

**Uttoxeter Learning Trust
Trustees' Board**

Minutes of a meeting of the Trustees' Board held in Thomas Alleyne's High School, Uttoxeter, on Wednesday, 18 October 2018 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, Rev M Sherwin,
Mr T Sutcliffe.

Also Present:

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) – Mrs A Tapp
Clerk to the Uttoxeter learning Trust (ULT) – Mr R Sheldon

Apology:

An apology for absence was received from Mr L Trigg (Trustee)

100. Declarations of Interest:

Declarations of interest were given from Mr S Slater (DfE consultant – Minute 111) and Rev M Sherwin (chair of governor at St Mary's CE First School, Uttoxeter – Minute 105 (g)).

101. Election of Chair:

It was resolved –

That Mr S Slater be elected as chair of the ULT Trust Board until the first meeting of the autumn term 2019 and that trustees also place on record their thanks to him for all of his hard work and commitment to ensure the continued development of the ULT.

102. Election of Vice-Chair:

It was resolved –

That Mrs P Livesey be elected as vice-chair of the ULT trust Board until the first meeting of the autumn term 2019.

103. Chair – Power to Act:

It was resolved –

That the chair be authorised to act on behalf of the Trust Board on urgent or minor matters that arise between meetings.

104. Trustees' Board Minutes:

Minutes of a meeting of the Trustees' Board held on Wednesday, 11 July 2018 had been previously circulated.

It was resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting be received and approved.

105. Matters Arising:

a) Governance Review (Minute 92(b) refers)

The CEO reported that the governance review of Ryecroft Middle School had recently been completed and the report received. Governance reviews at four other schools were currently being undertaken and it was anticipated that the review of all school governing bodies would be completed before the end of the autumn term.

It was resolved –

- i) That the CEO be requested to circulate copies of the completed report following the governance review at Ryecroft middle School and to circulate all other reports once received.
- ii) That trustees note the need for an appropriate action plan to be determined on completion of all governance reviews.

b) CIF Bids (Minute 92(d) refers)

The CEO reported that schools continued to review their CIF bids and were working with Entrust to identify appropriate bids to be submitted.

c) Meeting with Local MP (Minute 92(e) refers)

The CEO reported that a written response to the questions submitted for the meeting that had been cancelled was still awaited. However, an assurance had been given that a response would shortly be sent.

d) Marketing (Minute 92(f) refers)

The CEO reported that a marketing committee was now meeting and that Mrs Wilbraham-Jones, headteacher of Windsor Park Middle School, was working with a company with a view to setting up a website aimed at raising the profile of the Uttoxeter Learning Trust.

The chair reported that he had also discussed this matter with the Vice-Chancellor of Staffordshire University to see if students could also offer support with a website.

It was resolved –

That trustees welcome the work being done by the marketing committee but before final decisions are taken regarding the website, the CEO be requested to discuss the matter further with Staffordshire University.

e) Pupil Admissions (Minute 93(b) refers)

The CEO reported that at the appeals hearing none of the appeals for admission to Oldfields Hall Middle School had been upheld. The outcome had been in the best interests of both Oldfields Hall and Windsor Park Middle Schools.

f) Safeguarding Reviews (Minute 93(d) refers)

The CEO reported that all 7 schools were to have a safeguarding audit undertaken by Staffordshire's Safeguarding lead. Five of the audit reviews had been completed with others to be completed shortly. Although formal reports were still to be received for the completed reviews, the schools had begun to work on identified actions and had also agreed to use a common format in determining the appropriate action plan.

Trustees also noted that, as previously reported, the safeguarding review commissioned for Thomas Alleyne's High School had been completed. Details of how the review had been conducted were circulated and trustees noted that the review details had been of use to all schools. The CEO further reported that Thomas Alleyne's had taken appropriate actions to improve any recommended safeguarding practice.

It was resolved –

That the update on school safeguarding audits be noted and that trustees welcome schools working together to determine appropriate action plans.

g) Associate Membership (Minute 81 refers)

(Rev Sherwin declared an interest during discussion of this item).

The CEO was pleased to report that Richard Clarke First School, Abbots Bromley, had agreed to join the ULT as an associate member initially for a twelve month period, but with a view to becoming a full member after that time. The school hoped to join from April 2019. As a result, the headteacher had been invited to attend meetings of the Headteacher Professional Board and the chair of governors invited to attend meetings of the School Representation Board with immediate effect.

The CEO further reported that legal advice was currently being sought to help finalise the formal agreement for the associate membership.

