

Minutes of the Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust (DGAT) Board Meeting held on Monday 20 May 2019, 8:30am, The Jerusalem Room, No 4 College Green, Gloucester, GL1 2LR

Present: Mr P. Perks (Vice Chair)
The Venerable P. Andrew (PA)
Mr T. Brock (TB)
Cmdr. M. Cowdrey (MC)
Mrs R. Dick (RD)
Mrs R. Howie (CEO)
Dr K. Lynch (KL)
Mr R. Stokes (RS)

Apologies: Professor D. Cowper (Chair)

In attendance: Mrs H. Springett (Deputy CEO (DCEO))
Mrs E. Hully (Clerk)

1. Welcome

The Vice Chair welcomed Trustees and Officers to the meeting and welcomed the Clerk back from maternity leave. PA opened in prayer.

a. Apologies

Apologies were noted and accepted. The Vice Chair noted that he would Chair the meeting in Professor D. Cowper's absence and that KL would be late to the meeting.

b. Declarations of interest

No new declarations of interest were declared.

2. Minutes of the Trust Board meeting held on 4 March 2019 and Extraordinary meeting held on 23 April 2019

a. Accuracy

The minutes of the Trust Board meeting held on 4 March 2019 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting. All Trustees were in unanimous agreement. RD highlighted section 4 about Trust reserves and identified she was now happy with it.

The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 23 April 2019 are not ready for approval and therefore are to be deferred until the next meeting.

b. Matters arising and actions

Trustees reviewed the action table on page 7 of the minutes. The CEO confirmed all actions have either been completed or are covered on the agenda.

Action: The Clerk to add minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 23 April 2019 to the next Trust Board agenda.

3. Outcomes for Children / School Effectiveness

a. Inspection update

There were no inspections to report on.

b. School Dashboard

The DCEO directed Trustees to the Spring Data overview on page two of the Report to the Trust Board. Areas for concern are highlighted in yellow. The DCEO suggested a drop in Greater Depth (GD) is due to teachers' reluctance to commit to GD on Target Tracker (TT) rather than this being an area for concern. This will be included as an item in Wednesday's Headteachers' Forum. The DCEO also highlighted an upward shift in Pupil Premium showing the great work happening with those children. The DCEO reminded Trustees of the effect the size of a school has on data and the narrative around outcomes.

c. Questions from Trust Board

The DCEO asked for any questions.

The CEO asked the DCEO to include a comparison between expected and actual outcomes to allow the Board to assess how accurately staff are using TT. The DCEO to complete a comparison over the summer when final data becomes available.

KL joined the meeting.

Trustees questioned if Local Governing Bodies (LGB) are adequately challenging senior leaders. The CEO has been attending LGB meetings for every school to provide informal feedback and reported that a good amount of challenge is present in most LGB meetings across the Trust. **Trustees questioned what training is available to Governors.** The DECO has been asked to undertake monitoring and challenge training with some LGBs. More training will be provided next year for Governors including sessions for new Governors on how to appropriately challenge in a DGAT school. A number of schools have Governor vacancies, with some struggling to recruit. All LGBs undertake regular skills audits. **Does the Trust have a bank of reserve Governors, noting the National Governance Association suggestion that teachers become Governors?** Governors are recruited informally – national websites are utilised by some schools. The CEO and DCEO are committed to reducing teacher workload. The CEO would encourage those who want to become Governors but recommended not setting this as a requirement for DGAT teachers. **Trustees suggested asking retired teachers or Headteachers if they are willing to become Governors and for Chairs (or a nominated member of the LGB) to sit in on other schools' meetings.** Trustees noted the significance of the Clerk. The CEO noted an experienced Clerk is put into Interim Governing Bodies

and the Trust Board Clerk has been tasked with starting a Clerk's Forum with Linda Rolfe supporting.

The CEO advised Trustees of a school being supported around financial management and strategic planning.

The CEO informed Trustees that St John's are going through a redundancy process. She is working with the school to support and is keen to redeploy staff elsewhere within the Trust if possible.

Trustees asked what the National Average is for attendance. The National Average is 96.2%. Average percentages for exclusions are produced for individual schools. The DCEO is yet to find a good MAT comparison.

Action: The DECO to complete a comparison of expected versus actual outcomes over the summer.

