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DE CURCI TRUST

Meeting of the Board of Trustees

9th May 2017, 5.30 – 8pm

Present:

Trustees: Alan Cufley (AC), Derek Good (DG) Chair, Lucy Sinnott (LS), Sara Spivey (SS), Tessa Webber (TW), Lucy Wilby (LW)

In attendance: Marion Hallsworth (MH) Interim Company Secretary/Clerk, Ros Cannell (RC) Interim Financial Co-ordinator

1. Apologies were accepted from: Chris Batstone (CB), Anders Bohea (AB), and Sharon Brueton (SB).

2. There were no declarations of interest other than those already recorded.
Quoracy was confirmed.

Any Other Business: LW asked for 'School Business Manager' (Solent) to be added. It was agreed this should be taken under item 10, Appointments.

3. The minutes of the last meeting (20th March 2017)

Page 2, the drainage problem was with Solent Junior School (SJS) only. Solent Infant School (SIS) did not have this problem. Page 3, the report on the skills survey and training has been deferred as SB could not attend this meeting. Page 4, the Members' AGM will be held in July. The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.

4. Code of Conduct

It is important that Members and Trustees understand their duties and responsibilities and signing a code of conduct would help to ensure the core functions are clear and accepted. The accompanying appendices will contain essential information such as the Articles, Nolan's Seven Principles of Public Life, the Governance Handbook and the Trust's Schemes of Governance and Delegation. The board felt the phrase, 'regularly attend' needed clarification.

ACTION: MH TO INSERT A REFERENCE TO THE TRUST HAVING THE RIGHT TO USE THE POWERS SET OUT IN THE ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION TO DEAL WITH NON ATTENDANCE.

The draft was approved subject to this change.

The code will be modified by MH to make it applicable to Local Governors.

5. Members and Trustees have received The De Curci Trust's Articles of Association.

LW gave an update on the Tenancy- at- will issue at SJS. PCC has asked Hampshire County Council (HCC) to agree to a transfer of the land (which has been used for Education) behind 231 Havant Road. Negotiations between PCC and HCC are ongoing. VWV will chase these and convey their outcome. PCC has asked if the Trust would you like this land registered under its own title or amalgamated with the title of SJS.

Trustees unanimously agreed that the land should be amalgamated with the title of Solent Junior School and become part of the overall lease agreement.

6. Condition reports

Condition surveys for the three schools have been completed and summary reports were sent to Trustees for noting. There were no unexpected items in the reports and the main issues flagged for SJS were roofs and tiling and for Springfield they were roofs and windows.

SS gave an update on the situation relating to proposed Legionella work at Springfield issued by the Council. The school did itself previously pay for urgent work on this and it continues to ensure essential pipe flushing work is carried out to ensure that risk is low.

SS and AC met with colleagues from PCC last week but were disappointed not to receive an updated report on the level of risk and no detailed information on the proposed work, such as details on timescale, the number of professionals/contractors that would be required or the sequence rationale for the programme of works. SS stated that the safety of the school community was of paramount importance. SS has started researching private contractors who maybe able to advise on this work independently.

After discussion Trustees agreed SS should obtain advice and quotations from private companies whilst continuing to negotiate with PCC.

TW asked if grants from DfE were available to help pay for such work.

SS said an application could be made to the Academies Condition Improvement Fund. The date for registering an interest is likely to be in November, with a date in December for submission.

DG said it was necessary to obtain an accurate assessment of the risk in order to be able to make an informed decision on the appropriate action. Meanwhile the Trust will continue work to quantify and address the risk.

ACTION: SS TO CONTINUE TO CONSULT THE HEALTH AND SAFETY WEBSITE AND TO OBTAIN QUOTATIONS FOR THE WORK.

PCC had sought to delay the start date for converting Springfield's pool and are now addressing the need for changing rooms. The school is disappointed that the original date of commencement (June) has not been met by the Council as it presents significant logistical challenges to the safe operations of the school when work occurs in term time.

LW gave an update on the issue with drains that had affected SJS. No full camera survey was ever done by PCC as it was deemed too expensive: camera work was focussed on the drain run affected. The problem has now been fixed and preventative measures put in place.

LGBs will discuss site issues, such as condition surveys, and make recommendations that will come to the Board of Trustees for decision.

ACTION: MH TO REQUEST RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE BOARD VIA THE CHAIRS OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEES

7. Draft Risk Register

This document has been created using a template from the DfE. Trustees examined the document and considered its suitability and if it covered all risks. Trustees felt it to be an appropriate and comprehensive document. SS mooted teacher recruitment (2.6) as a possible increased risk, given the problems being experienced by schools nationally. Trustees discussed current risks including this along with sections 1.4, 3.2 and 4.1, 4.6.

After discussion the following was agreed:

- LW, SS, RC to co-ordinate completion of risk registers
- A risk register should be personalised for each school and sent to LGB Chairs
- Each LGB should review it and plan appropriate action
- Anything of high risk should be highlighted for Trustees' consideration and action, as appropriate

8. Schemes of Financial Limits and Delegation

These had been discussed at a previous meeting and trustees approved the broad allocation of responsibilities. There was a query concerning BACS which RC will review and correct.

