

The Spring Partnership Trust
Final adopted minutes of a meeting of the Members of the Spring Partnership Trust
held at Hayes Primary School at 6.45pm on Monday 28th January 2019

Present:

Mr C Lees, Chair
Mrs J Brinkley, CEO
Mrs J Nelson
Ms V Boaden
Mr S Bhalla
Mr I Stealey

In attendance:

Ms K Hawker

Clerk:

Miss K Crossley

1. Apologies for absence, approval of absence, absence, constitution of the meeting

- 1.1 Apologies for absence had been received from S Narracott.
- 1.2 Members were satisfied with the reason given for absence and accepted the apologies.
- 1.3 The meeting was quorate.
- 1.4 Members welcomed S Bhalla and I Stealey, who had recently been appointed as Members on 7th January 2018 and K Hawker, who had been appointed as a Director in December 2018. Introductions were made.

2. Pecuniary Interests and Register of People with Significant Control

- 2.1 V Boaden declared a related-party transaction, which would be brought to the attention of the CFO. **KC to advise CFO.**
- 2.2 There were no changes to the register of Persons with Significant Control relating to the two new Members. The Get Information About Schools (GIAS) website had been updated to reflect that S Bhalla and I Stealey had been appointed as Members.

3. Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising

- 3.1 The minutes of the Members' meeting of 16th June 2018 (appendix 1) were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed by the Chair.

4a. CEO report including major strategic developments

- 4.1 Questions were invited on the CEO report (appendix 2). Members inquired about the IT strategy and its impact, and were informed that there were different components: on-going need for routine replacement of IT hardware, harmonisation of different level of IT provision and skills across the Trust, and IT for education. The CEO described how the IT strategy would support the creation of a digital environment for both business and educational needs, including digital tools to support pupils' learning about social media and online safety. Members were concerned to ensure that that the project was affordable and accepted the explanation as to how the project, which was one of the 'Big 6' key strategic aims, had been funded.
- 4.4 Members inquired about succession planning and were satisfied that appropriate measures were in hand to replace C Lees, who would step down at the end of the academic year. The matter would be considered at the next meeting of the Trust Board.
- 4.5 Members asked about progress towards the stated aim of spending reserves and were informed that this was in progress. In response to a follow-up question about the inherited

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accumulation of pupil premium funding at LPS and MPS, it was reported that the funds would be invested in infrastructure (such as Nurture provision) to support vulnerable pupils, the impact of which would be measured. Members accepted the good reasons described for the level of reserves and the plans to reduce them.

4.6 Members discussed the deficit at central Trust level in 2017/18, how this arose and measures to correct this were discussed.

4.7 Members inquired about progress towards GDPR compliance and were advised that the Board received termly reports from its external Data Protection Officer which been helpful in terms of identifying housekeeping issues and maintaining mindful awareness. Members were satisfied that appropriate actions were in place to demonstrate progress towards compliance. A decision on whether to renew the DPO contract would be taken following the reports at the end of the spring term.

4b. Chair's report (appendix 3) addressing the following areas:

1. Strategic leadership that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy.
2. Accountability that drives up educational standards and financial performance.
3. People with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity.
4. Structures that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
5. Compliance with statutory and contractual requirements.
6. Evaluation **to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance**

4.8 The Chair described how spending requests were challenged by the Board as an example of Directors holding senior leaders to account. In addition, a policy review schedule was in place to ensure compliance with updates to legislation and guidance, including the 'must' requirements of the Academies Financial Handbook.

4.9 Members asked whether Directors self-assessed, and were advised that previous attempts had not been entirely effective due to practical difficulties in obtaining meaningful information. This would be an area which could be reviewed by the Chair's successor.

5. Directors' activity and impact report

5.1 This item had been discussed in minutes 4.8 and 4.9.

6. Composition of Trust Board

6.1 Members were referred to the Board and Committee membership (appendix 4) detailing the composition of the Trust and discussed the reasons behind the resignation of six Directors, three of whom had resigned in the current year. Members accepted the circumstances of the resignations and acknowledged that it was becoming increasingly difficult to recruit suitably qualified directors who understood the expectations of the role. A Member undertook to approach large local employers through an employer's internal volunteering network in regard to recruitment of Directors. **VB to action.**

6.2 C Lees, J Nelson and V Boaden reaffirmed the appointments of S Bhalla and I Stealey as Members with effect from 7th January 2019, which had previously been approved by email.

6.3 C Lees, J Nelson and V Boaden reaffirmed the appointment of K Hawker as a Director with effect from 4th December 2018, which had previously been approved by email.

6.4 Arrangements would be made for S Narracott to reaffirm recent appointments to Members and Directors. **KC to action.**

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7. Receive Annual Accounts to 31.8.18 for TSPT and review Auditor's summary

7.1 There were no questions from Members on the annual accounts to 31st August 2018 or the auditor's summary, an analysis of which had previously been provided.

8. Approve reappointment of Auditors UHY Hacker Young

8.1 Members considered the reappointment of UHY Hacker Young as auditors to the Trust. In response to questions from Members, it was confirmed that the Trust been very satisfied with the service provided since 2011. The issue of having a long term auditor had been discussed by Directors and from the auditor's perspective, professional standards would be maintained provided the audit partner (Allan Hickie) rotated after 10 years.

8.2 Separately, the Trust had also considered whether the Trust would benefit from having a new auditor anyway, for example to provide a new perspective or better value. The matter had been considered by the Finance, and Resources Committee, which had agreed that work on tendering the contract should begin in 2018/19 with a view to the tender being concluded by the start of the academic year 2020/21. Members accepted that careful consideration had been given to auditor independence and approved the reappointment of UHY Hacker Young as auditors to the Trust for a further year.

9. AOB and dates of next meeting

9.1 There was no other business.

9.2 The next meeting would be held on Monday 15th July 2019 at 6:45pm at Hayes Primary School.

9.3 The meeting closed at 8:15 pm.

Signed:Date:
Clive Lees, Chair, Board of Directors, The Spring Partnership Trust