

### Minutes of the Trustees' meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at 6:00pm at Cam Woodfield Junior School

**Present:** Nigel Riglar (Chair), Graham Ayre, Debbie Bird, John Gilbert, Ruth Hollier, Judith Taylor, Stuart Wilson (Chief Executive Officer – CEO).

**Apologies:** Nicki Wadley, Barbara Green

**In Attendance:** Emma Gray (Chief Finance and Operations Officer – CFOO), David Dale (Clerk).

#### 1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and said that he would depart from the order of business as shown on the agenda to allow for a full discussion of the Beacon Secondary Academy project and a report from the Organisational Development Group.

#### 2. Apologies – NW and BG.

#### 3. Declarations of Interest – none.

#### 4. Minutes of the meeting of 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Trustees considered the draft minutes of the last meeting and noted that they were an accurate record apart from an error at item 11(i) regarding the initials of the Trustee who had seconded the motion. Subject to this correction, it was **proposed** by JG, and **seconded** by GA, that the minutes be approved and signed, to be published on the Trust's website. This was **agreed** unanimously.

#### 5. Action point checklist

The Clerk ran through the actions. Trustees asked for clarification of the action on cost-of-living pressures (CBAT 212) to indicate if this had been completed. On data protection and privacy (CBAT 215) Trustees asked how many of them had undertaken the cyber-security training. **Action: Clerk** to check iamCompliant records and remind any Trustee who is still to undertake this training.

#### 6. Matters arising – none.

#### 7. Decisions taken under Scheme of Delegation

The Clerk reminded Trustees that the following decisions had been taken and recorded since the last meeting:

Date	Decision
11/5/22	To approve the new Trust policy on Parents'/Carers' Code of Conduct
11/5/22	To approve the revised Trust policy on Pupils with Medical Conditions

#### 8. Trustee resignations and appointments – none.

## 9. SDB minutes and matters raised

Trustees received and noted the minutes of the meeting of Marling SDB on 28<sup>th</sup> March. There were no matters arising.

The Berkeley and Cam Woodfield SDBs had not met since the Board's last meeting.

## 10. Recommendations from SDBs for decision (item 11 on the agenda)

The Clerk advised Trustees of a unanimous recommendation from Berkeley SDB to reappoint Nicola Everhard for a further term of office when her current term expires soon. It was **proposed** by NR and **seconded** by JG to reappoint Nicola Everhard as a Governor on Berkeley SDB for a further term of office with effect from 24<sup>th</sup> May 2022. This was **agreed** unanimously.

## 11. Beacon Secondary Academy (item 19 on the agenda)

The CEO shared latest school place-planning data from the local authority showing the impact of the pandemic and Brexit on delays to housing development in the county, as well as a drop in pupil numbers in Reception and a lower birth rate. Overall, after many years of population growth there is now a national downturn and combined with local factors this means a reduction in forecast pupil numbers, with additional secondary places in the Gloucester area and to the south of the city not likely to be required before 2030. This is in sharp contrast to the forecast in 2019 when the free school was planned. As a result the Beacon Secondary Academy will not be required in the short to medium term.

The Chair reported on meetings with the RSC and the GCC Director of Education and to analyse the place-planning data and consider the options available to the Trust. The CEO said that the Trust could either withdraw its free school project due to lack of viability or make a formal request to the DfE for the pupil numbers to be checked and referred to the Secretary of State for the final decision to be made. Chair said that it is very disappointing to have reached this situation after the Trust's success in winning the free school bid, there is no reason to believe the pupil projections will change in the short term, and the DfE would not ring fence funding or progress with a project which wasn't needed, so on balance he recommended the first of the two options described.

There followed a detailed discussion in which Trustees asked about the financial and other risks to the Trust, the costs to be met from the advance funding received, and the likelihood of future growth opportunities generated by housing development in the wider area to the south of Gloucester. The CEO said that future housing development in the Stroud District Council area could be focussed on the A38 corridor through Whitminster and down to Berkeley and Sharpness. He advised that he would brief the Trust's Members on the situation but keep the news confidential in the short term until a communications strategy had been agreed.

It was then **proposed** by SSW and **seconded** by GA that in light of the revised place-planning data from the local authority the Trust withdraw its free school proposal and inform the DfE accordingly. This was **agreed** unanimously. **Action: CEO** to inform DfE accordingly.

## 12. Finance (item 14 on the agenda)

- (i) GA reported back to Trustees on the meetings of the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee (FARC) held on 7<sup>th</sup> April and 13<sup>th</sup> May. He drew their attention in particular to the need to tender for and appoint the Trust's external auditor in line with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook. He said that while the Committee would oversee this process the Board would need to make a recommendation to Members on who to appoint. The Scheme of Delegation requires a minor amendment to clarify this.