ACTION: RC WILL REVIEW AND CORRECT THE SCHEDULES AND FORWARD TO LW AND SS TO BRING TO THE NEXT MEETING

Trustees took note of key financial dates/deadlines.

9. Draft budget summaries

Draft budget summaries and medium term projections for all three schools were discussed. The schools' positions are similar. Currently there exist an annual deficit, but each school holds some cumulative surplus. However, the latter might well be needed to address risks and capital project shortfalls.

TW asked if part of the surplus could be used now to create a Maths role across the MAT.

SS said several more established MATs have such cross MAT roles and it is something The De Curci Trust should consider developing in the future.

ACTION: ALL THREE SCHOOLS TO SUBMIT A DEFICIT REDUCTION PLAN TO THE NEXT MEETING.

ACTION: LS TO PREPARE A TRUST BUDGET REPORT FOR DG TO PRESENT TO MEMBERS AT THEIR MEETING IN JULY

ACTION: RC WILL PREPARE A REPORT ON CONVERSION COSTS AND SPENDING AND TAKE IT TO THE TRUST'S FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

10. Appointments

The following appointments were ratified:

M. Hallsworth - Company Secretary/Clerk (6 month interim post) from 1st April 2017

R. Cannell - Finance Co-ordinator (6 month interim post) from 1st May 2017

AC put forward the proposal by Solent's LGB that Tessa Webber be elected as Chair of the LGB. This was seconded by DG and trustees voted unanimously in favour of approval.

The Solent HR working group will meet on 13th June to agree an Executive Head Teacher job description. This will go to the Trust's HR committee and AC will bring it and a proposal on making it permanent to the next meeting.

A confidential item was then discussed by Trustees and recorded in a confidential minute.

12. Committee Terms of Reference (TOR)

ACTION: SB, SS AND MH TO REVISE THE EXISTING TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEES AT THE THREE SCHOOLS IN RELATION TO THE TRUST'S SCHEME OF GOVERNANCE (RESOURCES, BEHAVIOUR & SAFETY, CURRICULUM & STANDARDS).

The Trust delegates the appointment of governors to these committees to the LGBs.

ACTION: SB AND MH TO DEVELOP TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE TWO TRUST COMMITTEES

It is proposed that membership of the Trust committees is as follows:

Finance and Audit – Lucy Sinnott, Derek Good, Anders Bohea, Chris Batstone

Human Resources – Alan Cufley, Sharon Brueton, Tessa Webber, Lucy Sinnott

Sara Spivey and Lucy Wilby are ex-officio members of both committees.

13. School Improvement Quality Assurance

As the schools have decided to leave Challenge Partners for one year, a new form of independent verification is needed to provide an extra layer of quality assurance. SS proposed The De Curci Trust appoint individuals as Trust Improvement Partners.

ACTION: SS TO SUBMIT A WRITTEN PROPOSAL, INCLUDING FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS, TO THE NEXT HR MEETING.

14 Policy review schedule

A list of policies that Academies are required to have was considered and it was agreed that each one would be examined by a trustee and a recommendation made as to whether it should be reviewed at Trust or LGB level. Core policies must be reviewed within 12 months.

TW volunteered to look at policies on Whistle-blowing and Admissions and DG on a Health and Safety policy and both will bring recommendations to the next meeting.

DG proposed the formal adoption of the Portsmouth Manual of Personnel Practice as discussed as part of TUPE. This was seconded by AC and trustees voted unanimously in favour of approval.

15. Letter from Dominic Herrington to all Portsmouth MATs

Trustees noted the content of the letter. SS will reply on behalf of the Trust confirming The De Curci Trust's participation will continue.

16. HWB Financial Training

This will take place at 7pm on 14th June at Springfield School.

17. Next meeting

Wednesday 28th June 2017, 5.30pm at Solent Infant School.

Agenda items for 28th June 2017

Draft risk registers & high risk areas
Proposal for Trust Improvement Partners
Health & Safety policy
Whistle-blowing policy
Admissions Policy
Executive HT job description and proposal
Deficit reduction plans
Schemes of Financial Limits and Delegation
Training and skills audit results

Action points carried over from the meeting on 20th March

Skills audit and training

It was agreed that the results should be presented in three ways: Trustees, Members and Trustees/Members combined.

ACTION: OUSTANDING FORMS TO BE RETURNED TO SB ASAP. SB WILL ANALYSE RESULTS AND CIRCULATE THEM SO THAT A COURSE OF ACTION CAN BE DECIDED AT THE NEXT MEETING.

ACTION: ONCE ANALYSIS OF THE SKILLS AUDIT IS COMPLETED SB TO PUT FORWARD PROPOSALS FOR THE COMPOSITION OF THE FINANCE & AUDIT COMMITTEE AND THE HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE.

There was no other business and the meeting closed.

Signature of the Chair of Trustees, Derek Good:

Date:

The De Curci Trust, a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales with company number 10646541.

Registered office address: Springfield School Central Road, Drayton, Portsmouth, Hampshire, United Kingdom, PO6 1QY.