

COMMUNITY FIRST ACADEMY TRUST (“The Company”)

Minutes

Of a meeting of the Directors of the Company held at Platt Bridge Community School,
Rivington Avenue, Wigan, Lancs, United Kingdom on
Thursday 15th December 2016 at 5.00pm

Present: Mr J Pugh, Mrs S Darbyshire, Mrs V Lewis, Mrs D Wood, Mr G Ashton,
Mr C Sweeney, Mr N Bailey

Apologies: Mr M Rowlands, Mr D Sherrington, Mr P Harmer

In attendance: Mrs M Frost, Mr C Holden, Mrs M Foster (Clerk to the Trust)

The meeting was preceded by the presentation of the Audited Annual Accounts for the year ended 31st August 2016 by Mr S Parker of Haines Watts. Two documents were circulated for Directors’ information and scrutiny.

Directors noted in particular:

- The accounts are different to the previous year due to Rose Bridge and the SCITT joining the Trust.
- National Insurance and pensions contributions are two significant costs which are outside of the Trust’s control.
- The funding position for the Trust and for both schools is strong in respect of assets.
- The National Funding Formula will have an impact on funding – further details will be sent to Mrs Frost when available.
- Staff costs have remained static as a percentage, although the actual costs have changed.
- Three quarters of costs are direct costs being spent towards the Trust’s charitable objectives.
- A new IT system is to be introduced, PS Financials, and this will enhance reporting procedures.
- Pecuniary interest forms and declaration forms for governance need to be updated.

Q: Directors questioned why pension costs so high are.

A: Rates have gone up, although GMPF are not demanding additional contributions like some other pension funds.

Q: Directors asked about the Kingsbridge bank reconciliation.

A: This will be addressed once PS Financials is in place.

Q: Directors asked about deferred income.

A: This is money received in advance, for example for Universal Free School Meals or for SEN. Funding is received part way through the year for the full year. It is apportioned and deferred to the correct financial year.

Mrs Frost advised Directors that separate reports are available for Platt Bridge, Rose Bridge and Kingsbridge if required.

Directors approved the Audited Annual Accounts and agreed to Mr Pugh signing the relevant documentation.

Directors thanked Mr Parker, Mrs Frost and Mrs Jones for the work undertaken in preparing the accounts. Mr Parker left the meeting at 5.35pm.

1. APOLOGIES

- a. To receive apologies for absence
Apologies for absence were received from Mr Rowlands, Mr Sherrington and Mr Harmer.
- b. To accept apologies for absence
The apologies were accepted.
- c. To note Directors not in attendance
All Directors were either present or had tendered apologies for absence.

2. URGENT ITEMS TO BE INCLUDED UNDER ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were three items of AOB:

- Kingsbridge (Mr Ashton)
- Director and LAB member resignations (Mr Pugh)
- IT proposal (Mr Holden)

3. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL, PREJUDICIAL OR PECUNIARY INTEREST

Directors were invited to declare whether they had any direct or indirect personal, prejudicial or pecuniary interest or conflict of interest in any matter forming part of the agenda for this meeting or likely to be discussed at this meeting. The following interests were declared:

Mr Ashton	Kingsbridge EIP SCITT Operating Officer/Consultant Northern Schools MAT Department for Education Consultant Baker Dearing Educational Trust Senior Education Consultant Wigan Youth Zone Board Member ASCL, Institute of Directors (MINSTD) FRSA
Mrs Darbyshire	Kingsbridge EIP SCITT Director Wigan Road Management Company Director FASNA
Mrs Wood	Kingsbridge EIP SCITT Director Ofsted Inspector
Mrs Lewis	Westbridge Teaching School Director Self-employed School Improvement Consultant
Mr Sweeney	Platt Bridge Community Centre Limited Director Abram Ward Community Co-operative Limited St Mary's CE Primary School LA Governor

4. HEADTEACHER/HEAD OF SCHOOL REPORTS

a. Rose Bridge Academy

Mrs Wood had previously circulated a report which included key information for governors. This is updated termly for the Local Academy Board. The Annual Report on performance related pay progression was also shared with Directors.

Mrs Wood reported that outcomes for low ability students, vulnerable groups and maths were very positive. The options group also performed above national average. Areas for improvement include most able boys and most able disadvantaged (9 students). Case studies have been undertaken for these groups.

Q: Directors asked what is “Restart a Heart day”?

A: Students were trained in the use of a defibrillator.

Mrs Wood provided updates on staffing and CPD. Discussion took place about Year 11 predictions and it was noted that it is very difficult to predict results with any certainty this year due to the change to the 9-1 grading system for English and maths, there being no firm grade boundaries and the move to the Progress 8 measure.

Directors requested “at a glance” information.

Mrs Wood will provide Directors with a copy of the information booklet which has been provided to parents.

Mrs Darbyshire left the meeting at 5.55pm due to illness.

Discussion took place about the recent Academy Review, PD, Behaviour and Welfare. It was noted that both attendance and persistent absences were better than national. Exclusions, CLA and SEND updates were provided. It was noted that there are now 30 students with statements or EHCPs.

Directors asked for their thanks to be passed on to staff in respect of the positive data around attendance, drama, maths and humanities and the exceptional performance of lower ability students.

Mrs Wood advised Directors that there have been some concerns around science, however a diagnostic has been undertaken and an action plan is now in place.

b. Platt Bridge Community School

A Head of School Report and an Annual Report on performance related pay progression were circulated to Directors. Mrs Shelford was unable to attend the meeting.

It was noted that Platt Bridge is in one of the most deprived areas of the Borough and the starting points of pupils entering school is very low. It was noted that improvements are being made. Directors were requested to e-mail Mrs Shelford directly with any questions regarding the report.

5. DATA UPDATES: RAISE

a. Rose Bridge Academy

Mrs Wood shared an annotated copy of RAISE online with Directors. It was noted that most years have starting points significantly below the national average. However at GCSE achievement of the very low

ability cohort is almost double the national average. The document was discussed and considered. Directors asked the following questions/made the following comments:

Q: Directors asked for clarification that maths performed better than English

A: This was confirmed.

Q: How much confidence is there that there were 74 students at secure Level 4 on entry?

A: This was a judgement made from externally marked SATs.

Q: What is the maths Level 1/Level 2 Certificate?

A: This is a qualification for lower ability students who would be unable to complete the full GCSE qualification.

Q: Why did only 5 students take separate sciences? Is this still being offered?

A: This is cohort dependent and is offered as an additional after school class.

Q: Could you please elaborate further regarding the science improvement strategy.

A: Mrs Wood responded that there have been a number of issues including two members of staff on maternity leave last year. There are also sickness absence issues. These are being addressed. However, two other members of the faculty will also be going on maternity leave this year. Supply cover will be put in place from Easter and adverts will go out for maternity leave covers and a permanent post. An external consultant has completed a faculty diagnostic and an SLT action plan is in place. Issues around leadership will be considered once staff attendance issues have been addressed. Discussion took place about the possibility of financial support being available from the Trust if needed.

b. Platt Bridge Community School

RAISE on line, the Inspection Dashboard, the 2016 School Position Statement and the Improvement and Implementation Plan were shared with Directors. It was noted that Mrs Shelford would attend the next Directors meeting to discuss the document further. Current Year 2 and Year 6 data was also shared. In the meantime it was agreed that Directors would e-mail Mrs Shelford with any questions.

6. CEO REPORT

Mrs Darbyshire's report had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Spring Term Monitoring Schedule was also shared. Mr Pugh took Directors through the report in Mrs Darbyshire's absence.

Q: Directors asked why Teaching School bookings were slow this term?

A: Mrs Lewis advised that this may be due to the competition in this area. NLEs have been invited to meet with the Assistant Director for Education in Wigan to discuss how school improvement in the borough can be supported, and how teaching schools can be involved.

Q: Directors asked about the Lead for ITT.

A: The Lead provides two days support for Kingsbridge.

Mr Ashton advised that in respect of Kingsbridge, there are possible financial concerns due to fewer trainee recruits for September 2017. This is due to the quality of candidates not being as high as in previous years. 30 candidates are needed to break even. More information will be available in June/July. It was agreed that maintaining quality of candidates is a priority.

Q: Directors asked why some funding under the "contingency" heading has been spent.

A: This was to provide CPD and new signage.

7. FINANCE UPDATE

Reports had been circulated previously, including performance related pay reports from both schools. Directors were advised that all increments had been allocated in the payroll. Directors approved this action.

Q: Directors asked what the procedure was where SLT were at the top of their pay scale (as is the case at Rose Bridge).

A: Directors were advised that there has to be a differential of pay between the Assistant Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher so to increase the pay of individuals at the top of their pay scales a full salary benchmarking review would need to be undertaken.

Q: Directors asked whether Central Team contracts would be opting out of the School Teachers Pay and Conditions.

A: This is currently being investigated. The board however holds the overall power to determine the pay and conditions for employment contracts including central and executive posts,

Q: Is the carryover a reasonable amount or should Directors have concerns?

A: Directors were advised that carryovers for both schools were in line with average.

Directors were advised that both schools are currently moving over to the PS Financials system which will make financial management across the Trust easier. Additional software has also been purchased which provides the ability to forecast budgets more easily.

Q: What proportion of carryover can be invested?

A: Mrs Frost advised that £400,000 is invested, split into four 31 day accounts of £25,000 each. Plus term investment of £300,000 for 12 months.

Discussion took place about the National Funding Formula.

Directors were advised that Rose Bridge is oversubscribed next year based on first preferences. A meeting is also to take place with the LA about providing additional places. This will only be agreed if the LA provide appropriate funding but has the potential of generating an additional £120,000 income.

Q: Directors asked about insurance cover for staff working abroad.

A: This is covered.

Mrs Frost advised that the SOFA is currently being reviewed to bring Kingsbridge into the CFAT SOFA and the introduction to PS Financials.

8. HR UPDATE

Mr Holden provided a report for discussion. It was noted in particular that:

- 3 apprentices have been appointed
- One member of staff at Rose Bridge is at stage two of the sickness procedure.

Mr Holden explained that the trust has been approached by unions to agree recognition. The purpose of a trade union recognition agreement is to set out the relationship between the recognised trade unions and the employer, beyond the minimum legal requirements. Directors were advised that whilst there is no legal requirement to have a union recognition agreement, if the Trust does not enter into an

agreement with the Unions, the historic agreement with Wigan Council will have transferred across as part of the TUPE process.

Mr Holden explained that he has previously worked with The Rowan Learning Trust and the Unions to draft a document which is more “fit for purpose” for the Academies and MAT’s. The agreement was shared with Directors who were advised that it is an ‘honour’ agreement, i.e. not legally binding. The benefits of the union recognition agreement were discussed.

Q: Directors asked what the cost of the agreement was.

A: The agreement is cost neutral. However, if a school from outside Wigan Borough joined the Trust, there may become a need to pay facilities time (Wigan currently pay this for all schools in the Borough). Mr Holden explained that the Department for Education issued some non-statutory advice on trade union facility time in January 2014 that the circulated document reflects.

Q: Would there be a local TU Secretary on each site and would the Trust have to pay for this?

A: As an academy trust we are free to determine our own approaches to facility time to ensure positive workplace relations.

It was agreed to adopt the Union Recognition Agreement.

Mr Holden tabled a number of policies that have already gone through negotiations with the Union for approval and adoption including:

- a. Pay Policy
- b. Disciplinary Procedure
- c. Grievance Procedure
- d. Flexible Working Policy
- e. Capability Policy
- f. Performance Management Policy – it was noted that the date for teaching staff performance management reviews has been moved to the end of October.

The above policies were approved and adopted.

- g. DBS Checks – discussion took place about the lack of an ‘expiry date’ on DBS certificates. Directors requested it to be noted that the recommendation is for these to be renewed every 3 years. Discussion took place about the financial implications of renewing every 3 years. It was agreed that Mr Holden would look at costing up a programme of renewals, liaise with other MATs to look at best practice, and take advice from the LADO.

Action: To be an agenda item at the next meeting.

9. GOVERNANCE ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

a. Board Committees

Discussion took place about the proposal to set up Board Committees as specified in the Scheme of Delegation. Also it was proposed that both LABs meeting half termly, and consideration be given to the Trust Board meeting half termly, with the first meeting of the academic year being a business meeting and primary data. It was agreed that a proposed schedule be prepared for the next meeting.

b. To receive minutes and reports from Local Academy Boards

Minutes were circulated from both LABs. Discussion took place about concerns over the LAB membership for Platt Bridge.

c. DBS checks for LAB members

Mr Holden to look at this in conjunction with the DBS Policy.

d. NGA membership

Mrs Frost advised that the Trust had now registered for NGA membership.

e. Trustee training update

There was nothing to report for this item.

10. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FULL BOARD OF TRUSTEES HELD ON TUESDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER 2016

a. The minutes of the meeting of 27th September 2016 were approved as a true and accurate record.

b. Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting of 27th September 2016 were as follows:

- Mrs Lewis is arranging a meeting for an update on vulnerable groups

- Item 19 – Admissions:

Q: Directors asked if the admission arrangements have now been finalised.

A: This is currently out to consultation for the 2018 intake.

11. CORRESPONDENCE

Mr Pugh shared a letter received from the Regional Schools Commissioner and advised Directors that a meeting has been arranged for 30th January. Mr Pugh, Mrs Darbyshire, Mrs Wood, Mrs Frost and Mr Holden will be attending.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Kingsbridge:

Mr Ashton advised that the Trustees have agreed that the Kingsbridge Education Improvement Partnership and charity be wound down.

Director and LAB member resignations:

Mr Pugh advised that Mr Sherrington had resigned from the Board of Directors. Directors expressed appreciation of the time, support and input Mr Sherrington had given to the Board. Additionally, Mr Russon and Mr Wilson had resigned from the Platt Bridge LAB. Replacements are being sought.

IT Proposal:

Mr Holden circulated documents for Directors' consideration and explained the two options available for the future ICT needs of the MAT, one on site solution, the other cloud based.

Q: Why do we need to do anything with our IT systems?

A: We are currently using 3 different systems across the Trust and need to migrate to one system across the MAT.

After discussion it was agreed to move to the cloud based solution, subject to final costs being negotiated.

13. CONFIDENTIALITY

Directors were reminded that the usual confidentiality applies to the discussions during the meeting.

14. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETINGS

Tuesday 28th March 2017 at 5.00pm.

There being no further business the meeting adjourned at 8.20pm.

Proposed:

Seconded:

Date:

DRAFT