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**DE CURCI TRUST**

**Meeting of the Board of Trustees**

**5 February 2018, 5.30 – 8.00pm**

**Present:**

**Trustees:** Chris Batstone (CB), Sharon Brueton (SB), Alan Cufley (AC), Sara Spivey (SS), Tessa Webber (TW), Lucy Wilby (LW) Lucy Sinnott (LS)

**In attendance:** Nathan Waites Chief Financial Officer designate (NW),

1. **Apologies** were accepted from: Derek Good (DG) Marion Hallsworth (MH) Company Secretary

Not present: Anders Bohea (AB)

2. **Quoracy** was confirmed.

**Declarations of Interest.** There were no declarations of interest.

**AOB**

LS requested to include a brief update on the Internal Audit as an AOB item.

3. **Minutes of the last meeting.**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2017 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Vice Chair.

**Matters arising.**

LS had updated the annual accounts.

The strategy meeting has been arranged.

The rebranding is on the agenda.

Pensions: NW answered a query from HCC, which administers the Trust staff's pensions plan, about the Trust's Pensions Policy. HCC said it looks like a copy of the PCC policy and that we should have one of our own.

SB added that when basing our policies on someone else's we should credit who it is from but also have our own Trust brand on it.

**ACTION** SS suggested NW check with MH as she was working on all the Trust policies; SS believed this to have been done already.

SB said that all actions had been completed and there were no further matters arising.

**4. Trust Strategy**

SS reported on a meeting with the Kings Group which as a MAT had reached capacity but are interested in networking with other MATs which may prove beneficial in the future. There is a meeting planned with Mike Stoneman, SS and DG to discuss the future for the MAT and potential expansion. Academisation nationally has slowed down due to a shift in Government priorities and the fact schools who needed to convert have become academies while those who wanted to have now converted.

The focus is now on expanding existing MATs rather than creating any new ones but there is very little direction from either central or local government.

SS added that even the new UTC is being nudged to join a MAT.

QUESTION: Is it possible to have a list of the Portsmouth and Hampshire schools which have not yet converted as well as the Academy Trusts those which have converted become part of? AC said he would contact Mike Stoneman for a list of converted schools and the Trusts they are with.

NW said the information was available on the School Funding Spreadsheet

QUESTION: Can we also find out how the schools which have not converted feel about academisation and whether they are actively looking to convert?

LW said most schools were fairly open about it.

QUESTION: Can we have this information ready for the strategy meeting

**ACTION: NW and AC to provide this information for the Strategy meeting**

## 6. BUDGET UPDATE

NW presented Trustees with budget updates on all three schools as well as a merged view of the Trust's schools. All information has already been shared with the LGB of Solent Schools and Springfield. NW has been in post for five weeks and said he would like to get to the point where he is comfortable with the figures when he is reviewing them. Currently there are some differences between the approved Budget and the working forecasts and moving forward there would be more accurate phasing throughout the year

QUESTION: Is the software suitable for what we want?

NW said HCSS was a good system which other MATs are bringing in or using. The Kings Trust being one of them. He added that no system is exactly what you need but this uses standard codes and a format which makes for clearer understanding. He added that he has not yet been fully trained on the system and is currently learning what he needs to know so that the training will be most beneficial as he will know what questions to ask.

SS added that the three finance teams worked together to choose the operating system and had decided this was the best suited for the MAT's needs even though it was not perfect. If there is now an opportunity to work with them to refine it that would work well.

NW added there is an online format for making suggestions which he is making full use of and had a good response back. He hopes to be able to present something different to Trustees and Governors in the future which has more detailed information but only details that are needed.

He added that the main headlines in the budget were that in the Accumulative data the carry forward was higher than anticipated by £154,000. Some of this is down to the reviewing of the legionella risk at Springfield which saved £100,000 so the Trust will be better off than anticipated by the end of the year.

QUESTION: Having presented these to the three schools was there anything that came up which needed investment?

SS said the schools feel hesitant about investing until there is a more accurate picture of finances moving forward. At Springfield however one post which was being reviewed will no longer be at risk. Capital investment would still be the best way of getting some real money to spend on improving schools.

SB added that while this is the first academy year and the LGB are getting to grips with their own schools the Trustees need to get familiar with the whole picture.

QUESTION: Can we have a Budget for the Trust?

NW said at the moment there is not much to show except a couple of salaries.

QUESTION: Can we have something for the next meeting?

NW added that it was important to know how much money the Trust had moving forward so decisions on spending on joint projects such as branding could be made as well as covering costs of Governance, training, legal fees, audit and staff development.

SS and NW explained that many SLAs run out in August and the schools sign up to different levels of the same SLA (example grounds maintenance) adding that as a Trust we want to get the right cover for the right price.

It was also pointed out that it is not known how secure the council delivered services are as there is no money for School Improvement, but HR is expanding.

