

THE SPRING PARTNERSHIP TRUST

Final adopted minutes of a remote meeting of the Director held on Monday 18th May 2020 at 6pm

Present:

Mr J Cliff, Chair
Ms C Barenbrug, from minute 3.2
Mr R Barlow
Mr A Blount, until minute 4.2.3
Mrs J Brinkley, CEO
Ms K Hawker
Miss R Punter, from minute 3.2

In attendance:

Mrs C Sheehan, CFO
Mrs V Bolton, COO

Clerk: Miss K Crossley

1. Apologies for absence

- 1.1 Apologies for absence had been received from D Okafor and R Taylor. The meeting was quorate.

2. Declaration of pecuniary interests

- 2.1 None.

3. Minutes of previous meeting

- 3.1 The minutes and confidential minutes of the meeting of 10th February 2020 (appendix 1) were approved by Directors and would be signed by the Chair at the earliest opportunity.
KC to action.
- 3.2 Directors were referred to the matters arising report (appendix 2) detailing actions which had been completed and the status of outstanding actions. Action 7.2.2 (to include the policy spreadsheet in meeting papers) would be postponed until the first meeting of the next academic year. **VB to action.**
- 3.2 Directors noted the record of the remote meeting held on 1st April 2020 (appendix 3).
- 3.3 Directors ratified the following approvals made at recent remote meetings, noting that due to exceptional circumstances, it had not been possible to obtain the written approval of D Okafor:
- the postponement of support staff restructuring
 - the Chair's action to approve changes to the Funding Agreement
 - the appointment of Sally Ann White as Chair of the Local Committee at Hayes Primary School.
- 3.4 Directors approved the re-appointment of Diana Anthony as a Parent Local Committee Member at Lessons Primary School, effective 3rd March 2020.

4. Executive team reporting

4.1 CEO report

4.1.1 Update on recovery of plan and reopening of schools

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- 4.1.1.1 Directors thanked the CEO for her response to questions raised in advance of the meeting on the recovery plan and the re-opening of schools, which had been circulated to all Directors (appendix 4).
- 4.1.1.2 The CEO referred Directors to her report, TSPT control measures and the updated C19 risk register (appendices 5-7) and provided commentary on preparations to re-open nurseries and schools to the youngest and most vulnerable pupils. In addition to welcoming pupils in Reception and Y1 back to school in 'bubbles' from 3rd June 2020, there would be a renewed effort to encourage attendance of children of key workers as well as those with an EHC Plan or a social worker. In response to a question about parental views on re-opening schools, it was reported that there had been a good response to parent surveys and confidence was expected to increase gradually.
- 4.1.1.3 Directors asked about staff morale and were informed that headline plans for reopening had been shared with staff. Many questions had been raised and a Q&A document was being drafted to address concerns. In response to a question about staff who were shielding or whose family members were shielding, it was confirmed that a sensitive approach would be adopted and staff in this category would continue to be paid. Risks assessments for staff who were shielding had been completed and exact numbers would be calculated before pupils returned to school. The CEO was monitoring national concerns through CST and social media.
- 4.1.1.4 In response to a question as to whether any members of staff had been furloughed, it was confirmed that only posts funded by income generation had been furloughed, in line with government guidance.
- 4.1.1.5 Directors asked questions on procedures for suspected/confirmed cases of coronavirus, high risk subjects involving shared equipment (such as PE and DT), cover in the event of loss of site staff and legislation relating to medication and were satisfied with the responses received, subject to minor amendments to the control measures. **JB to action.**
- 4.1.1.6 It was confirmed that Trust and individual school risk assessments were being completed in preparation for re-opening. The Trust was working with the local authority regarding the return of pupils to the Tree House unit; to date, no pupils had attended Tree House since the start of lockdown. The risk
- 4.1.1.7 Directors approved the following:
- the reopening of schools from 1st June 2020, subject to completion of risk assessments
 - control measures in schools
 - the updated C19 risk register.

4.2 CFO report

- 4.2.1 There were no questions from Directors on:
- the CFO report
 - consolidated managements accounts, March 2020
 - consolidated cash flow forecast, March 2020
 - consolidated balance sheet, March 2020
 - consolidated budget report, March 2020 (appendices 8-12)).

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- 4.2.2 The CFO reported that the recent visit from a Schools Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) had gone well and there had been no unexpected findings in the report (appendix 13); some recommendations were already in progress. The recommendation to pool GAG and reserves under a single legal entity, as recommended by the ESFA, would enhance transparency at all levels of school and governance. Initial conversations held with HTs/HoSs indicated that GAG pooling would be well received in terms of the simplification and clarity offered and the freeing up of time to focus on school improvement. HTs/HoSs had emphasised the need for transparency and for the right of appeal.
- 4.2.3 Directors asked whether HTs/HoSs would no longer have delegated responsibilities for budgets and were advised that they would continue to be responsible for the use of the PE and Pupil Premium funding. It was anticipated that proposed staffing structures and curriculum budgets would continue to be taken for approval at FARCO. Senior leaders understood that once staffing and overheads had been accounted for, any remaining GAG funds would be distributed based on pupil numbers in line with the strategic plan. Directors asked what would happen if schools wanted to spend funds on specific projects and it was reported that if it could not be covered by GAG allocation, it was anticipated that a proposal to be funded from generated income would need to be submitted to FARCO.
- 4.2.4 Initial feedback from schools had been largely positive, with common themes on the need for transparency and a right of appeal. The Chair had spoken to the Local Committee Chairs and the next step would be to prepare a Q&A response. **JB to action.**
- 4.2.5 Directors noted that the SRMA report had been thorough and that the KPIs and ratios had been very helpful. It was agreed that consideration would be given to how to monitor the KPIs and ratios more formally going forward, **CS to action**, and that an update be provided on the recommendations and actions which had not yet been addressed, **CS to action.**
- 4.2.6 Directors noted the ESFA letter to academy trust accounting officers of 21st April 2020 (appendix 13).

4.3 COO report

4.3.1 Head office relocation proposal

- 4.3.1.1 Directors were referred to the proposal to relocate the central Trust team from The Cottage on the HPS site to rented rooms at The Warren in Hayes (appendix 14). The COO summarised the context and rationale for the proposal, highlighting the increased cost of £10.8k per annum, vs the current annual payment of £5k to HPS. In response to questions from Directors, it was confirmed that HPS needed the space in The Cottage, and that the long-term plan had always been for the central team to relocate away from any specific school site. Directors asked whether there was scope to rent additional space if the Trust expanded in the future and were advised that various options were available. Directors noted the benefits of the setting and facilities at the Warren to staff wellbeing. The proposal was approved, subject to clarification of the review period of the rental charges. **VB to action.**

5. Date of next meeting

- 5.1 The next meeting would be held on Thursday 9th July 2020 at 7pm, venue tbc.
- 5.2 The meeting closed at 7pm.

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Signed: Date:
John Cliff, 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.