



TRUST BOARD

Minutes of a Meeting of the Trust Board of South East Cornwall Multi Academy Regional Trust held at Liskeard School & Community College on Tuesday 16th April 2024 at 5.30 pm.

Present	Yes/No	Present	Yes/No
Mr M Aarts	Yes	Mrs L Lawson	Yes
Ms J Chan-Penney	Yes via Teams	Mr S Lloyd	Apologies
Mr D Buckley, CEO	Yes	Mr C Piper	Yes
Mr J Crisp	Yes via Teams	Dr J Traverse	Apologies
Mr L Hallam	Apologies		

In Attendance: Mrs J Lumbard, CFO
Mrs K Williams, Clerk to Trust Board
Mr K Carrington, Director of Education

19. **Welcome**
Mr Buckley explained that Mr Hallam and Mr Lloyd were both going to be absent from the meeting so he had agreed to chair the meeting and welcomed everyone, especially Mr Carrington, Director of Education.
20. **Declaration of Business or Pecuniary Interest and Academy-related parties - update on any changes since completion of written declaration**
There were no changes.
21. **Apologies for Absence**
Mr Hallam, Mr Lloyd and Dr Traverse sent their apologies which were received and accepted by the committee. Mrs Lawson was expected to attend.
22. **Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting held on 07-12-2024**
The minutes of the meeting held on 7th December 2024, having been circulated in advance, were agreed as an accurate record and will be signed.
23. **Progress of action points and matters arising**
 - M7. Reports and Recommendations from Committees**

f) It was agreed that the approval of the draft accounts would be circulated to Trustees by email given there were a number of Trustees missing from the meeting although the meeting was quorate. Mr Buckley reiterated that a clean audit is a major achievement.
Update: Complete.
 - M8. CEO summary of HT Reports – focus on Pupil Progress**

h) **A Trustee asked about benchmarks being used.** Mr Buckley advised that these are all based on national benchmarks. We have now added a trend graph to the data set which compares the schools to benchmark and this should enable deeper conversations. We are working on this with the TSLT (Trust Senior Leadership Team) after Christmas on how to present this to governors. **A Trustee asked when this document is completed.** Mr Buckley advised that this is completed termly and a link to the document when updated will be circulated to Trustees. All data should be RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rated.
Update: On this agenda.
 - M11. Risk Register update and agreement of allocation of risks to committees**

a) It was noted that it may be difficult to allocate risks to committees without the Chairs of Committees present so it was agreed that it would be more beneficial to circulate recommendations which are then agreed by email.

Update: This document has been updated and circulated.

M13. Items from Chair

b) A Trustee asked about the agenda for the AGM. The Chair advised that the main item is the presentation of the annual accounts. This will be discussed in more depth at the Members meeting next week. The Clerk to add this to the next Trust Board agenda. **A Trustee suggested using a hybrid method for the AGM.**

Update: Complete.

M17. Any Other Business

The Chair asked if the Director of Education could attend the next Trust Board meeting for introductions. He starts formally in January.

Update: Complete.

Going Concern

Trustees were content to approve but it was agreed that it would be circulated by email as several Trustees were absent.

Update: Complete.

24. Summary of LGC minutes and Link meeting notes

Documents were circulated in advance of the meeting. From these:

a) There were no concerns raised.

25. Reports and Recommendations from Committees

Documents were circulated in advance of the meeting. From these:

a) People and Remuneration (confidential) 21-02-2024

Mr Buckley summarised the key points from the meeting. The Safeguarding Peer reviews have been altered following a Safeguarding Review from the Local Authority and we have chosen to adopt their model of review. The Safeguarding Peer Reviews will continue to run with Mr Carrington as the lead and working with the Designated Safeguarding Leads. Absence of staff and students is still high but this is being monitored. Mr Carrington is overseeing attendance across the Trust and working on tightening systems. The Remuneration Committee considered any late UPS applications and these were accepted. The Gender Pay Gap report was reviewed and there have been improvements which is positive.

b) Resources verbal update 20-03-2024

The meeting is being held later this week.

c) **A Trustee referred to the LGC summary paper and asked about the £30k predicted deficit for Trewidland.**

d) Confidential appendix.

e) Audit & Risk verbal update 20-03-2024

The meeting is being held this week.

