

THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST
Final adopted minutes (incl confidential minutes) of a meeting of the Directors
held at St Mary Cray Primary Academy at 7.30pm on Thursday 5th July 2018

Present:

Mr C Lees (Chair)
Mrs J Brinkley (CEO)
Miss R Punter
Mrs C Cousins
Mr R Taylor
Mr J Cliff
Mrs L Falk (from minute 5.1)
Mr J Martin

In attendance:

Mrs C Sheehan, CFO
Mrs V Bolton, Trust Services Manager

Clerk:

Miss K Crossley

1. Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from D Okafor, I Raitt, B Simpson.
- 1.2 Directors were satisfied with the reasons given for absence and accepted the apologies.
- 1.3 The meeting was quorate.
- 1.4 Directors welcomed J Martin who had recently been appointed to the Board and would sit on the Achievement and Curriculum Committee. Introductions were made.

2. Declaration of Pecuniary Interests

- 2.1 No pecuniary interests were declared.

3. Board Business

3.1 To note changes to the Board and remaining terms of office

- 3.1.1 There were no changes to the Board.
- 3.1.2 The terms of office of all Directors were noted.

3.2 Approval of TSPT meeting schedule 2018/19

- 3.2.1 The Trust meeting schedule for 2018/19 (appendix 1) was approved by Directors.

4. Minutes of previous meeting

- 4.1 The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting of 21st May 2018 (appendices 2 and 3) were approved by Directors and signed by the Chair.
- 4.2 Directors were referred to the matters arising report (appendix 4) detailing actions which had been completed and the status of outstanding actions as follows:

4.2, 11.12.1 Dual-roll pupils

The monitoring of the safeguarding and progress of dual-roll pupil being educated off-site in alternative provision had been delegated to Local Committees. The Business Planner would be updated accordingly. **KC to action.**

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5. Chair's report

- 5.1 Directors were referred to the Chair's report (appendix 5) which referred to the desire to consolidate secure governance oversight procedures through Subject and School Link Director roles. The importance of such a structure from the perspective of succession planning was also noted. The Chair thanked Directors for agreeing to continue or take on roles as follows:

Subject Link Directors

| | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Safeguarding: | J Cliff |
| Teaching and learning: | B Simpson and J Martin |
| IT/GDPR | D Okafor and L Falk |
| Equalities: | R Punter |
| SEN: | Vacant |
| Premises/health and safety | C Cousins |

School Link Directors

| | |
|-------|-----------|
| CPS: | C Cousins |
| DRIS: | C Cousins |
| HPS: | B Simpson |
| LPS: | J Cliff |
| MPS: | J Martin |
| SMCPA | I Raitt |

- 5.2 Directors discussed the need for a standardised local governance model to ensure that local committees discharged their duties and the ways in which this could be achieved, for example by agreeing a set of expectations relating to monitoring areas such as school improvement, safeguarding, finance etc. Consideration would also be given to how to ensure the quality of the monitoring, such as using the good estate management tool recently released by the government as a framework for premises and health and safety monitoring. The Chair noted that LCs had been asked to prepare a strategy for governance within their own school. **CL to action.**
- 5.3 Directors approved the draft Plan for Governance (appendix 6).

6. Trust Development

6.1 CEO/EHT Report including:

6.1.1 Overview of key issues, incl progress towards targets

- 6.1.1.1 This minute was deemed to be confidential, see confidential minute 14.

6.1.2 Review any strategic/political developments

- 6.1.2.1 This matter had been discussed in minute 6.1.1.

6.1.3 Strategic development

- 6.1.3.1 There were no questions from Directors on the draft development plan 2018-21 (appendix 8). The plan was approved, subject to deletion of the word 'measured' under 'Expansion', point 1. The Chair intended to discuss the plan fortnightly with the CEO and would update the Board on progress. **JB to action.**

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6.1.4 Outcome of MAT Development Improvement Fund grant

6.1.4.1 This matter had been discussed in minute 6.1.1.

6.2 CFO Report

6.2.1 Set consolidated budgets for 2018/19

6.2.1.1 Directors were referred to the proposed school and Trust budgets (appendices 9-14). The Chair of FARCO reported that the budgets had been considered at the recent FARCO meeting and were recommended for approval by Directors. The following points were highlighted:

- A recommendation from SMCPA as to how to bridge the shortfall associated with the loss of the bulge class in 2021 would be brought to the next FARCO meeting.
- Falling revenue and increasing costs would be partially offset by increased use of Trust assets (eg from rental), but not sufficiently to bridge the gap.
- Pupil number assumptions had been adjusted following discussion at FARCO on the need for accurate forecasting of actual pupil numbers and to guard against a positive bias in pupil number forecasts.