SB added that now was a good time to look at what is being offered and where else it can be sourced from so that we receive value for money.

NW said this is one of the things he is looking at and added that we are in a good position as we can look at the schools as a Trust.

## **6. Marketing**

SS updated the Trustees about her meeting with NW to discuss the website and how it was felt we could build our own. LW updated Trustees about the planned changes to the Solent Schools uniform and logo to incorporate both current school logos and unify the uniform from Year R to Year 6 including a change from jumpers to sweatshirts. The design concept will be decided by a competition for the logo.

To maintain Trust identity the font will connect the three schools and the next step is to look at website design. The Trustees were shown examples of some of the websites currently being used by schools and some mocked up pages for the Trust and the importance of updating images to keep the sites fresh and current although it was noted that few regular users browse the website they go there to obtain specific information.

SS said there was also the need for items such as lettered paper which are just from the Trust and the logo needs cleaning up.

It was suggested that the websites, logo change and uniform change as well as the other branding would be completed ready for September. The money needed would come from the Trust's budget but it was not felt this would be an excessive amount at a time when all three schools have budget deficit reduction plans in place.

Data protection was highlighted as needing consideration and would require a time limit on photographs used on the website and deletion policy.

SB said the best way to ensure this happened was to do a data dump every two years and start again.

**QUESTION:** Is there financial delegation for the Trust money?

SS said this was laid out in the approved Scheme of Financial Delegation for the Trust. This is reviewed annually and will next be looked at in the Summer to incorporate the appointment of NW.

## **7. Business Continuity**

NW shared the document he has created for Springfield which when complete can be rolled out for The Solent Schools and made school specific. The document was created from a PCC template but there did not seem to be a specific plan in place at PCC. NW also looked at the Business impact model from Norfolk CC and he has merged both documents to create the one shared with Trustees which had already been shared with SLT at Springfield. The key equipment to maintain business is broken down in order of priority which will be different at each school and certain protections and requirements are essential including data protection and safeguarding. There are also key questions to answer if faced with an emergency.

**QUESTION:** Is it worth putting down an ownership column for actions?

NW: That would be down to the Critical Incident Team who would create a Critical Incident Plan.

LW said that at some recent training Hampshire Fire Service spoke about emergencies and having grab bags at exits which included key information.

NW said a lot of information was now backed up off site digitally.

SS said what should not happen is that this document is created and then put on a shelf and left. Trustees needed to be asking questions to make sure it remains live.

QUESTION: What is your expectation of timescale for the completion of this?

NW What I hope is that having done this a lot of the ground work is done so early in the summer term.

## **8. LGB Committee Minutes**

### **Minutes of the Solent schools' LGB meeting November 28.**

TW reported on the LGB meeting although the minutes were not available at this time to Trustees. They would be uploaded to the Moodle once agreed and signed. The headteachers report took up a fair amount of the meeting including the progress toward the SIP targets.

### **Minutes of Springfield School's LGB meeting**

AC presented the minutes from the last meeting which included discussions on Retention and recruitment of staff particularly in core subjects and that although fully staffed the school was relying on Agency staff in some subjects. LW added that although it was not currently a problem in the Primary sector it would be interesting to see if this was still the same as vacancies arose at The Solent Schools. AC added that the Governors also discussed the ongoing issue with social media and parents not contacting the school if they have an issue but airing it on social media where it is spread fast and far. Pupils are also spoken about which is a safeguarding issue.

QUESTION: Are parents encouraged to come into school if they have a problem?

AC said he thought they were but people preferred the ease and speed of using social media to have their say.

## **8. Policy Approval**

Trustees looked at The Disciplinary Policy and Procedure, Grievance Policy and Capability Policy.

SS told Trustees that these policies were working well and so can just be taken forward with Disciplinary being delegated down to Heads of School and Deputies as good CPD where dismissals are not required.

**The policies were formally proposed and approved with a unanimous vote.**

## **10 Training**

SB reminded Trustees of the Safeguarding training on February 20<sup>th</sup> and that it would be good for everyone who could make it to be there. She added that there was still one outstanding Skills Audit and that once that was completed and the Safeguarding training done some feedback would help develop the Trust's next training focus.

QUESTION: Should we be keeping a record of training undertaken by Trustees

**ACTION: SB to have a look at some templates to record Trustee training**

## **10 CEO Appraisal**

SS left the room. AC briefed Trustees on the CEO appraisal and the fact she had met the targets set by the Trust. Her appraisal and subsequent pay increase was proposed by AC and seconded by SB. **The Board unanimously approved the proposal.**

SS rejoined the meeting.

**13. AOB was taken next**

LS briefed Trustees on the Internal Audit and the fact that David Brookes had issued a letter of engagement and didn't come back with any concerns.

Items for next meeting:

**ACTION POINT SUMMARY**

Signature of Chair:

Date: