

**THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST**  
**Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Directors**  
**Held at Leasons Primary School at 7.00pm on Wednesday 8th February 2017**

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**Present:**

Mr C Lees (Chair)  
Mr R Taylor (V Chair) (from min 6.3)  
Dr I Raitt  
Mr M Gibbs (from min 6.8)  
Mrs J Brinkley (CEO/EHT)  
Mrs J Nelson  
Mr M Cousins  
Sir R Bosher (from min 6.5)  
Mr J Cliff

**In attendance:**

Mrs C Sheehan, Head of Finance and HR (HoF/HR)

**Observer:**

Mrs M Staley, CC Interim Board member

**Clerk:**

Mrs V Bolton

**1. Apologies for absence, acceptance of absence, absence, constitution of the Board**

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from J Tagg, B Simpson and the new Member appointed Director P Verghese.
- 1.2 M Staley was welcomed to the meeting as an observer.

**2. Declaration of Pecuniary Interests**

- 2.1 There were no pecuniary interests declared.

**3. Minutes from the Board meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016**

- 3.1 The minutes from the Board meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016 were approved and signed by the Chair.

**4. Matters Arising**

- 4.1 The Directors were referred to the Matters Arising report (see Appendix 4) and discussed the following points:-  
*4.5, 6.4 Post-transfer task list*  
It was confirmed that this list would include health and safety items discussed during the due diligence process that required following up as well as any other qualifying points that were raised during transfer discussions for CC, DRIS, Lessons and Midfield. **VB/CS to action**
- 4.2 *6.2 External validation*  
An update on the sourcing of external reviews by an industry expert would be provided at the next meeting of the Board in order to provide both robust challenge of each school and the provision to directors of an accurate Judgement of each school (as part of directors 'triangulation'). It was agreed that an external review was not necessary at CC at this point. **JB to action.**
- 4.3 *6.10 PP6 reviews*  
It was stated that PP6 reviews would be carried out by the CEO/EHT rather than an external advisor. The first review would take place at CC in March. **JB to action.**
- 4.4 *8.1 CEO/EHT Performance Objectives*  
It was confirmed that amendments would be made shortly to the CEO/EHT Performance Objectives as discussed at the January TB meeting with details to be determined in discussion

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with Sir Robin Boshier and that further precision would be added by including the numerical values of the member schools HT targets as a method of measuring CEO/EHT performance.  
**JB to action.**

**4.5     9.1 Pay policy**

It was stated that the review and consultation of the pay policy would be completed in time for the start of the next academic year. An additional meeting of the Pay and Performance committee was taking place later this term, in part to continue to resolve any outstanding pay policy issues and to challenge various procedures.

**4.6     15.3 SLT/HT status**

The Directors were referred to a confidential paper (see Appendix 4.15.13) which detailed the current and prospective SLT structure for all member schools. It was stated that the aim would be for the CEO/EHT role to become less operational going forward, and that interviews were being held for various SLT roles that would allow this to happen. It was suggested that J Nelson (as Chair of the Interim Board at CC) be involved with the interviews for the HT role CC. Further information would be circulated to the relevant people. **VB to action.**

**5.     Chair's Report and Commentary on agenda**

- 5.1     The Directors were referred to the Chair's report (see Appendix 5) and it was confirmed that the CEO/EHT had recently taken the decision to resign the Trust from RAPT due to concerns over being able to fulfil appropriate fiduciary duties. The resignation had been carried out in a way which allowed good working relationships to continue with the remaining RAPT members.

**6.     Trust development**

**6.1     CEO/EHT Report**

The Directors considered the Trust position on further expansion versus consolidation and agreed that the current focus would be to consolidate systems and structures but that it was important to continue to be aware of potential new member schools with a view to them joining from September 2017. The Chairman questioned whether resources were available at the current time to allow further expansion and as such it was recognised that new schools might initially join as 'associates' thereby avoiding the workload concomitant with due diligence. The CEO/EHT would continue to communicate with other HTs and MATs for this purpose.

- 6.2     It was confirmed that there would continue to be pressure from the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) regarding expansion and that they had announced that meetings would be set up with CEOs of growing Trusts to assess their ability to expand. It was suggested that were TSPT to be considered by the RSC to be in an appropriate position for expansion, ultimately the decision to expand would sit with the Trust Board.