The chair also referred to a recent meeting held with the governing body of St Mary's CE First School, Uttoxeter, to invite the school to become an associate member. A decision was still awaited but the chair reported that due diligence would be necessary should a request be received from the school to become an associate member.

It was resolved –

That trustees formally approve Richard Clarke First School as associate members of the ULT and await the decision from St Mary's CE First School.

h) School Development Plans (Minute 96 refers)

Copies of the School Development Plan Overview 2018/19 for each of the 7 schools had been previously circulated. Discussion followed and trustees noted that school performance had been discussed in detail at the recent meeting of the Education committee. Two key areas in particular had been identified – middle school performance and post-16 outcomes – and external support was to be sought to help identify appropriate intervention strategies to bring about improvement.

When looking at the content of each overview trustees noted that all made reference to children's mental health. Trustees agreed that this was a priority for all schools. The role of an educational psychologist in supporting this was also discussed and the CEO was requested to pursue this further.

Finally, trustees discussed the format of the school development plan overview and recognised that the detail was in each individual school action plan. They were of the view, however, that priorities outlined in the school development plan overview should be measurable and also have identified success criteria.

It was resolved –

- i) That trustees welcome the common format used by schools for the Development Plan Overview but request the CEO to discuss this further with headteachers with a view to bringing about further improvement to both the format and content.
- ii) That the CEO be requested to work with headteachers to investigate options around the appointment of a centrally based Educational Psychologist, to support children's mental health in particular

106. 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 and School Representation Board

Both boards continued to meet on a regular basis and trustees noted the many different areas of discussion to ensure the continued development of the ULT.

b) Health and Safety Audits

The CEO reported that all schools receive health and safety advice and support from Entrust and that all schools were currently due an external audit. A current H&S level was given for each school and trustees noted that only one school (Windsor Park Middle) was graded at the highest level 5.

Reference was made to a recent catering health and safety incident at Oldfields Hall Middle School and the CEO confirmed that all necessary action had been taken by the school in response to the incident.

It was resolved –

That the CEO be requested to remind all headteachers that health and safety must be a priority for their school and that trustees expect them all to be performing well and graded at least level 4.

c) Finance Audits

The CEO reported that all schools had undergone an internal finance audit and that the detail of each audit would be discussed at the next meeting of the Finance committee to ensure that all actions are addressed efficiently and accurately.

The CEO further reported that the current external auditors (Moore Stephens) had sold part of their business to Mitten Clarke, and who would now be undertaking this year's external audit.

It was resolved –

That trustees agree to continue with the services of Mitten Clarke to ensure that this year's audit was completed in accordance with agreed timeframes but that a review would be undertaken before the start of the next financial year.

d) CEO Split Role-Working

The CEO circulated a report showing views expressed by the leadership team (chair of governors, deputy headteacher, senior leader) at Picknalls First School in respect of her split role-working as both chief executive officer and headteacher. Trustees were pleased to note the positive comments expressed. The CEO further reported that the arrangements that had been put in place had helped to ensure better quality of time to fulfil both roles.

It was resolved –

That based on the positive views expressed by the leadership team at Picknalls First School it was agreed that the current arrangements for the CEO split role-working should continue.

107. CEO Performance Management Targets:

A copy of the provisional CEO performance management targets had been previously circulated and the chair reported that they had been agreed following discussions between himself and the CEO. Trustees were asked if they considered the targets to be appropriate. Discussion followed with particular reference to the target on improving progress and attainment.

The chair further reported that it would be necessary to establish a small group to undertake the performance management review.

It was resolved –

- i) That the performance management targets be approved subject to an amendment to the inclusion of closing the gap between disadvantaged and other pupils within the target to improve progress and attainment.
- ii) That the performance management review be undertaken by Mr Slater, Mrs Bell and Mr Sutcliffe.

108. Education Committee Report:

Trustees noted that a meeting of the Education committee had recently been held on 2 October 2018 and the chair of the committee briefly referred to the issues considered. The meeting had included a presentation by Mrs Rudge, headteacher of Thomas Alleyne's High School, with regard to GCSE and A level data. With regard to GCSE results the progress measures had again been positive but the key issues for improvement had been identified as English and the gap between the performance of disadvantaged students compared to other students. Post-16 outcomes had been disappointing and the chair of the Trust Board reported that he had met with Mrs Rudge to discuss possible strategies to help bring about the required improvement.

