

**Uttoxeter Learning Trust
Trustees' Board**

Minutes of a meeting of the Trustees' Board held in Thomas Alleyne's High School, Uttoxeter, on Wednesday, 3 April 2019 at 6.00pm.

Present:

Member and Trustee – Mr S Slater (in the chair)

Trustees – Mrs E Bell, Mrs V Bennett, Mrs P Livesey, Mr R Oldham, Mr T Sutcliffe, Mr L Trigg

Also Present:

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – Mrs A Tapp

Clerk to the Uttoxeter Learning Trust (ULT) – Mr R Sheldon

Apologies:

An apology for absence was received from Rev M Sherwin.

Tour of School:

Prior to the start of the formal meeting Mrs Rudge, headteacher, gave trustees a tour of Thomas Alleyne's High School which provided them with an opportunity to see all of the work that had been undertaken, and continued to be undertaken, to further improve the educational facilities available to students. Trustees thanked the headteacher for the tour of the school.

139. Declarations of Interest:

There were no declarations of interest relevant to agenda items.

140. Chair – Power to Act:

The chair reported on the following actions taken between this and the last meeting:

- Approval given to postpone discussions with the unions, regarding the proposed change to the redundancy scheme, as the business case was not ready at that time. Discussions had been re-arranged for 15 May.
- Following a meeting with other trustees able to attend, the recruitment pack for a new CEO had been finalised and the salary set at circa £85K.

It was resolved –

That trustees fully support all actions taken by the chair, with thanks to him.

141. Trustees' Board Minutes:

Minutes of a meeting of the Trustees' Board held on Thursday, 13 February 2019 had been previously circulated.

It was resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting be received and approved, subject to the following amendment:

Minute 132 – UTL to read ULT.

142. Matters Arising:

a) ULT Pay Policy (Minute 128(b) refers)

The chief executive officer reported that the Finance committee had given its approval to the Pay policy, subject to a number of amendments which had been made. The policy had subsequently been presented to headteachers who were happy with it. The unions had made a number of recommendations regarding the policy.

It was resolved –

That the Pay policy be approved and recommendations of the unions would be taken into account when the policy was next reviewed.

b) Diocese CIF Bid Contribution (Minute 129 refers)

The chair reported that a request had been made to the Lichfield Diocese to fund the required 10% contribution towards any successful bid for ULT church schools. The request had not been approved. Discussion followed and reference was also made to the decision of the Diocese not to support the ULT bid for sponsorship of the new school to be built in Uttoxeter. It was felt that a key factor in this decision was schools not buying into the Diocese service level agreement for SIAMS support and ongoing issues around the shared building by Rycroft CE Middle and Dove First Schools. The chief executive office further reported that the Diocese had since offered a service level agreement to cover all ULT church schools.

It was resolved –

- i) That trustees note with disappointment the response from the Lichfield diocese but that trustees also make clear that all ULT schools would continue to be treated equally.
- ii) That trustees note that other providers could also help schools preserve the Christian ethos and support the SIAMS and that the chair and chief executive officer be requested to discuss the matter further with headteachers before taking a decision on a service level agreement.

c) External Governance Reviews (Minute 130 refers)

The chief executive officer circulated governance action plans for all 7 ULT schools to address issues raised during the recent external governance reviews. All schools were working together to ensure a consistent approach to the action plans. The chief executive officer further reported that, in general, the biggest challenge for all local governing boards was around school performance.

Discussion followed and consideration was given by trustees to their role in ensuring that each local governing board was fulfilling its role and delegated responsibilities. A number of ideas were put forward to ensure that trustees had a greater knowledge and understanding of actions taken by the local governing boards. This could include attendance at governing board meetings and trustees being linked to individual governing boards.

It was resolved –

- i) That the governance action plans be received and noted but that trustees would look for evidence to show that agreed actions had proved effective.

- ii) That there should be a standard agenda for meetings of local governing boards and that the minutes of all meetings should be forwarded to the chair of trustees and the chief executive officer.
- iii) That the chair and chief executive officer should give consideration to the linking of individual trustees to a local governing board and to provide an opportunity for them to attend meetings.
- iv) That the ULT School Improvement model be updated to reflect the roles and responsibilities of local governing boards to bring about improved school performance and that the chief executive officer be requested to remind headteachers that they each had a collective responsibility to support all ULT schools as required, which was key to the top slice funding being set at only 2 ½%.

d) ULT Vision and Values (Minute 132 refers)

The chief executive officer circulated an updated Vision and Values document and reported that it had been revised to take account the views of headteachers. Discussion followed and consideration given to the name 'Uttoxeter Learning Trust' given that schools from a wider geographical area were being invited to join the ULT. Trustees also considered the need to ensure that the development of the ULT incorporated all phases of education and not just a focus on a 3 tier system.

