

## WANDLE LEARNING TRUST

### Trustee Meeting

6.00pm, Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2018

#### 1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

**PRESENT:** Sian Mathias (SM), Jill Newey (JN), Sarah Marshall (SMa), Sue Pidgeon (SP), Judi Dumont-Barter (JD-B), Kate Burns (KBu), Andy Brock (AB), Robert Waugh (RW), Emma Simmons (ES), Christian Kingsley (CK), Mark Siswick (MS),

**APOLOGIES:** Karen Best

**CHAIR:** Sian Mathias

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Steve Wallis.

**CLERK:** Philip Moss

*Meeting commenced at 6.00pm*

#### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

SP declared she was governor at Ravenstone Primary School, Wandsworth.

#### 3. ACTIONS AND MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

*Minutes of Trust Board Meeting - 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018*

Update on actions from meeting:

- Action 1: SW to liaise with SMa and JN to finalise budget for 2018/19. *Complete.*
- Action 2: The final budget to be signed off at the Trust Board meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> July to enable it to be submitted to the ESFA by the deadline of late July. *To be signed off at this meeting.*
- Action 3: JN, SMa, KB and PM to meet to produce a governance cycle for 2018-19. *Complete.*

- Action 4: Regular updates regarding the work and financial performance of the WTSA to be provided to the Trust Board via the Trust's Standard's Committee. *On-going – next meeting of Trust Standards Committee 19<sup>th</sup> November 2018.*
- Action 5: JN and SP to develop Trustee induction materials/process. *To be signed off at this meeting.*

SMA made the point that the detailed discussion of the draft budget was not on the face of the minutes. She stated that it is important that any discussion and challenge of budget matters is recorded in both LAC and Trust minutes.

**ACTION 1:** PM to ensure record of robust challenge of budget is recorded in minutes.

Trustees approved minutes of 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

*Minutes of Trust Board Meeting - 13<sup>th</sup> June*

Minutes did not record apologies from ES.

**ACTION 2:** PM to amend minutes to record apologies from ES.

Minutes of 13<sup>th</sup> June were approved.

#### **4. BUDGET 2018-19**

SW introduced the budget for 2018-19. He explained that it had been through each LAC and was being presented to trustees for final sign-off. SW would then submit to ESFA.

Trustees made the point that they had had limited opportunity to scrutinise the budget until this point. They recognised that this was the first year of the MAT and processes were still evolving. Also, four of the members had only just been invited to join the Board (to be appointed formally by the AGM 2018) so were unfamiliar with either school budgets. It was noted that overseeing the financial operation of the Trust was one of the primary functions of the Board. Going forward it was vital that sufficient information, time and opportunity was provided to ensure Trustees could fully discharge their duties, challenge and scrutinise the work of the LACs and were in a position to sign-off budgets.

**ACTION 3:** PM to convene an additional Trust Finance and Resources Meeting early in the new term (Autumn 2018) to enable further scrutiny of the Budget to take place.

Trustees raised a number of issues in relation to the Budget:

*CGA budget* – it was noted that it was utilising reserves this year to achieve a balanced in-year budget – this was not a sustainable position long term. SMa explained CGA’s LAC Finance and Resources Committee had discussed this in some detail. It was considering detailed options to ensure the academy was able to set a balanced budget without using reserves in further years.

CK made the point that the academy currently admits 5.5 forms of entry organised into 6 classes. An increase in pupil numbers to 6 full forms of entry would increase income without impacting significantly on costs.

It was noted that Trustees had a clear responsibility for ensuring all academies in the Trust set sustainable budgets and that the Trust Resources and Finance Committee would be the forum for ensuring each LAC was undertaking the proper scrutiny and challenge.

*Reserves Policy* – clarity was sought over how the reserves policy operated given that, legally, the Trust had overall control of all financial resources. SW explained that this was the case in law but that Trustees had taken the decision not to “pool” reserves but to allow each academy to notionally retain the resources each had brought into the Trust. A process of checks and balances was in place nevertheless that:

- a. required each Academy to *RAG-rate* their proposed use of resources for scrutiny and sign off by the Trust; and
- b. that further proposals for the use of reserves, not agreed as part of the annual budget process, would also come to the Trust for scrutiny and sign-off.

Ultimately the Trust could withhold approval for an academy’s proposed use of reserves.

Trustees understood the rationale and principles underpinning this approach. SMa stated that this approach should be set out clearly in the Trust’s Reserves Policy. SW explained that this was being developed. A draft would be presented to the next meeting of the Trust’s Finance and Resources Committee for discussion and sign-off.

**ACTION 4:** Trust Finance and Resources Committee to receive draft Trust Reserves Policy at its next meeting.

*Teaching School Budget* – this budget appeared to be carrying significant reserves, however SW and MS explained that in reality the majority of the “reserve” were funds received in advance of payment (School Direct, Early Years Hub etc). The level of actual reserves was very low and generated in the main from income received from the courses the Teaching School ran. Any surplus generated was then used to re-invest in future provision – e.g. the Teaching School was in the process of developing a teacher training provision for secondary teachers in the new academic year.

