priority.</p> <p>LM had undertaken refresher Safer Recruitment training in the week prior to the meeting and had asked the question about remote interviews. The answer given was that the risks should be managed as part of the risk assessment before any appointments are confirmed.</p> <p><b>Q – PB asked if appointments made on Teams could be on a one year contract?</b>  A – It is not possible to appoint on a one year contract unless covering a specific vacancy, for example maternity.</p> <p>A long discussion around remote interviews took place. Trustees encourage leaders to use their networks where possible to obtain further information about candidates and possibly request more than two references or have a telephone conversation with a referee. Trustees also agreed that if necessary candidates could be invited back more than once for further questions.</p> <p>Trustees <u>agreed</u> the Trust current approach to interviews with the caveat that leaders should not hesitate to bring a candidate back for further discussion, as many times as is felt necessary, before a final decision is taken.</p> <p>An update on recruitment will be provided at the</p>	
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			next meeting.	LM
4		Trust Board Committee updates	<p>The Audit Finance and Resources Committee had met 11<sup>th</sup> December 2020. L Elias provided a brief overview of the meeting.</p> <p>The main item for consideration was the external audit report. LE confirmed that in all the years of reports he had never seen a cleaner, more excellent external audit report and recorded thanks to WM, ST and the Finance team.</p> <p>The external audit had been carried out remotely. The final accounts were signed off and submitted with Companies House for publication in advance of the deadline.</p> <p>Management accounts to date were received and there were no issues to report.</p> <p>The finance scheme of delegation was approved.</p> <p>The Trust Risk Register was considered.</p> <p>R Hardman talked through the Estates report.</p> <p>JC offered thanks and congratulations on the excellent external audit report and that as a Trustee this was very reassuring to read.</p> <p>The Trust AGM had been held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020.</p> <p>The final accounts were approved and signed off. It was agreed to continue with UHY as external auditors.</p> <p>Members were given an update on the Trust response to Covid-19.</p> <p>It was noted that in future Members would be issued with the Trust Board report to Academy Committees.</p>	
		Trust compliance	<p>A report on compliance was presented following a request at the last meeting. The report detailed data breaches and compliance across the Trust.</p> <p>WM advised Trustees that since the report had</p>	

			<p>been produced the items marked as pending have now been classified as low risk and are not reportable to ICO.</p> <p>Some of the incidents since the new year have been due to online lessons taking place. Staff have been reminded of the risks of data breaches and the Executive Team are confident enough that there is sufficient training and guidance in place to not require any further action.</p> <p>Trustees did not have any questions relating to the report and were reassured by the information given, whilst acknowledging things can go wrong.</p>	
		Check Spring Census completed in all schools	The Spring Census was completed 21 <sup>st</sup> January 2021 and has been submitted for all schools.	
		Admissions and attendance registers kept in accordance with regulations	Attendance registers are being taken for all schools for both in school and online lessons and there are no concerns.	
		Academic Focus (Priorities 2&3 Curriculum development/QA)	<p>The remote learning offers for the 7 schools and the Sixth Form were issued to Governors in the standard DfE template.</p> <p>Leaders are aware of the increased screen time for staff and students and therefore not all lessons are online. English, Maths, Science, MFL, History and Geography are live lessons on Teams and Art PE and Food Tech set assignments which means time away from screens.</p> <p><b>Q – RK asked if there were any device issues remaining and where this was up to?</b></p> <p>A – The picture is constantly changing. Laptops were provided by the DfE and issued to students and further devices have been purchased by the Trust and issued to identified students.</p> <p>The Trust have also signed up to schemes to obtain further equipment and recently Laurus Rycroft have been allocated 25 Chromebooks.</p> <p>There have been issues reported where more than one student are working on a shared device and issues are being dealt with as they arise.</p>	