6.2.1.2 A discussion followed on the difficulty of balancing on-going cost assumptions with exceptional items. A pertinent example of this was the recruitment budget: there was an implicit assumption that teachers recruited through agencies would remain in post, but the tight market indicated that it was increasingly difficult to class agency fees as exceptional. It was noted that there was no scope within the budgets to factor in placeholders and that decisions on exceptional items would need to be taken as and when they arose.

6.2.1.3 In response to a question as to planning for emergency repairs, such as to boiler or roofs, it was confirmed that a rolling premises programme was in place and would be overseen in the short-term through the Link Director for Premises and Health and Safety role, as discussed in minute 5.1. Preparations were underway for the next round of CIF bids for large capital projects; a new bid consultant had been retained and would visit all schools to identify subject of bids, with increased input from schools. A rolling plan would be developed for infrastructure planning, **VB to action**. Strategic planning approaches were beginning to be adopted in other areas, such as IT (see minute 6.3.2).

6.2.1.4 The budgets were approved by Directors.

6.2.1.5 Directors thanked the CFO and the Finance Manager for their work on the budgets.

6.2.2 HR update

6.2.2.1 This item was deemed to be confidential, see confidential minute 15.

6.3 Trust Services Manager Report

6.3.1 GDPR, incl DPO report on audit of Trust schools

6.3.1.1 The Committee was referred to the comments in the Trust Services Manager report (appendix 15) on the report from the Data Protection Officer (appendix 16). Directors asked about issues identified during the DPO visits to schools and were informed that any areas for improvement would be followed up with the schools. **VB to action**. A discussion

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followed on GDPR awareness more broadly, and the need for regular prompts to staff to lock computers, offices and the like when unattended; the DPO would provide the Trust with posters to raise the profile of GDPR in schools, and the IT team would set computers to auto-lock if unattended for 10 minutes. **VB to action.** In addition, the CFO and Trust Services Manager had visited schools to reinforce compliance with GDPR and finance and HR policies and procedures more generally, with a view to effecting a change in mindset. The sessions had been considered valuable, with questions from staff suggesting that they were considering procedures from a fresh perspective.

6.3.2 In response to questions from Directors, it was confirmed that there had been no data subject requests and one very minor data breach.

6.3.3 Directors present at the meeting signed Acceptable Use Agreements. The Clerk would ensure that forms were completed by all Directors. **KC to action.**

6.3.2 IT strategic plan

6.3.2.1 It was reported that the IT Strategic Working Party would meet on 16th July 2018 and an update would be provided at the next meeting. **VB to action.** The Working Party was being supported on a semi-consultancy basis by a Local Committee member with experience of IT strategy rollout in MATs.

6.3.3 Critical issues update

6.3.3.1 This item was deemed to be confidential. See confidential minute 14.3.

6.3.3.2 It was agreed that a column for mitigation would be added for all issues in future schedules of critical issues. **KC to action.**

6.3.4 Review compliance of Trust website

6.3.4.1 It was confirmed that the Trust Communications Officer had completed a review of the compliance and accuracy of the Trust website. The content of the website was fully compliant. Improvements would be made to the calendar function and the HR drop-down menu would be reviewed to ensure that information on vacancies was accurate and appealing to candidates, and included information on how the employee experience was being enhanced. **VB to action.**

6.3.4.2 It was confirmed that an audit point relating to the display of statutory governance information on the website related to a technical issue which had been addressed.

6.3.5 Equality report and action plan

6.3.5.1 Directors were referred to the draft Equality Policy (appendix 18), and considered how to quantify and monitor the objectives. It was suggested that actions and targets, such as conducting a staff survey, could be documented in equality action plans at school and Trust level, monitored and published annually. **VB to action.**

6.3.5.2 A discussion followed on how to define equality; it was noted that, for example, the difference in boys' and girls' writing constituted an outcome rather than an example of lack of equality, and that schools' action in response to the different outcomes would be to ensure equal access to the curriculum for both sexes. It was acknowledged that the equality objectives were yet not sufficiently developed to be assessed through KPIs, but that they were beginning to be measurable. It would be important to define equal treatment

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for all, such as making sure that there were opportunities for all to succeed by supporting different means of and access to learning.

6.3.5.3 The Equality Policy was approved, subject to the school equality action plans being reviewed, and population/completion of appendix 3 (equality action plan) at Trust level. **JB to action.** It was suggested there should be a focus on one objective every six months to avoid overwhelming staff with too much change at the same time as other major changes such as GDPR. **VB to action.**

7. Report from FARCO

7.1 Minutes of meeting of 3rd May 2018 and verbal report of meeting 25th June 2018

7.1.1 There were no question from Directors on the minutes of the FARCO meeting of 3rd May 2018 (appendix 19).

7.1.2 An update on the meeting of 25th June 2018 was provided as follows:

- Analysis of three-year budget school and Trust budget returns. Directors requested that in future these should be approved by directors before submission to the ESFA, as required by the new AFH.
- Consideration of internal audit report of May 2018, including an audit point relating to an unauthorised purchase, which had been the subject of an investigation and report by the Local Committee. It had been agreed that the next internal audit at the school in question would include a review of staff awareness and understanding of Trust policies and procedures. **VB to action.**
- The Committee would no longer consider ad-hoc spend requests which were not linked to the strategic plan and schools would be required to plan spend requests as part of the annual budgeting process.
- Discussion of KPIs, and the need to establish specific targets based on industry benchmarking
- The requirement in the Academies Financial Handbook 2018 for cash-flow statements to be produced, which the CFO had in hand.