The CFOO gave further details of the process and timescale. With the Board's approval,

tender documents would be issued to a number of providers including the current external auditor, Bishop Fleming, on 20<sup>th</sup> May. Tenders would be returned by 15<sup>th</sup> June, evaluated, and a recommendation made by the Committee.

It was **proposed** by NR and **seconded** by RH that the tender documents be issued as described, and that the Scheme of Delegation be amended to clarify that the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee's terms of reference include "to oversee the process for appointing the Trust's external auditor and to make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees; and to appoint an internal auditor". This was **agreed** unanimously.

- (ii) Budget monitoring: GA reported that FARC on 13<sup>th</sup> May had considered the forecast and actual expenditure for the period to the end of March. The CFOO had noted that expenditure is slightly higher than income at this stage due to lagging income, this is not a concern and no further action is needed. She is continuing to monitor the pressure on the primary schools' budgets caused by additional SEND support for a number of pupils without funded EHCPs.
- (iii) Risk register: GA reported that FARC on 13<sup>th</sup> May had reviewed the format of the risk register and agreed the need for FARC to be sighted on all risks and mitigations including those at the individual schools. The CFOO shared a draft of a new format for the Trust's strategic risk register, and noted that she is introducing a new template for school risk registers. She will attend each SDB early in the new academic year to help schools identify specific risks and mitigations, and to report these in a consistent format.

### **13. Property** (item 16 on the agenda)

The CFOO reported that the Trust had been successful with three CIF bids, two at Marling School (East Campus and Biology Block) and one at Cam Woodfield (flat roof). The bid for Berkeley school windows had been unsuccessful by a single point, this will be appealed due to a factual omission in the evaluation process.

The CEO and CFOO also gave updates on a number of other property issues including security fencing and footpath closure at Marling School, a future request to the Secretary of State to dispose of the canal field, and the design of extra classrooms at Berkeley.

### **14. IT strategy and operations** (item 17 on the agenda)

The CFOO reported that the Steering Group had met this week and the project is progressing well. The new central IT team is up to strength with a third post having been filled.

Trustees had a detailed discussion around cyber security. They are mindful of a security attack at a nearby local authority and to ensure that relevant lessons have been learnt from this. They are keen to ensure that all Trustees have undertaken the training. **Action: CFOO** to check iamCompliant records and advise accordingly. Trustees asked FARC to consider other aspects of cyber security including insurance cover and business continuity management exercises. **Action: FARC** to consider these and report back.

### **15. Data protection and privacy** (item 18 on the agenda)

Nothing to report.

*The CFOO left the meeting at 7.30pm.*

### **16. Headteachers' reports** (item 9 on the agenda)

These were received and noted. Trustees asked about the level of staff turnover at CWJS, the CEO noted that this was mainly due to teachers leaving due to promotion., Trustees asked about

the number of Y6 pupils at CWJS who did not attend the spring residential course and the possible reasons for this. **Action: CEO** to ask the Headteacher to consider ways to promote attendance at future residential courses.

**17. CBAT Strategic Plan** (item 12 on the agenda)

The CEO shared the final version of the Plan and advised Trustees that following their previous discussion he had now highlighted those common objectives which should appear in the school improvement plans of all CBAT schools (objectives 1.1, 1.2, 1.4 and 3.2). With these amendments, it was **proposed** by SSW and **seconded** by JG that the Trust's revised Strategic Plan be approved. This was **agreed** unanimously.

**18. Safeguarding** (item 13 on the agenda)

Nothing to report.

**19. People** (item 15 on the agenda)

The CEO reported positive feedback on the Governance Conference from Trustees and Headteachers, and an appetite to hold a further event in the future. He had met with DB and BG to go through the detailed feedback from the discussion groups, this material will now be used by BG to draft an employee value statement for Trustees to consider.

The primary schools' videos had been well received and the CEO said that he would look into producing a Trust video to launch the employee value statement and show how the schools are working together.

**20. Other growth opportunities**

The CEO reported that he is continuing to actively pursue a number of potential opportunities with primary and secondary schools in the county. There is a higher level of interest, particularly since the publication of the Schools White Paper *Opportunity for All* which sets out the government's ambition for all schools to be in or joining a strong MAT by 2030.

**21. Report of the Organisational Development sub-group**

Confidential minute.

**22. Date of next meeting**

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> July at 6.00pm at Marling School.

The meeting ended at 8.03pm.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'R. J. G.', is written over a faint, illegible stamp or watermark.

12<sup>th</sup> July 2022