4. Vision, Ethos and Growth Strategy

a. Initial feedback on Trust financial models

The CEO has meetings scheduled with other Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) which she will report on in due course. However, she is confident DGAT is in a similar position to many other MATs in reviewing their financial organisation. **Trustees agreed with the Chairs of Governors' suggestion to ask the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) what her preferred financial model would be.** The CEO agreed to include this in the next meeting.

The CEO has, so far, spoken informally with other Diocesan MATs. Some already General Annual Grant (GAG) pool and of those spoken to many are looking into it. The majority of larger National Trusts GAG pool with other non-church Trusts of our size having an 80-20% split (with the latter GAG pooling). About half of the 80% are looking at how to move forward to GAG pooling. There is a very mixed picture.

The CEO summarised those Trusts that GAG pool have one single bank account which receives GAG income from all schools minus Pupil Premium and Sports Premium. Payroll is done centrally then each school bids for what they require for that year. It is then for the Trust Board to decide how funds are distributed. Headteachers and LGBs are responsible of the non-staffing expenditure in their school. Some Trusts also hold Devolved Formula Capital (DFC) centrally to use for the Trust's Estates strategic plan. One Trust is transitioning by using a hybrid model where they will GAG pool from a particular point in time. Individual schools' reserves will not be pooled up until that point. Another Trust is allowing schools to retain a percentage of their current reserves before moving to GAG pooling. New MATs are GAG pooling from the onset.

Trustees discussed the impact GAG pooling may have on the Trust as an organisation; notably upon pupil outcomes, estates management, buying power, current individual schools and those joining the Trust. Trustees highlighted the desire to include schools in the decision making and the importance of understanding the ramifications of each

model on each school. Trustees discussed that the driving force is improving outcomes for pupils and maintaining a sustainable financial position for all schools in the Trust.

Trustees discussed how budgets are currently being monitored by Headteachers, LGBs and the central team and how the Trust is utilising skill sets of LGBs and challenging use of reserves.

The CEO was tasked with compiling a report of research on the different models of financial organisation and their impact to circulate to LGBs and the Trust Board for feedback to allow the Board to make an informed decision.

Actions: The CEO to speak with the RSC about her preferred financial model at their next meeting. The CEO to compile a report of research on the different models and impact of GAG pooling to circulate to LGBs and the Trust Board.

5. Leadership and Governance

a. Board composition – appointment of additional Trustees

The CEO reminded Trustees of the current vacancy on the Board noting a gap in the Trust Board's skills audit for HR, legal and premises expertise. The CEO reiterated the importance of recruiting the right person who will represent all children within the Trust and asked Trustees to contact her with any suggestions. If required a job description could be circulated to LGBs.

Action: Trustees to contact the CEO with any suggestions for a new Trustee.

b. Feedback from Chairs of Governors Forum

The CEO informed Trustees the Chairs of Governors Forum was very well attended, with TB and KL also there. The meeting was productive with a positive direction of travel and good level of understanding. The meeting provided the first opportunity to raise the issue of the need for a financial review and Chairs aired any initial concerns and issues. LGBs are being involved from the onset and will be given an opportunity to share their views with the Trust board prior to any decision being made.

The roll out of School Condition Allocation (SCA) funds has also been positively received. The CEO thanked TB and KL for attending, noting the positive influence of having Trust Board representation at the Forum. Trustees commended the Head of Business Operations (HBO) for his strategic work on the SCA. The CEO invited Trustees to attend the next meeting, the date of which she will circulate.

The CEO asked if there were any questions. There were none.

Action: The CEO to circulate the date of the next Chairs of Governors Forum.

6. Business, Finance and Operations

a. Minutes of the Audit and Finance Committee meeting held on 13 March 2019

RD asked if Trustees had any questions or comments on the minutes. RD summarised the meeting and noted that it included a good paper on the high amounts of supply costs across the Trust. The report highlighted the significant differences between known supply and agency and concluded that bringing supply in house was not financially viable. RD recommended the Trust Board delegate approval of the Budget Forecast Return and Report to the Audit and Finance Committee. Trustees were in unanimous agreement.