			<p>LM informed Trustees that some members of staff had also been provided with laptops to allow them to work at home. Whilst all teachers have ipads they are not suitable for planning and delivering lessons from home.</p> <p>WM reported that the DfE had provided 259 laptops. There are 5,500 students across the Trust and 10% PP. The 259 laptops were distributed and a further £75,000 was spent to purchase additional laptops for distribution. Currently there are over 500 devices out to students and 175 laptops to staff. Older devices had been redone to make good devices where at all possible. Leaders were confident that the Trust had responded well and supported students as much as possible.</p> <p>MV confirmed that broadband access did not appear to be an issue for families who had required devices.</p> <p><b>Q – PB asked if it was possible that some parents may be embarrassed to say if their child did not have access to a device?</b></p> <p>A- MV confirmed that this could be possible but that issues like this come to light when students are contacted as they have not accessed online lessons. Parents are asked if a device is needed and pastoral staff have excellent knowledge of students and their families.</p> <p>DB drew reference to the safeguarding contact made with students as part of the addendum agreed to the Safeguarding Policy.</p> <p>Students are now in class groups for their Teams lessons rather than in year groups. This allows students to ask and respond to questions and engage with staff.</p> <p>SEN and Vulnerable students, if not in school, receive an additional weekly call.</p> <p>Emails are sent home to parents of all students on a weekly basis, by either SLT, Head of Year, Head of House or Form Tutors. Regular phone calls are also made and followed up if necessary.</p> <p>A big change from the first lockdown is that</p>	
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		<p>lessons now only have one member of staff present. All lessons are recorded.</p> <p><b>Q – DK asked how staff ensure students are engaged and learning? Are there students who are not engaging?</b></p> <p>A – This is actually a very valid question which is repeatedly asked at SLT meetings. Students can log on and then go elsewhere. The teacher of the live lesson can ask students questions to gauge their engagement and also set assignments for completion and returning which can then be marked. This provides a 2 way process to be able to monitor engagement and understanding.</p> <p>The B system is also still used during school closure. Parents are notified if students are not engaging. Whilst all staff are doing their best it is acknowledged that there will inevitably be students who fall behind in their learning but we are doing as much as possible to prevent this.</p> <p>RK asked to have an offline conversation with MV regarding the use of engagement with Teams going forward.</p> <p>Members of SLT drop in to lessons on Teams in the same way they would on a walkaround school and have been impressed by what they have seen from both staff and students.</p> <p>Going forward it was discussed that there may be opportunities for ongoing use of Teams including parents evenings, professional learning across the Trust and Head of Department meetings Trust wide.</p> <p>It was also noted of the excellent use the Trust primary schools of Teams for online lessons.</p> <p>TL asked that the document produced at the end of the first national lockdown, What is working well and how can be harness going forward, be updated and brought to the strategic planning TBM5 in May 2021.</p> <p><b>Q – PB asked how are we as a Trust sensitive to the needs of the staff who are all working so hard?</b></p> <p>A – Regular communication is maintained with all</p>	<p>RK/MV</p> <p>Executive Team</p>
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			<p>staff. LM updated and sent out an email at the start of the term and reminded staff that they should not feel the need to be present and available at all times.</p> <p>Staff are reminded to contact their line manager or SLT if there are any issues they would like to discuss and the school will put support in place where possible.</p> <p>Lesson time has been reduced to 45 minutes to allow staff a break in between lessons.</p> <p>Staff are also aware of the huge amount of resources and information available to them via the HR hub.</p>	
		Curriculum and assessment compliance	<p>It was confirmed that all statutory duties are being met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory duties for curriculum and assessment</li> <li>• Compliance with SEND Code of Practice</li> <li>• EYFS policies and procedures are in line with EYFS framework</li> <li>• Compliance with regard to statutory requirements for careers guidance</li> <li>• An appropriate approach for directing pupils off site, exclusions</li> </ul>	
		Trust Growth and development	<p><u>Sixth Form</u> Following the end of the consultation period LM had produced a paper relating to Sixth Form provision across the Trust, and in particular at HGHS.</p> <p>On the whole the outcome of the proposal to pause admissions for a minimum of 2 years was positive. The major issue is the funding. The cost to refurbish is in the region of £2.5m and to rebuild is in the region of £3.5m. The Trust are currently looking into ways to obtain funding. There is no option for Free School bids to be submitted and EFSA do not allow borrowing.</p> <p><b>Q – JC asked what are the downsides to refurbishing as opposed to rebuilding – will this future proof the Sixth Form?</b> A – The preferred option would be a complete rebuild but this costs a huge amount of money and there is no opportunity for Free School bids at present.</p>	

