

# THE DE CURCI TRUST

## Meeting of the Board of Trustees

19 March 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), Derek Good (DG) Chair.

**In attendance:** Nathan Waites Chief Financial Officer (NW), Marion Hallsworth (MH) Company Secretary

**1. Apologies:** none

**Not present:** Anders Bohea (AB)

**2. Quoracy** was confirmed.

**AOB:** Trustees noted SB recently attended the latest PCC's Governors' Forum meeting.

**Declarations of Interest:** there were no declarations of interest other than those already registered.

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

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 February 2018 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

**Matters arising:** none.

**4. School Performance.**

**Solent Schools**

In order to provide the Board with the most up-to-date information LW will send the report to Trustees after her meeting with Heads of School to finalise its revision.

**ACTION:** MH to send it to Trustees.

**Springfield School**

There have been no significant changes since the last report. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment remains good, as does pupil outcomes and overall effectiveness.

The introduction of the new GCSE grading system has made grade predictions less secure than in previous years. Extra support and revision sessions are in place. Teacher recruitment in key areas remains a challenge. Keeping a full roll has also become an issue to be monitored as a result of external competition such as the UTC.

**5. Budget update**

Trustees examined the 'Budget Summary Term 1 (Sep – Dec)' giving income and expenditure information for Springfield, Solent Junior, Solent Infant, Trust Central and Trust Consolidated. The Trust is £120,000 better off in terms of income and with a saving of £ 75,000 in terms of expenditure.

After the budget dashboards for all three schools had been sent to Trustees, NW received information from PCC on proposed pay increases for support staff. These proposals are being considered by Trade Unions. Any pay award will be backdated to April 2018.

Assuming these proposals will go through unchanged; NW plotted the figures into HCSS software and produced updated budget dashboards which he gave to Trustees. Trustees also

examined tables comparing the current working forecasts for the Trust Consolidated and each of the three schools, with ones including the PCC proposed support staff pay bandings and rises.

Trustees agreed unanimously that the Trust should not vary pay rates for support staff from those agreed with PCC; it was noted that pay rates must be consistent across all schools in the Trust

Trustees discussed possible ways of reducing budget deficits and agreed that if this pay award goes ahead the Trust will have to look for further savings elsewhere in the budget.

**ACTION:** This should be communicated to LGB Chairs and Chairs of Resources committees, along with information on the possible pay award for support staff.

NW gave a progress update on budget monitoring and demonstrated ways of interrogating the data. Budget dashboards for all three schools were discussed

**Question:** a Trustee queried the size of the projected in-year deficit for Solent School in relation to the school's size.

**Answer:** there are several experienced teachers nearing the top of their pay scales. Also the school has been operating over PAN and is now reducing back to PAN and this affects income. Budget deficit reduction is a standing item on the agenda of Solent Resources committee.

Noting that redundancy can be expensive, a Trustee suggested that if a situation arose where natural wastage was not an option, then Resources committees might consider possible redeployment across the Trust.

## **6. Re-branding/logo update**

The Solent schools have a competition for members of the school community and the Trust to design a new school logo. The deadline for submissions is the end March, with the aim of the new logo being in place for the beginning of September.

## **7. Strategy meeting**

The minutes from the meeting were approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

A varied and open discussion had taken place at the meeting. Research is continuing and a plan will be developed for consideration by the Board.

**ACTION:** DG will circulate to Trustees an outline of what questions should be asked and what information acquired for the completion of a PESTEL.

**The next Strategy meeting will be at Solent Infant school on 22<sup>nd</sup> May at 5pm.**

## **8. Committee reports**

Human Resources Minutes 26/02/18

AC drew attention to the sections of the minutes dealing with employee benefits. The Board agreed that all De Curci Trust employees should enjoy the same benefits. Recommendations will come to the Board when research into schemes is concluded.

**Question:** Are benefits included in job application packs?

**Answer:** They will be consolidated into a brochure and promoted more heavily.

Trustees agreed that the time and number of occasions teachers can have paid absence for interviews should be limited to 2 paid days in any academic year. Any further time requested would be unpaid.

**ACTION:** Schools to update their documentation to reflect this change in the Discretionary Absence policy.

## **Finance & Audit Minutes 12/03/18**

The meeting had been quorate for Finance matters but not for Audit items. The continued absence of Anders Bohea from meetings was noted and the Board asked the Chair to consult with him to find out if he has any problems that are causing his non-attendance that we might help with, or if he wishes to resign.

**ACTION:** DG to discuss attendance with Anders.

LS drew attention to the action point on page 3 of the minutes.