It was resolved –

- i) That the chief executive officer be requested to email a copy of the Vision and Values document to all trustees to enable them to submit views which could also then be included in the free school presumption bid.
- ii) That trustees agree to retain the name Uttoxeter Learning Trust to support member schools across all education phases rather than just 3 tier.

e) Safeguarding – DSL Meeting (Minute 133(d) refers)

Mrs Bennett reported that she had attended the recent meeting of designated safeguarding leads and that although only five had attended it had proved to be a useful meeting. Discussion took place and trustees considered the importance of all being aware of the guidance around keeping children safe in schools.

It was resolved –

- i) That Mrs Bennett be thanked for attending the recent meeting of designated safeguarding leads and for reporting back on discussions taken place.
- ii) That the minutes of the meeting should be sent to all headteachers and designated safeguarding leads with a reminder that they should all attend the next meeting.
- iii) That the chief executive officer be requested to send the link for trustees to access the Keeping Children Safe in Schools guidance and that trustees should acknowledge that they have read it.

143. Trustee Self-Review and External Review:

The chair referred to a number of documents to support MATs in undertaking a self-review and referred in particular to the DfE guidance document 'MAT Development programme 2018'. The chair further reported that the Ofsted document 'Summary of Evaluations of MATs would be useful to read before undertaking any self-review.

Consideration was also given to the need for an external review of the ULT but trustees felt that such a review should be undertaken by an organisation with a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of an effective MAT.

It was resolved –

- i) That trustees agree to undertake a self-review and that the chair and chief executive officer should circulate the list of key questions taken from the DfE guidance document to help trustees prepare.
- ii) That thoughts on a suitable organisation to undertake an external review of the ULT should be given to the chair.

144. ULT Vision and Values:

The chair reminded trustees that the UTL had originally been established with a particular focus on schools in Uttoxeter and the surrounding area. However, the ULT was now looking to expand and schools from other areas were being encouraged to join. As such, it was necessary for the originally identified vision and values of the ULT to be revised. Discussion followed and it was felt that a small working party should be established to determine a revised vision and new set of values.

It was resolved –

- i) That the working party should comprise trustees, local governors and headteachers and that the chief executive officer be requested to make the necessary arrangements.
- ii) That trustees accept, with thanks, the offer from Mrs Bennett and Rev Sherwin to represent the Trustees' Board on the working party.

145. Chief Executive Officer Report:

The chief executive officer presented her report on the work of the ULT, a copy of which had been previously circulated. Discussion followed with particular reference to the following matters:

- a) Headteacher Professional Board (HPB) Meetings
Headteachers continue to discuss pupil transition between schools to ensure that it is as smooth as possible. They are looking at what more can be done to support pupils and, in particular, the more vulnerable pupils. Trustees would be kept updated on any changes agreed to further improve pupil transition.
- b) Regional Schools Commission (RSC)
The chair of trustees and the chief executive officer referred to their recent meeting with the RSC, also attended by the headteacher of Thomas Alleyne's High School, and all

had considered it to be a very positive meeting. It had been an opportunity to outline everything happening across the ULT whilst also challenging the level of funding and likely impact of the change of admission arrangements at JCB academy. They were pleased to further report that the RSC had acknowledge the strengths of the ULT.

c) Free School Presumption Process

The chief executive officer reported that, following discussions with the Regional Schools Commission, confirmation had been received that the ULT was an approved sponsor. As such, work had commenced in preparing a bid to sponsor the new school on land to the west of Uttoxeter. The chief executive officer acknowledged the support being given by the headteachers of All Saints and Hutchinson Memorial Schools, and chair of trustees, in completing the required free school presumption process application form. Everything was on track for the application to be submitted before the deadline of 12 April 2019.

d) ULT Pupil Choir

The chief executive officer was pleased to report that a choir featuring ULT pupils had been invited to perform at Uttoxeter races on 4 May 2019 and trustees were invited to attend, if able.

It was resolved –

- i) That the chief executive officer be thanked for her informative report and that it be received.
- ii) That trustees fully support the bid to be submitted for sponsorship of the new school and placed on record their thanks to the two headteachers and chair of trustees for their help given to the chief executive officer in preparing the application form.

146. Education Committee Report:

Trustees had been previously circulated with minutes of a meeting of the Education committee held on 29 January 2019. Trustees also noted that a meeting of the Education committee had recently been held on 19 March 2019. The committee chair outlined the issues that had been considered at both meetings.

He reported that particular focus continued to be given to school performance and that it was pleasing to note that school data was now being based onFFT20 targets. The chair of trustees further reported that he had met with the headteacher of Thomas Alleyne's High School to discuss post-16 outcomes but that the planned meeting with middle school headteachers had been postponed. The meeting was, however, to be re-arranged.

It was resolved –

That the minutes of the Education committee meeting held on 29 January 2019 be received and accepted and that the report of the meeting held on 19 March 2019 be received and noted.

147. Finance Committee Report:

Trustees had been previously circulated with minutes of a meeting of the Finance committee held on 31 January 2019. Trustees also noted that a meeting of the Finance committee had recently been held on 28 March 2019.

The chief executive officer reported that the external auditor had been invited to attend the last meeting but, due to the absence of the committee chair, an invitation to attend the meeting to be held in May had been accepted. Issues discussed at the last meeting included approval of the Investment policy and a request for Insight HR to obtain benchmarking information around redundancy schemes offered by different local authorities. This information would be included in the business case to be submitted.

The chief executive officer further reported that discussions continued with Woodhouse Middle School, Biddulph about joining the ULT initially as an associate member. Trustees were informed that this school had changed its redundancy policy since becoming an academy. Discussion followed and trustees considered the implications of schools joining the ULT with their own policies already in place.

It was resolved –

- i) That the minutes of the Finance committee meeting held on 31 January 2019 be received and accepted and that the report of the meeting held on 28 March 2019 be received and noted.
- ii) That trustees would take into account policies of those schools to join the trust in the future but that there would be a need for transition from such policies to those of the ULT.

148. ULT Business Case Consultation:

See Confidential Appendix (attached).

149. Recruitment Process for the Appointment of CEO:

The chair of trustees reported that the recruitment process for the appointment of a new chief executive officer was now underway. The post had been advertised to offer it on a full-time contract but with some flexibility if necessary. A copy of the appointment pack had previously been sent to trustees together with details of the proposed recruitment timeline. Trustees were reminded that a short listing meeting was to be held on 17 April with interviews to be held on Monday, 29 April 2019. Headteachers and chairs of governors would have an opportunity to meet with candidates on the interview day.

It was resolved –

That the update on the chief executive officer recruitment process be noted.

150. Other Business:

a) Meeting Papers

Trustees referred to a number of documents distributed at the meeting and requested the chief executive officer to send further copies by email for ease of storage.

It was resolved –

That, wherever possible, all meeting papers should be circulated to trustees by email in advance of any meeting.

b) Trustee Email Addresses

Discussion took place regarding the circulation of ULT papers to trustees via their personal email addresses and the implications of this through GDPR.

It was resolved –

That consideration be given to establishing ULT email addresses for trustees and that this matter be included on the agenda of the next meeting for further discussion.

c) Pay Award for Administrative Staff

The chair of the finance committee referred to national guidance around the pay award for administrative staff, including those employed by schools, and reported that there were two options as to how a pay increase could be awarded. Either was acceptable although whichever one was agreed it must be applied consistently across the whole of an organisation. As such, all schools in the ULT must follow the same practice in awarding a pay increase to their administrative staff. The chair of the finance committee further reported that of the two options offered, one would benefit those currently paid on a lower scale and the other would benefit currently paid on a higher scale. Discussion followed it was agreed to seek the views of the chief finance officer on the implications of either option.

It was resolved –

- i) That the chair of the finance committee be requested to send the pay award guidance document to the chief finance officer and that his views be sought for further discussion at the next meeting.
- ii) That of the two possible options for awarding a pay increase to administrative staff, trustees agree in principle to the option that favours staff currently paid at the lower scale.

151. Date of Next Meeting:

It was resolved –

That the next meeting of the Trustees' Board be held in Ryecroft CE Middle School on Wednesday, 15 May 2019 at 6.00pm.

Signed.....

Date.....