7.2 Overview of key issues

7.2.1 This matter had been discussed in minute 7.2.

7.3 Review management accounts, latest internal audit report and KPIs

7.3.1 Directors noted and discussed the management accounts to April 2018, fund analysis, balance sheet, consolidated financial report, internal audit report May 2018 and financial KPIs (appendices 20-25).

7.4 Consider and approve any spend requests over £20,000 (appendix 26), including kitchen equipment improvements at SMCPA

7.4.1 HPS - Cloakrooms and classroom storage in KS2

7.4.1.1 This spend request had been withdrawn following pre-meeting scrutiny and was likely to be re-submitted in September 2018.

7.4.2 Hayes Primary School - OPAL project school specific

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7.4.2.1 Directors approved the request for HPS to purchase play equipment at a cost of £5,896 to be funded from unrestricted reserves.

7.4.3 Trustwide - Playground project – OPAL

7.4.3.1 This spend request had been withdrawn following pre-meeting scrutiny and was likely to be re-submitted in September 2018.

7.4.4 Trustwide – Assessment Papers

7.4.4.1 Directors approved the request for the Trust to purchase assessment papers at a cost of £11,869 to be funded from the Trust budget 2018/19 (appendices 27-30).

7.4.5 Trust insurance contract

7.4.5.1 Directors were informed that the Trust's three-year insurance contract would shortly expire. An extension of the contract to the end of August 2018 had been obtained to align the contract with the financial year. The CFO had met with a broker to ensure good value for money and appropriate cover under a new contract. A quote which represented a significant saving on the cost of the current contract had been received and would be compared with the findings of a different broker. As there would be no meeting of Directors before the renewal of the contract, it was agreed that approval of the contract would be delegated to the Chair, R Taylor and J Cliff. **CS to action.**

8. Report from ACC

8.1 Final unadopted minutes of meeting of 19th April 2018

8.1.1 The minutes of the ACC meeting of 19th April 2018 (appendix 31) were received for information.

8.2 Overview of key issues

8.1.2 None.

9. Administration

9.1 Membership at Schools and TSPT committees

9.1.1 Directors were referred to, and approved, the updated Board and Committee membership (appendix 32). It was confirmed that L Elliott had transferred from LPS to MPS Local Committee.

9.2 Revised Scheme of Delegation

9.2.1 Directors were referred to the revised Scheme of Delegation, in which changes were highlighted on the cover sheet, including significant changes to the financial scheme of delegation on p34. The changes were approved by Directors.

10. Safeguarding

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10.1 Safeguarding report

10.1.1 A full audit of all schools would be undertaken in the autumn term. The audit would include the use of new software for logging referrals, which would be in use from September 2018.

10.1.2 This incident was deemed to be confidential, see confidential minute 14.4.

11. Health and Safety Update

11.1 The next health and safety review was scheduled for October 2018. **VB to action.**

12. Policies

12.1 Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

12.1.1 Directors were advised that there had been minor amendments to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy as listed on the change log. Directors asked if the policy was compliant with the revisions to Keeping Children Safe in Education which would come into effect in September 2018 and were informed that this was not the case. The policy was approved but would be updated in line with the revised guidance, including changes for previously looked after children, and brought for approval at the next meeting. **VB to action.**

13 AOB and date of next meeting

13.1 Update on SATs maladministration

13.1.1 This minute was deemed to be confidential, see confidential minute 14.5.

13.2 The meeting closed at 9:20 pm. The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 19th September 2018 at 7:30pm at HPS.

Signed: Date:.....
Clive Lees, Chair of Directors

Minutes might be confidential for the following reasons:-

- a) information relating to an employee or office holder, former employee or applicant for any post or office, or a pupil or their family;
- b) the terms of, or expenditure under, a tender or contract for the purchase or supply of goods or services or the acquisition or disposal of property;
- c) negotiations or consultation concerning labour relations between the Trust and its employees;
- d) any issue relating to legal proceedings which are being contemplated or instituted by or against the Trust;
- e) action being taken to prevent or detect crime to prosecute offenders;
- f) the source of information given to the Trust in confidence; or
- g) any other matter which, in the opinion of the Chair, is confidential or the public disclosure of which would prejudice the effective discharge of the Trust's functions.