



Address:
 Waterton Academy Trust
 The Grove
 Walton
 Wakefield
 WF2 6LD

Waterton Academy Trust

Minutes of a Trust Board Meeting

DATE:	TIME:	LOCATION:
29 April 2020	6pm	Held via video conferencing (Microsoft Teams)

Attendees

Chair:	B Cook	
Trustees	S Bates	S Johnson
	D Dickinson (CEO)	J Shaw
Clerk:	<i>L Clark (MAT Governance Officer)</i>	
Apologies:	P Beaman	

ITEM	ACTION
1. Welcome to a meeting held via video conferencing	
The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and thanked Trustees for their adaptability for holding the Trust Board meeting virtually using Microsoft Teams. Thanks were recorded for the IT support from the central team, notably from J Sephton (Apprentice in Digital Marketing and Media).	
2. Apologies for Absence	
There were apologies of absence from Paul Beaman.	
3. Declarations of Interest	
The standing register of declarations of interest was noted.	
4. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 3rd March 2020 and matters arising	LC
Trustees reviewed and approved the minutes. It was agreed these would be signed in person by S Johnson, who had chaired the previous meeting, once restrictions had been lifted.	
Actions from the meetings had been undertaken and it was agreed that all had been completed in a timely manner.	
5. Conditions of Care Update	
Trustees reviewed the report and were in agreement that the Conditions of Care have been met to date. There were no updates to the previous report.	

ITEM	ACTION
6. Risk Assessment	<p>The CEO drew attention to the additional risks which had been added to the risk register in advance of the previous meeting and the control measures which are in place to mitigate against such risks. Trustees noted the rationale, and highlighted their responsibilities as a charity Trustee, particularly with regards to managing finances effectively. It was noted that the public health situation will be discussed in detail in the next item.</p>
7. CEO Update	<p>The CEO referred to the report which had been available on WES prior to the meeting, and provided an update to Trustees on the emergency care provision in place to support children from across the Trust and from LA settings. A robust and careful process was put in place to review applications for school places and an appeal process implemented. A very small number were rejected based on there being insufficient evidence that a parent is a key worker, or where the Trust felt that based on previous behaviour it would be impossible for staff to follow government guidelines on social distancing.</p> <p>It was noted that pupil numbers fluctuate daily (numbers are collated by lunchtime each day) and following a review of figures, and of staffing, a number of schools were closed and other schools used as a hub for a number of children. This arrangement is working well and will be monitored closely. Trustees were provided with data on pupil numbers, total staff in work (i.e. in schools), and details of the schools which were open and to whom. In response to a question it was highlighted that safety and ensuring that there are minimal risks was a key consideration.</p> <p>The CEO commented that the Trust are also providing places for other LA pupils, and that the Trust have a strong name in the community and there has been very positive feedback.</p> <p>The Trust are following all government guidelines closely and communicating to stakeholders. Teachers are working from home, setting work for pupils and using school websites to also communicate. Home visits are not taking place, however, phone calls are being made to vulnerable pupils following the safeguarding advice provided. All schools will also ask teachers to contact their classes by phone to keep in touch. A 'storytime' is also being set up where staff across the Trust read books and children can access this at their convenience. It was noted that L Harrison (Governor at the Trust) will be reading her newly published book to begin.</p> <p>The Trust are now delivering hampers fortnightly (rather than grab bags) – these have been very positively received.</p> <p>Across the Trust a range of development work and projects are being undertaken. Significant work is being undertaken on curriculum development, and it is envisaged that all schools will have completed curriculum development planning by September. The School Improvement team continue their work on the Centre of Excellence, and Apprenticeship provider status has also been applied for and work is moving forwards on this. Trustees commented very positively on the range and progress of these pieces of work.</p>