**ACTION:** Head Teachers and Chairs of LGB Resources Committees should work with local governors to review 3 year forecasts and budget deficit reduction plans

## **9. Internal Audit**

All Trustees have received a copy of the 'External auditor's supplementary programme of work. Testing of controls, transactions and systems for the period 1 September to 31 January 2018'.

This audit had a positive outcome and Finance staff were found to be coping well with the new systems. NW outlined the areas identified for some improvement namely, claiming VAT, accruals, and the Primary Heads' Fund. LW gave more information on the Primary Heads' Fund which is likely to move from Solent to another primary school.

## **10. General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Update**

Work is underway in preparation for the introduction on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018. School teams are aware of the impending legislation. There was a staff briefing at Springfield last week and there will be an INSET half-day dedicated to it later this week. Feedback and results from training sessions will inform the development of procedures and controls. Proposals will be brought to the Board on 14<sup>th</sup> May.

## **11. DCT Policy delegation**

Trustees agreed the policy schedule.

**ACTION:** MH to discuss the allocation of remaining policies with the chairs of Human Resources and Finance and Audit committees. Policy schedule to be circulated to Schools Clerk and Committee Chairs.

## **12. Policy approval/ratification**

**Contingency & Business Continuity Plan** As the agreed deadline for completion is early in the summer term. This was deferred until the next meeting.

Subject to a few minor amendments to job titles, CB proposed approval of the following:

- The De Curci Trust Scheme of Delegation
- Springfield School Scheme of Delegation
- Solent Junior School Scheme of Delegation
- Solent Infant School Scheme of Delegation

**The proposal was seconded by DG and all four were approved with a unanimous vote.**

CB proposed approval of the following:

- The De Curci Trust Schedule of Financial Limits
- Springfield School Schedule of Financial Limits
- Solent Junior School Schedule of Financial Limits
- Solent Infant School Schedule of Financial Limits

**The proposal was seconded by DG and they were approved with a unanimous vote.**

SS proposed approval of the Staff Absence Policy and was seconded by AC. **The Staff Absence policy and appendices were approved with a unanimous vote**

### 13. Training

Safeguarding training took place on February 20<sup>th</sup> and training on the Academies Financial Handbook is arranged for 26<sup>th</sup> April.

#### **If Trustees receive information on training they should forward it to SB**

A recent email concerning free training for Trusts was discussed and SB will send information on possible alternatives to DG and MH.

### 14. Summary reports from LGBs

#### **Minutes of the Solent schools' FLGB meeting 6<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

TW reported on the LGB meeting. The Safeguarding governor has resigned but there is a potential replacement with Safeguarding experience. A session on Holding School Leaders to Account was held on 20<sup>th</sup> February. Governors will be asked to complete the skills audit again in July.

#### **Minutes of Springfield School's FLGB meeting 8<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

AC presented the minutes from the last meeting. Springfield has two governor vacancies. A governors' skills audit has been completed and the results are being analysed. A House system for pupils and governors has been introduced successfully. Governors received the latest DfE guidance on Exclusions.

### 15. Trustees' Term of Office

Trustees were reminded of the dates their terms of office are due to end.

**ACTION:** LS to let MH know if she wishes to continue as a Trustee after 20<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

### 16. Items for the agenda for next meeting (14 May at Solent Junior School)

Data Protection & FOI Policy  
 Scheme of Delegation  
 Scheme of Governance  
 Budgets update (Standing item)  
 Contingency & Business Continuity Plan

There was no other business and the meeting closed.

#### ACTION POINT SUMMARY

Action	Person responsible	completed by
Send Solent school performance summary to Trustees	LW then MH	End of April
Trustees agreed that if the support staff pay award goes ahead the Trust will have to look for further savings elsewhere in the budget. This should be communicated to LGB Chairs and Chairs of Resources committees, along with information on the possible pay award for support staff.	AC and TW	Half -term

Circulate to Trustees an outline of what questions should be asked and what information acquired for the completion of a PESTLE.	DG	End of April
Schools to update their documentation to reflect the change in the Discretionary Absence policy that limits to 2 days (in any academic year) the time and number of occasions teachers can have paid absence for interviews	School Recruitment staff	End of March
Discuss attendance with Anders	DG	Next meeting
Work with local governors to review 3 year forecasts and budget deficit reduction plans	Head Teachers and Chairs of LGB Resources Committees	On going
Discuss the allocation of remaining policies	MH with chairs of Human Resources and Finance and Audit committees.	Next meeting
Inform MH about continuing as a Trustee after 20 <sup>th</sup> May 2018.	Lucy Sinnott	ASAP

Signature of Chair:

Date:

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