			<p>The current building is a refurbished version of the Youth Centre. There is a central room with rooms around the edge. Currently there are no detailed drawings to be able to share with Trustees. The PAN for the Sixth Form would still remain at 200 but currently is operating at nowhere near those numbers.</p> <p><b>Q – CF asked how this would affect the AP School on the site of HGHS?</b></p> <p>A – This wouldn't affect the AP school at all as this will be built further away on the school land. The Sixth Form centre is situated in the middle of the existing school buildings.</p> <p><u>LCH extension</u></p> <p>The extension to the dining area at LCH will no longer be done. Instead there will be an outside food pod and covered seating area, as done recently at Laurus Ryecroft. The funds reserved for the extension will be used to make the changes.</p> <p><u>3G at LCH</u></p> <p>Planning permission will be submitted in the coming months for the 3G pitch. Funding will be half by Football Foundation and half by LFET.</p> <p>TL agreed to liaise with P Moss on behalf of the Board to update on possible funding opportunities for the Sixth Form rebuild or refurbishment.</p>	TL
		Risk Management	<p>M Stewart joined the meeting to present to Governors the IT strategy.</p> <p>There were 3 main areas for the presentation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Keeping up to date with technology</li> <li>2. Adapting for the future</li> <li>3. Risk Management</li> </ol> <p><u>Keeping up to date with technology</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £3.1m invested over the last 3 years</li> <li>• Supporting teaching and learning and not driving it</li> <li>• Future proofing devices</li> <li>• Webinars and virtual training</li> <li>• Preferred partners</li> <li>• Staff training</li> <li>• Evaluation of products including</li> </ul>	

			<p>hardware and software</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff updates to support new features</li> </ul> <p><u>Adapting for the future</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a 5-year plan to ensure demands are met</li> <li>• EDL replacements – projectors being phased out</li> <li>• Migration to Cloud services</li> <li>• Teams collaboration</li> <li>• Progression opportunities</li> <li>• Consolidate supported platforms</li> <li>• Zero touch deployment</li> </ul> <p><u>Risk management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater online presence</li> <li>• Realtime monitoring of all services</li> <li>• Disaster recovery</li> <li>• Geofenced authentication for increased security</li> <li>• Staff training and guidance</li> <li>• Third party access</li> <li>• Policy review and regular compliance checks</li> <li>• Security maintenance</li> </ul> <p>Trustees thanked MS for the comprehensive presentation which had covered a lot of information.</p> <p>RK commented that it was important to bring to the attention of the Trust if it was felt further software or tools were required. Advice was also given to put tools in place to show priorities and measure the impact against them.</p> <p>It was noted that WM, LM and MS will meet to discuss priorities going forward but due to the additional pressures of lockdown and online home learning it was felt to be currently working reactively rather than proactively, whilst acknowledging this would change in the future.</p> <p><b>Q – TL asked MS how do you get your challenge and refresh? It is important for development to not constantly be reactive?</b></p> <p>A – It is difficult in the current climate to be anything other than reactive but this will change and the department will revert back to being proactive in normal times. There will be further development of the team including induction and</p>	
				LM/WM

			<p>managing a team training.</p> <p>Trustees thanked MS and his team for their hard work ongoing.</p> <p>The Risk Register was reviewed at the Audit Finance and Resources meeting in December 2020 and is a regular agenda item for this committee. It was noted that a major risk is recruitment &amp; retention and health and well being and that both are high on the Trust agenda. From January 2020 to January 2021 the staff rating of 1-5 on wellbeing rose from 3.6 to 4 and staff recruitment was 97.6%.</p> <p>WM shared the HR Hub screen with Trustees to show the wealth or resources and information available to staff to support their well-being.</p> <p>The Covid Risk Registers for both primary and secondary were discussed.</p> <p>For secondary the document has been updated to reflect the national lockdown and to include lateral flow testing. The document is a live document which is being updated ongoing.</p> <p>As with secondary the primary document is regularly updated ongoing. Trustees attention was drawn to the section relating to holiday club which will be provided for the children of critical worker and vulnerable pupils. Demand for places is high and safety measures will be in place.</p> <p>The Risk Assessments for Mass Testing were shared with Trustees.</p> <p>Tests are offered to staff twice weekly in secondary schools and will twice to students in school.</p> <p>Test kits were provided to staff at the primary schools to self test at home.</p> <p>It was noted that currently there had been no positive LFT tests across the Trust. A further update will be given at the next meeting.</p> <p><b>Q – TL asked what was the uptake of adults?</b>  A – Initially it was 100% but now there are more staff permanently at home the numbers being</p>	WM
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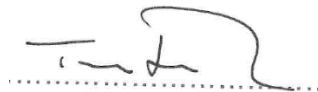
			<p>tested in school have dropped.</p> <p>The Safeguarding policy addendum was updated to reflect the national lockdown January 2021 and was <u>approved</u> by Trustees.</p>	
		CEO's Performance Management	<p>Trustees formally offered their congratulations to L Magrath on her recent OBE.</p> <p>The Performance Management review for CEO will take place immediately after this meeting.</p>	
		Approve policies as per the Trust Policy Schedule	<p>The following policies were <u>approved</u> by Trustees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complaints procedures</li> <li>• Capability policy</li> <li>• Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy</li> <li>• Health and Well-being policy</li> <li>• Managing Stress policy</li> <li>• Privacy Notice visitors</li> <li>• Safeguarding policy</li> </ul>	
		Trustee training	<p>Trustees were reminded to complete the GDPR training and to inform the clerk if they have any issues accessing.</p> <p>Academy Committee Governors have been asked to complete Pupil Premium monitoring module ahead of the next round of meetings in March.</p>	
5		Financial position	The Audit report was included in the documents for this meeting for Trustees information.	
6		AOB	<p>Parental feedback of overwhelmingly positive comments for each school was circulated to Trustees by the Clerk prior to the meeting. It was noted that this was just a small sample of the feedback received and that parents were extremely grateful for the educational provision during lockdown.</p> <p>Trustees were pleased to receive the feedback.</p>	
		Meeting dates	<p>Wednesday 24.03.2021 at 10.00am</p> <p>Wednesday 05.05.2021 at 10.00am</p> <p>Wednesday 07.07.2021 at 10.00am</p>	

#### Impact of Meeting / Key Outcomes

- Trustees approved the changes to the Scheme of Delegation
- Trustees received an update of Governor recruitment across the Trust

- Trustees were updated on the provision for remote recruitment during the national lockdown
- The Chair of the Audit, Finance and Resources committee gave a verbal overview of the meeting held in December
- Trustees received a verbal overview of the Trust AGM meeting which had taken place in December
- A report on Compliance was presented to Trustees
- Confirmation that the School Census on 21<sup>st</sup> January had been completed and submitted
- Trustees reviewed the remote learning offer for all schools in the Trust
- Trustees received an update around Trust growth and development
- M Stewart presented the IT strategy to Trustees
- Trustees considered the Covid 19 risk assessments and the mass testing risk assessments
- 7 policies were approved
- Trustees were given a sample of the feedback received from parents for the educational provision during lockdown

Meeting closed at 12.15pm



Chair of Trustees:

24<sup>th</sup> March 2021