Trustees commended the Head of Finance for his strategic reports and for providing information which allows the Trust Board to make informed decisions.

b. Minutes of the Estates and Free School Committee meeting held on 26 February 2019

MC informed Trustees another meeting had taken place since the 26 February; summarising that all schools had been surveyed and projects entered onto a portal which provides a grading of importance and therefore clear prioritisation. £372,000 has been received as this year's SCA which has been allocated to the highest priority projects (noting the ~£5 million required). The Committee discussed emergency contingencies and use of reserves towards the Trust's Estates Strategy. Trustees again commended the HBO for his work on the SCA.

c. Policies

i) Finance Policy

The CEO explained the Finance Policy had already been agreed by the Audit and Finance Committee and is implemented in schools.

ii) Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions and First Aid Policy

The CEO confirmed the only changes made to the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions and First Aid Policy were to comply with GDPR and correct small typos.

Trustees confirmed they had reviewed the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions and First Aid Policy. KL to email the CEO with minor suggestions. The Clerk and CEO to review and amend the policy. Trustees agreed unanimously pending minor amendments.

Action: The Clerk to ensure updated policies are sent to the Executive Officer for circulation and to put onto the Trust website.

7. Trust Board Report

There were no further questions on the Trust Board Report.

8. AOB

The Chair asked if there was any other business in addition to those on the agenda. There were none.

a. Trustee Training

The CEO explained the Trust Board had been offered one fully funded place to attend National training on good practice in MAT boards. The CEO has received one firm commitment and two tentative. Trustees agreed for the Chair and CEO to decide who should attend. The CEO to confirm within the next 48 hours.

The CEO has received an invitation for Trustees to attend other MAT Trust Board meetings. The CEO asked if Trustees would be happy for other Trustees to also attend our meetings. Trustees confirmed this would be fine.

TB noted some free governor training available. He agreed to forward it to the CEO to include in next newsletter if appropriate.

Action: The CEO to confirm who will attend the National Good Practice training within 48 hours of this meeting. TB to forward information about training to the CEO.

b. Date of next Trust Board meeting

The next Trust Board meeting will be held on **Monday 15 July 2019**. Time and venue to be confirmed.

c. Upcoming Committee meetings

The Clerk highlighted upcoming Committee meeting dates as summarised on the agenda.

d. Trust Board meeting dates for 2019-20

The Clerk asked Trustees to consider start times and days for meetings going forward. Trustees asked the Clerk to report on good practice for meeting dates versus timing of approval for ESFA reports.

e. Circulation of meeting papers moving forwards

The Clerk asked Trustees how they would like meeting papers circulated moving forwards.

Actions: The Clerk to email Trustees about their preference for start time and day of meetings for 2019-20 and method for circulation of papers. The Clerk to report on good practice for meeting dates versus timing of approval for ESFA reports.

The Vice Chair thanked Trustees and Officers.

The meeting ended at 10am.

Minutes signed by:

Mr D. Cowper
Chair

Actions from previous meetings	Responsibility	Completed / Update
None.		

Actions from this meeting 20 May 2019	Responsibility	Completed / Update
2.1/200519: The Clerk to add minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 23 April 2019 to the next Trust Board agenda.	Clerk	Completed
3.1/200519: The DECO to complete a comparison of expected versus actual outcomes over the summer.	DCEO	
4.1/200519: The CEO to speak with the RSC about her preferred financial model at their next meeting.	CEO	
4.2/200519: The CEO to compile a report of research on the different models and impact of GAG pooling to circulate to LGBs and the Trust Board.	CEO	
5.1/200519: The CEO to circulate the date of the next Chairs of Governors Forum.	CEO	
5.2/200519: Trustees to contact the CEO with any suggestions for a new Trustee.	All	
6.1/2005/19: The Clerk to ensure updated policies are sent to the Executive Officer for circulation and to put onto the Trust website.	Clerk	Completed
8.1/200519: The CEO to confirm who will attend the National Good Practice training within 48 hours of this meeting.	CEO	
8.2/200519: TB to forward information about training to the CEO.	TB	
8.3/200519: The Clerk to email Trustees about their preference for start time and day of meetings for 2019-20 and method for circulation of papers.	Clerk	Completed
8.4/200519: The Clerk to report on good practice for meeting dates versus timing of approval for ESFA reports.	Clerk	