The performance of middle schools had also been discussed at the meeting and a number of possible strategies identified to help bring about the required improvement. This included the possible use of outstanding middle school practitioners to carry out external reviews.

It was resolved –

That the report on the recent meeting of the Education committee be noted and that trustees fully support identified strategies to help bring about the required improvements.

109. Finance Committee Report:

Trustees had been previously circulated with minutes of a meeting of the Finance committee held on 5 July 2018. Trustees were informed that a meeting of the Finance committee due to have been held on 4 October 2018 had been postponed and re-arranged for 25 October. This meeting would focus in particular on the budget for Oldfields Hall Middle School and discussions with Insight HR regarding possible redundancy options.

It was resolved –

- i) That the minutes of the Finance committee meeting held on 5 July 2018 be received and accepted.
- ii) That Trustees note with interest the planned discussions for the meeting of the Finance committee to be held on 25 October 2018.

110. Letter from ESFA to CEO's in Multi-Academy Trusts:

Trustees had been previously circulated with a copy a letter sent from the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to the chief executive officers of all multi-academy trusts to remind them of the need to develop and maintain excellent and effective financial management. All chairs of Trust Boards had also been copied into the letter.

Discussion followed and trustees were assured that the ULT finances continued to be managed efficiently and effectively by the chief executive officer and chief finance officer in accordance with financial regulations. Trustees also discussed the role of governing bodies with regard to both school and financial management. In doing so, they also recognised the importance of knowing the governors and to also ensure that they complied with all financial regulations.

It was resolved –

- i) That trustees note the roles undertaken by the chief executive officer and chief finance officer with regard to efficient and effective financial management but that the Finance committee should continue to monitor and review as necessary.
- ii) That in order to get to know governors better, the CEO be requested to ask all headteachers to arrange for their governors to write a brief pen portrait of themselves, to be included on the school's governor page.
- iii) That the CEO be requested to contact the ESFA to seek advice on the legitimacy of a governor being able to undertake paid work at any of the schools in the ULT.

111. School Funding Letters:

Trustees had been previously circulated with various letters relating to the funding of schools and the support of trustees was sought in sending letters to all parents in support of a campaign being undertaken by professional associations and other organisations. The letters also included one sent to the Minister of State for School Standards expressing concerns regarding the national funding formula. Trustees were reminded that discussions

had been held at previous meetings regarding the funding formula which disadvantaged schools in a three tier system and concerns had been recorded.

The chair reported that his views had previously been sought with regard to sending the letters to parents but he had made it clear that this must be a decision for the Trust Board.

It was resolved –

- i) That trustees do not feel it appropriate to send letters to parents which were political and did not always reflect the true facts.
- ii) That trustees recognise and accept the valid concerns around the national funding formula and fully support the letter that had been sent to the Minister of State for School Standards.
- iii) That the chair, on behalf of the ULT, also be requested to send a similar letter to express concerns with regard to the national funding formula.

112. Other Business:

a) HR Central Based Role

The CEO reported that a request had been made by Thomas Alleyne's High School for the appointment of a central based HR member of staff to work across all schools in the ULT in providing support for many aspects of HR. The post would be advertised at Grade 8 and, with trustee approval, could be funded centrally or from individual school budgets.

It was resolved –

- i) That the CEO be requested to explore this HR appointment further with all headteachers and to seek their views on the necessity for such a post and, if it went ahead, their willingness to contribute towards the cost.
 - ii) That this matter be considered further by the Finance committee, taking account of headteacher views.
- b) Pay Uplifts

The CEO referred to the 2018 School Teacher's Pay and Conditions document and guidance around the pay award for teachers. The guidance document had suggested the following:

- 3.5% uplift to the main pay range
- 2% uplift to the upper pay range
- 1.5% uplift to the leadership pay ranges

The CEO further reported that the suggested pay uplifts should be awarded as a cost of living increase and separate from any progression through a pay range that may be applicable based on performance.

It was resolved –

- i) That trustees approve the pay uplifts as recommended in the 2018 School Teachers' Pay and Conditions document and outlined above.

ii) That the Finance committee be requested to look at the longer term funding implications for the schools in the ULT as a result of the approved pay uplifts.

c) Role of Trustees

The chair wished to place on record his thanks to all trustees for all of the work they continued to do on behalf of the ULT.

113. Date of Next Meeting:

It was resolved –

That the next meeting of the Trustees' Board be held in Thomas Alleyne's High School on Wednesday, 5 December 2018 at 6.00pm.

Signed.....

Date.....