ITEM	ACTION
<p>The Trust Estates team have scaled back all but essential works. The only project being progressed is the AMD (Ackworth Mill Dam) extension which must be completed by September as the PAN has been increased. Relevant permissions have been sought and £140k has been secured from LA in funding. In response to a question it was noted that the Trust Estates Manager has a schedule of work in place and caretakers are undertaking lone work.</p> <p>The HR team are working on creating a teaching pool solution for the Trust, given the considerable expenditure last year on supply agencies and absence insurance. Some staff have been furloughed following a DfE recommendation – these are staff who are funded through external/private funding streams such as wrap around provision teams and certain lunchtime supervisors. It was confirmed that the Trust will make up the 20% shortfall in funding. HR are also ensuring that services such as counselling continues to be in place as mental health wellbeing is vital.</p> <p>The CEO highlighted that as previously identified at Trust meetings there is a need to homogenise communications and web-based systems across the Trust and its schools, and this had been apparent during the current crisis. A project is underway to review and implement consistency across Waterton schools whilst also retaining individuality. In response to a question it was noted that whilst there is some government funding available for IT for key stage 4 and vulnerable pupils there was no widespread funding for IT.</p> <p>It was noted that finance will be discussed under the next agenda item.</p> <p>Trustees commented very positively on the comprehensive update provided by the CEO and the Trust's response to the Covid-19 situation.</p>	
<p>8. Finance Arrangements Discussion</p> <p>The CEO outlined that extensive consultations had taken place, including with SLT, Headteachers, other trusts, the Hub Boards, and Trustees. Headteachers had understood the challenges and that changes were required and some very positive conversations had taken place. Trustees noted the difficulties of modelling in the current climate and covid-19 situation, in relation to government spending.</p> <p>Trustees considered and discussed in detail the option 1 and option 2 outlined within the report. The CEO used an example of 'basic educational resources' which appears on school budgets and highlighted the wide range of spend per pupil across the schools within the Trust, and also the national mean spend. By pooling GAG funding, budget issues at locality can be addressed to create equal opportunities for all pupils within the Trust. It was also noted that SEND funding, PP funding etc. would remain at locality with the child. In response to questions on option 2 it was explained that schools can apply to the pool for additional funding if required and this would go to the Hub Board for a decision. The central team would also produce a budget which would be approved by the Hub Board when they review school budgets.</p> <p>The CEO confirmed that the Trust would not look to take the current reserves held at school level, but it was felt that it was fair that those schools access their reserves before requesting further funds from the pool. All schools had responded positively to</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
<p>this as a fair and transparent arrangement. Leadership including TLRs will be reviewed, and a significant piece of work will be undertaken.</p> <p>All were in agreement that at the centre of all finance remodelling should be the aim of raising outcomes for all children within the Trust.</p> <p>Trustees asked a range of questions about the options, and discussed the positives and negatives outlined within the report. The view was that option 2 (GAG pooling) with a central business function is efficient and addresses budget issues at locality, and provides schools with the ability to have a sharper focus on teaching and learning. It was noted that this was the ESFA favoured model, and that other Trusts are moving to this model. In response to a question, the CEO confirmed that discussions and advice has already been sought from the Auditors regarding option 2 (GAG pooling) and their advice ties in with this.</p> <p>It was noted that managing buildings and energy efficiency will be part of the central budget and contracts will be renegotiated – the focus of schools is on education. Trustees asked questions about Pupil Premium (PP) and how this spend will be monitored. The CEO confirmed that all PP strategies are published on school websites and plans will be adhered to and will be reviewed and scrutinised. Decisions will be made on a case by case basis and will depend on factors such as what ECHPs are in place, and the level of scrutiny on this has been increased.</p> <p>Trustees commented that there is a duty of care to the pupils of the Trust in providing education and that option 2 allowed for all schools to be resourced equitably. It was noted that during the covid-19 pandemic there has been a capacity for people to accept change and look at different ways of working, and ensure the best outcomes for all. The CEO was in agreement with this, and also highlighted how the Trust were also using the time to move forwards with a number of significant pieces of work.</p> <p>Resolved: Trustees unanimously agreed to move forwards with option 2 (GAG pooling).</p>	
<p>9. Scheme of Delegation</p> <p>The CEO provided an overview on the requested amendments to the Scheme of Delegation (SoD) which he had discussed with the Chair and MAT Governance Officer. With regards to the budget proposals, these are dependent on the ability to restructure certain staffing models at locality and in its current form the SoD delegates responsibility to Headteachers, with final say at Trust Board. However, the CEO has no powers to challenge without Trust Board approval. Devolved responsibility would allow this. In response to questions the CEO confirmed that he would not be involved in appointing staff across the schools, but this would be an advisory role particularly on leadership appointments and particularly when budgets were being stretched. He confirmed that the use of any such devolved responsibility would be reported to the Chair and Trust Board.</p> <p>If there was disagreement on staffing structures then an appeal can be made to the Local Hub Board, and a final appeal to the Trust Board if required. It was noted that there are Headteacher representatives on the Local Hub Boards and this provides transparency and integrity to any appeal made.</p>	

ITEM	ACTION
	Trustees resolved to amend the Scheme of Delegation. The Clerk was tasked with amending the document and ensuring the updated version was published on the Waterton website.
10. Any other business	LC
	None.
11. Feedback to / from Hub Board and ASCs – Questions, Concerns, Comments	<p>The Hub Board Chairs confirmed that they would provide a summary of the meeting to the Hub Boards at their next meeting, in particular the discussion of the budget options and the approval of Trustees to progress with financial modelling of their agreed proposal.</p> <p>S Johnson noted the previous discussions at Hub Board regarding the challenge of the sports funding plan, and he will be continuing to push for this. The CEO confirmed he would contact Headteachers to ensure that the Hub Boards have access to the PE curriculum documents. It was confirmed that when complete these are published on school websites.</p>
12. Identification of Confidential Items	DD / SJ
	None.
13. Confirmation of Date and Time of Next Meeting	<p>Tuesday 14th July 2020 – 6pm It was agreed that there was a possibility that this will be held via video conferencing.</p> <p>The Waterton Governors' Conference has been scheduled for Saturday 20th June – Trustees discussed scheduling a planning meeting for this with the possibility of producing a video / slides to go out to all Governors and stakeholders.</p>
	DD / BC / LC

MEETING CLOSED 7:15 pm

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

Actions from the Trust Board meeting held on 29 April 2020

Agenda Item N°	Summary of Action	Who?	When?
4	Sign previous minutes – clerk to arrange	LC	In due course
9	The Clerk was tasked with amending the document and ensuring the updated version was published on the Waterton website.	LC	asap

11	Focus on school sports premium plans	DD/SJ	
13	Planning meeting for the Govs Conference, with the possibility of producing a video / slides to go out to all Governors and stakeholders.	DD/BC / LC	