- 6.3     It was agreed that it would be crucial to have a leadership structure in place across the Trust with room for growth to allow the development of prospective HTs, as well as retaining middle leaders. This structure would free-up some CEO/EHT time which would allow the role to become increasingly strategic.

- 6.4     It was agreed that while the current focus would be on consolidation the decision to expand would largely depend upon the situation of the potential member school, in terms of how much support it would require from the Trust, as well as what impact the school would have on the existing member schools. A strong school requiring little leadership, academic or financial support would be the most viable option. The Directors requested that a list of criteria for

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potential new member schools be pulled together for discussion at the next meeting. **JB to action.**

- 6.5 The Directors were referred to the CEO/EHT report and appendices (see Appendix 6) and discussed the Teaching and Learning summary report. It was confirmed that HPS were due a Section 8 'short inspection' which would primarily assess leadership and impact on improving standards.
- 6.6 This item was deemed to be confidential (see minute 15.6).
- 6.7 A discussion took place on the external reviews that had been undertaken by P Watts and it was agreed that these reports had provided a broad brush response (see Appendix 6)xii) and that the detail had been drilled into by the CEO/EHT, and that the CEO/EHT would work with R Boshier to assess the review and planning in place at each school for 2017-18. It was suggested that while the P Watts reviews had been a valuable experience of challenge for the HTs, going forward the formal reports following these reviews needed to contain a clear judgement about the school ('Good' 'RI' etc) so that directors had external confirmation of the school. **JB to action.**
- 6.8 It was stated that the benefits of external challenge and internal moderation had been noticeable at SMCPA and that the standard of books had improved. The CEO/EHT had carried out monitoring visits, which included book looks, at the school every few weeks.
- 6.9 Whilst CC had continued to be RAG rated as 'requires improvement', it was reported that progress had undoubtedly been made since the recent inspection. The school would be unable to amend the inspection rating until the next inspection, however, it was possible that the forthcoming progress visit could identify the school as making 'adequate progress'.
- 6.10 The issue of pupil attendance was discussed and it was confirmed that improvements had been made at SMCPA which had an overall attendance level of 96% since September. Disadvantaged pupil attendance levels continued to be an area of focus as they were below 95%. The school had taken a very strict approach to attendance and how it was marked, and the initiatives in place at the school had also proved to be valuable at other schools. It was agreed that it was important that each school followed similar rules of recording attendance in order for the data to be comparable. **JB to action.**
- 6.11 This item was deemed to be confidential (see minutes 15.1 – 15.5).
- 6.12 The Directors were referred to additional reference papers regarding MAT characteristics, highlights from the presentation made by R Boshier at the recent trustwide staff training day and an SCR school visit write-up (see Appendices 6)viii – 6)xi).

**7. Summary update of critical issues from Chairman and Chairs of TSPT LCs**

- 7.1 The Directors were referred to the report from CC and the update of critical issues from member schools (see Appendices 7 and 7a) and acknowledged the work being done and the progress being made by the Interim Board and the staff at CC. It was suggested that the Interim Board begin to consider the longer term plan for reinstalling a Local Committee at the school in the future. **JN to action.**

