

THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST
Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Trustees
held at The Warren at 7pm on Tuesday 6th December 2022

Present:

Mr R Barlow, from minute 6
Mr A Blount
Ms W Cartwright (remotely)
Mr J Cliff, Chair
Mr R Taylor, Vice Chair, from minute 6
Mr D Terry

In attendance:

Mrs G Sesli, Acting CEO
Mrs C Sheehan, Acting CEO
Mrs V Bolton, COO
Miss K Crossley, Clerk

1. Apologies for absence

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Ms Barenbrug.
- 1.2 No apologies had been received from Mrs Brookman.

2. Declaration of pecuniary interests

- 2.2 None.

3. Trustee administration

- 3.1 Trustees noted the membership of the Board and the remaining terms of office.
- 3.2 The membership of Local Advisory Councils was noted. The revised terms of reference of the Local Advisory Councils were approved.
- 3.3 It was confirmed that all DBS checks were up to date.
- 3.4 There were no changes to Trustees' contact details.
- 3.5 Trustee details were up to date on the website and Get Information About Schools.

4. Trust Business

- 4.1 The skills audit would be carried over to the next meeting.
- 4.2 This minute was deemed to be confidential, see confidential minute 10.1.

5. Minutes of previous meeting

- 5.1 The minutes of the meeting of 15th September 2022 were approved by Trustees and signed by the Chair.
- 5.2 This minute was deemed to be confidential, see confidential minute 10.2.

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6.1 Executive report

6.1.1 This minute was deemed to be confidential, see confidential minute 10.3.

6.2 Update of consolidated plan

6.2.1 This minute was deemed to be confidential, see confidential minute 10.4.

6.3. Monthly management accounts to September 2022

6.3.1 There were no questions from Trustees on the management accounts to September 2022.

6.4 Approval of annual accounts to 31st August 2022 and review of audit findings report

- 6.4.1 Trustees were referred to the annual accounts for the year ended 31st August 2022 and the audit findings report. The Chair of FARCO provided commentary on the accounts, highlighting the recent focus on ensuring that restricted reserves were spent on cohorts during their time in school.
- 6.4.2 FARCO had approved the claw back of £46k of PE grant and tutoring funding to the DfE. The circumstances surrounding the claw back were discussed and measures would be put in place to prevent a recurrence. **CS/GS to action.**
- 6.4.3 The draft annual accounts to August 2022 had been reviewed in detail at the recent FARCO meeting. The Chair noted that no audit points had been raised in the audit findings report. A detailed discussion had been held on the revaluation of the Trust's land, with Trustees agreeing that no changes would be made. Therefore, building impairment would be reflected in the accounts.
- 6.4.4 The Committee had agreed that, in the interests of transparency, reference would be made to the resignation in April 2022 of the former CEO in the Trustee Report.
- 6.4.5 The Board approved the annual accounts to the end of August 2022. The Chair of FARCO thanked the Acting Joint CEO (CS) and the finance team for their work on the audit, acknowledging the impact of staff shortages on the audit.

6.5 Recommendation of appointment/reappointment of auditor

6.5.1 The Board recommended that Members approve the reappointment of UHY as auditors for 2022-23. It was agreed that Trustees would provide an annual report to Members going forward, covering issues such as quality of governance and reflecting on roles. **KC to diarise.**

6.6. CIF project recommendations

6.6.1 Trustees were referred to the paper on the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) bids, setting out the proposed applications, the value of the projects and possible contribution from the Trust in line with priorities. The bids had been discussed at the FARCO meeting in October 2022. Trustees noted the impact of the proposed Trust contributions, totalling £174k, on the financial KPIs and asked whether the contributions were affordable without impacting other plans. It was reported that careful consideration had been given to the bids and contributions, including taking into account the value of projects which would need to be

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funded by the Trust in the event of bids being unsuccessful. The CIF applications were approved.

6.7 Contract approvals and/or spend requests over £20,000:

- 6.7.1 Trustees were referred to the wording in the Executive Report on the replacement of two canopies at HPS which had been damaged in 2021/22. The cost of the new structures and the installation was £25k, to be funded by the Trust's insurers, with the Trust liable for the excess of £250. The Chair's action taken to approve the upfront spend, to be reimbursed by the insurer, was ratified.
- 6.7.2 Trustees were asked to ratify a request to approve the installation and contractual commitment to Voice over Internet (VoIP) at the four remaining schools which did not currently have access to the new telephony system, in line with the Digital Strategy. The request had been considered at the FARCO meeting in October 2022 in order to avoid delays to the project linked to timing of the next board meeting. Trustees were referred to a paper detailing 3 quotes, the rationale for the spend and the discussion at the FARCO meeting. The Board ratified the request for the work to be undertaken by iCS Communications as part of a 60-month contract at a total cost of £59,889.20.

7. Policies

7.1 Admission Policy 2024/25

- 7.1.1 The Acting Joint CEO (GS) had responded to a pre-meeting question from a Trustee confirming that the Trust Admissions Policy 2024/25 was in-line with the necessary guidance. The policy was approved.

7.2 Health and Safety Policy

- 7.2.1 The Health and Safety Policy was presented with only minor amendments. The policy was approved.

8. Trust Committee Business

8.1 HR Committee, 14th October 2022

- 8.1.1 The Chair of the HR Committee outlined that the Committee had moved towards working more strategically, with an executive-led approach.
- 8.1.2 The Committee had welcomed the discussion on the need to move away from annual auto-progression on the Upper Pay Scale and the mid points created in 2018. The Board agreed that this was the appropriate direction of travel.

8.2 FARCO meeting, 27th June 2022

- 8.2.1 The Chair of FARCO reported that, following consistently strong outcomes of internal audits, non-financial risks such as cyber security would be incorporated in internal scrutiny going forward, rather than continuing to repeat the same programme of internal audit.

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8.3 Achievement and Curriculum Committee, 14th July 2022

- 8.3.1 The Board enquired about the Y6 SATs results in 2021/22, with 58.4% of pupils meeting the expected standard. It was acknowledged that there was cause for concern and the bench-marking was challenging and robust internal and external auditing was required. Consideration would be given to setting aspirational targets, although it was acknowledged that this posed downside risks. There was particular concern relating to maths and it was explained that the Trust had invested in a new assessment scheme which would enable a better understanding of progress through scrutiny of data and benchmarking. A better understanding of progress would be gained as the year progressed.
- 8.3.2 Trustees asked whether the issues were trust wide and it was confirmed that this was the case, but less pronounced at HPS and MPS. The curriculum, Read, Write, Inc and the new maths assessment scheme would be key in increasing the number of pupils achieving the expected standard going forward.
- 8.3.3 It had been identified that further support would be put in place for senior leaders on how to manage challenging conversations and hold staff to account through the performance management and professional growth processes.
- 8.3.4 Trustees asked for an update on EDI and were advised that positive comments on the use of Voice 21 and Lyfta had been made at the recent Ofsted inspection at Leeson's Primary School.

9. AOB and date of next meeting

- 9.1 This minute was deemed to be confidential, see confidential minute 10.
- 9.2 The next meeting would be held on Thursday 9th February 2023 at 7pm at The Warren.
- 9.3 The meeting closed at 8:30 pm.

Signed:Date:.....
John Cliff, Chair of Trustee