**ACTION 5:** SW to consider presenting Teaching School reserves in further budgets separately to reflect a) receipts in advance and b) reserves generated from trading.

*ESFA Scrutiny* - it was noted that:

- a. 86% of the Trust's income came from core ESFA funding; and
- b. on average, 80% of the Trust's budget was spent on staffing (CPS 74% and CGA 83%).

SW explained that the ESFA would expect this latter figure to be c.80%. It was the case that some changes to staff costs were beyond the control of the Trust (national and local settlements etc). Such changes could impact on the proportion of budget spent on staffing. Close scrutiny is required to ensure the budgets of both academies remain viable.

*Central costs and Services* – SW explained that the actual incremental cost to the Trust of creating the MAT was c.£40k. SM asked if the scope of services provided by the Trust had been established and what a school joining the Trust would be expected to pay. SW explained that this was still a work in progress. A proposal would be brought to the next meeting of the Trust's Finance and Resources Committee.

**ACTION 6:** Trust Finance and Resources Committee to sign-off "top-slice" arrangements for schools joining the Trust at its next meeting.

SM summarised the discussion and re-iterated the point that it was vital that Trustees had the proper opportunity to scrutinise the Budget going forward.

She **proposed** that:

- a. trustees sign off the 2018-19 Budget as presented; and
- b. authorise SW to submit it to the ESFA.

Both proposals were agreed unanimously.

**ACTION 7:** SW to submit WLT Trust Budget to ESFA by deadline.

## 5. REPORTS FROM LACs

CGA – JD-M outlined a number of developments at CGA including:

- a. increased parental communication through newsletters;
- b. the academy had received the Charter Mark for its work around well-being.

- c. Trustees who did not know CGA were welcome to arrange a visit to the academy and/or attend a LAC meeting; and
- d. the intake of year 7 pupils in September 2018 had the highest number of pupils with Education Health and Care Plans.

CPS – JN outlined a number of developments at CPS including:

- a. minutes of CPS LACs were on Governor hub;
- b. Chesterton had been awarded Gold status as a UNICEF Rights-Respecting School.
- c. From September 2018 the academy would operate via a Full LAC plus two subcommittees (Finance and Resources, and Standards and Pupil Welfare).

## 6. TRUST STRATEGIC PLAN

MS and CK outlined the priorities for 2018-19.

Trustees noted that:

- a. the Executive Team was developing the central team, drawing on existing capacity across the academies. Overtime, a more centralised team would be developed.
- b. the development of a School Improvement Strategy will need to be put in place to support schools coming into the Trust.
- c. the intention is that at least 2 schools join the Trust over the course of the next Academic Year.

## 7. SAFEGUARDING POLICY

The Trustees noted the Trust-produced Safeguarding Policy, revised in line with new DfE guidance. Trustees were invited to feedback any comments to PM over the summer break to enable a final version to be produced for each academy at the start of the Academic Year.

SM explained that JD-B was the current Safeguarding Trustees but was keen to seek a second Safeguarding Trustee. ES volunteered to take up this role.

**ACTION 8:** All Trustees to feedback any comments to PM on Safeguarding Policy.

## 8. TRUSTEE INDUCTION

Trustees noted and agreed the induction checklist. It was agreed that all documentation would be placed on Fronter.

**ACTION 9:** PM to upload all Trustee induction documentation to Fronter.

## 9. DUE DILIGENCE

Trustees noted the Due Diligence documentation. It was agreed that trustees would feedback any comments to CK over the summer break.

## 10. SERVICE OFFER

Deferred to further meeting

## 11. MEETING CYCLE FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2018-19

Trustees noted the dates circulated.

## 12. AOB

It was noted that the Trust required a Business Continuity Plan – SW explained he was working on this and it would come to a further meeting.

### **ACTIONS – WLT TRUST BOARD MEETING – 09.07.18**

<b>AGENDA ITEM</b>	<b>ACTION No.</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
<b>3. ACTIONS AND MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS</b>	1	PM to ensure record of robust challenge of budget is recorded in minutes.
	2	PM to amend minutes to record apologies from ES.
<b>4. BUDGET 2018-19</b>	3	PM to convene an additional Trust Finance and Resources Meeting early in the new term (Autumn 2018) to enable further scrutiny of the Budget to take place.
	4	Trust Finance and Resources Committee to receive draft Trust Reserves Policy at its next meeting.
	5	SW to consider presenting Teaching School reserves in further budgets separately to reflect a) receipts in advance and b) reserves generated from trading.

	6	Trust Finance and Resources Committee to sign-off “top-slice” arrangements for schools joining the Trust at its next meeting.
	7	SW to submit WLT Trust Budget to ESFA by deadline.
<b>7. SAFEGUARDING POLICY</b>	8	All Trustees to feedback any comments to PM on Safeguarding Policy.
<b>8. TRUSTEE INDUCTION</b>	9	PM to upload all Trustee induction documentation to Fronter.