**8. Governance**

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- 8.1 The Directors were informed that P Verghese, with a business and health and safety background and introduced by Academy Ambassadors, had recently been appointed as a Director by the Members.
- 8.2 The Directors acknowledged the resignations from the Board of K Colville and J Covill (the latter of whom would continue in the role of Chair of the Local Committee at SMCPA), and thanked them both for their contribution to the Trust.
- 8.3 A discussion took place on the proposed revisions to the Scheme of Delegation for Governance Functions (SOD) (see Appendix 8a) and the plan for ACC delegation (see Appendix 9b). It was agreed that it would be important to retain strong local committee members at the schools who could robustly challenge and support teaching and learning.
- 8.4 It was stated that consideration would be given to the FARCO elements of governance delegation over the next term now that the Trust were in a position of consolidation.
- 8.5 The scheme of financial delegation was considered as discussed at the recent FARCO meeting. The financial delegation levels for member schools and trustwide spend were approved subject to the clarification of the phrasing regarding cheque signatories. **CS to action.**
- 8.6 The Directors approved the committee membership list (see Appendix 8b). It was stated that following the recent personnel changes on the Board there would be thought given to the membership of the trustwide committees, and that a membership list would be brought for consideration at the next meeting of the Board. **CL to action.**
- 8.7 Directors were informed that communication would be made regarding the assignment of specific roles for Directors. **CL to action.**
- 8.8 The Directors approved the terms of reference for the Interim Board (see Appendix 8d) at CC.
- 9. ACC**
- 9.1 The Directors were referred to the proposal for ACC delegation (see Appendix 9b) which clarified the distinction between ACC carrying out the strategic function and the Local Committees being responsible for delivering this strategy to the member schools. It was agreed that this proposal would be implemented as discussed under minute 8.3.
- 10. Finance**
- 10.1 An update was provided from FARCO regarding the management of the in-year deficit at SMCPA and the request from the committee for a 2 year financial plan for the school.
- 10.2 The Directors were referred to the proposal for TSPT accounting software (see Appendix 10c) which had previously been recommended for approval by FARCO subject to the provision of more in depth due diligence information and further positive feedback from existing users which had been included.
- 10.3 It was enquired whether the PS Financials package would require any additional spend on IT infrastructure and it was confirmed that the IT system had been assessed and found to be sufficient to run the system.

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- 10.4 It was confirmed that the alternative accounting software products would not be fit for purpose and the Board approved the spend of £45,765 on the PS Financials package.
- 10.5 MAT expansion grants had recently been applied for from the DfE, the results of which would be released at the end of March.
- 10.6 The Directors were informed that the committee had agreed that external advice would be sought regarding ICT Security across the Trust. It was stated that work was underway on recruiting a Director with this skill set in the near future.
- 10.7 It was confirmed that work on the reformatted risk register was underway and that an update would be brought for discussion at the summer term meeting of the Board. **VB to action.**

**11. Approval of revised statutory Policies:**

- 11.1 The Directors approved the following trustwide policies with no amendments:-  
- Accessibility  
- Equality  
- SEND  
- EYFS  
- Admissions 2018-19.
- 11.2 It was confirmed that the admissions policy for 2018-19 had been agreed by the LA and had been through the necessary consultation process and would therefore be published. **VB to action.**
- 11.3 The Directors requested that it be ensured that all relevant policies, such as Equality, should also be applied to the central TSPT staff. **VB to action.**
- 11.4 It was stated that Local Committee chairs would be asked to collectively consider non-statutory policies.
- 11.5 It was agreed that the website for each member school would contain the following trustwide policies:-  
- Child Protection and Safeguarding  
- Behaviour and Anti-bullying  
- Charging and Remissions  
- Complaints  
All other policies would be held centrally with each school having a link to the policy document on their website to allow easier administration of these documents. **VB to action.**

**12. Safeguarding update (if any)** Update on project to coordinate safeguarding activities

- 12.1 It was stated that the CEO/EHT would be undertaking monitoring of whether member schools had kept records of staff reading and understanding the latest KCSIE documentation, as well as their compliance with disqualification by association practices. **JB to action.**
- 12.2 It was confirmed that there is a longer term plan for the trustwide co-ordination of safeguarding practices and that the Trust were to subscribe to a safeguarding support service regarding Single Central Record compliance. **JB to action.**

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- 12.3 A large volume of work had been carried out on ensuring all employees had two references on their personnel files.

**13. Health and Safety (if any)**

- 13.1 It was confirmed that the trustwide coordination of Fire Safety and Health & Safety issues raised through the due diligence process was being actioned as part of the post-transfer task list. An update summary would be brought for the attention of the Directors at the summer term meeting of the Board. **VB to action.**
- 13.2 It was requested that priority be placed on any projects identified at CC. The site team had been requested to prioritise project spend requests to ensure compliance at the school. It was highlighted that additional fire safety regulations had recently come in to force of relevance to all member schools.

**14. AOB and date of next meeting**

- 14.1 There were no other items to discuss.
- 14.2 The next Trust Board meeting is taking place on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> Mar at 7pm at Midfield Primary.

**15. Confidential items**

- 15.1 The discussions under minute 6.6 and 6.11 were deemed to be confidential (see minutes 15.1 – 15.6).

The meeting closed at 9.30pm.

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

Date:.....