26. CEO summary of HT Reports – focus on Pupil Progress¹

Do Trustees have any questions to raise on the red areas of the report? A document was circulated in advance of the meeting. From this:

a) Mr Buckley explained that the key indicators are to be monitored over the year and we review

¹ HT reports to be available at meeting. Report to include summary data from HT reports (P14) for each school

the Head Teacher's report each November. Historical data is provided for comparison and a trends tab allows Trustees to see if there are any rises or decreases in the data. Mr Buckley advised that small schools' data can be skewed by due to the small numbers of pupils involved. Data is benchmarked against national averages and any red areas should be challenged by the governors.

- b) Mr Buckley explained SENDK data is red and whilst we are addressing pupils needs, there is a stress on the schools. There are different categories for SEND pupils and the thresholds for EHCPs (Education and Health Care Plans) is high.
- c) **A Trustee noted that there are a number of red areas in the Headteacher Report.** Mr Buckley explained that much of this relates to attendance and we have had a Trust wide focus in this area. **A Trustee noted that PP (Pupil Premium) is red.** Mr Buckley explained that this is Pupil Premium and we have moved to using national benchmarks. One of the main priorities has been to address attendance and this is a slow process to change. In terms of the position of the schools, attendance levels at Liskeard is static, Saltash is improving and Looe attendance has decreased. Mr Carrington explained the work being undertaken in this area which will show as incremental changes.
- d) **A Trustee asked why there is a downward trend in Looe.** Mr Carrington explained that rates of attendance have been impacted by Covid and we need to encourage students back into schools so communication with family's need to be straight forward and welcoming them back into school. This however a national challenge and not just specific to SMART schools and the South West's attendance rates are typically lower than national. The Attendance Leads in all the schools are now meeting termly and we have the tools to tackle the issues.
- e) **A Trustee asked if we should be using national benchmarks due to the South West attendance data being lower.** Mr Carrington advised that we do need to be aspirational and not dismissive due to us being in the South West. Mr Buckley advised that we are making progress. Mr Buckley noted that there are subgroups and it is hard to pick out individual cases at Trust level but this should be challenged by LGCs (Local Governing Committees).
- f) **A Trustee referred to the number of training opportunities for governors and asked if Trustees are included in this.** It was noted that they are not and that Saltash has not completed any training which Mr Buckley will discuss further.

Action: Mr Buckley

27. **Consider and review the SEF**

- Safeguarding update
- SEND Update

A document was circulated in advance of the meeting. From this:

- a) Mr Buckley advised that this document has been reviewed by Ofsted during their recent visits and it has enabled staff to focus on particular areas which need improvement. Mr Buckley advised that Landulph have been visited by Ofsted who reviewed all the areas and we have used this to populate the data.
- b) Trustees should be looking for patterns in the SEF (Self Evaluation Framework) where the schools have identified areas which need improvement and these are highlighted in red. These areas should be discussed in LGC meetings, addressed by the school and changed before discussion in subsequent meetings. Headteachers should be highlighting any areas which are potential risks and governors should be challenging specific areas and this will promote a greater depth of challenge in the future. The most recent report for Saltash from Ofsted has now been received.
- c) **A Trustee noted that there have not been any changes to the Liskeard SEF.** Mr Buckley will follow this up with the Headteacher.

Action: Mr Buckley

- d) Mr Buckley explained that we have had four Ofsted visits this academic year. Dobwalls, Landulph

and Liskeard Nursery were Good in all areas and Saltash's monitoring report has just been received and Ofsted have acknowledged that we have made progress. Mr Carrington noted that this outcome should help the mindset of the next inspection team. The Saltash RIP (Rapid Improvement Plan) which we were required to have in place by the DfE for the Double RI system, now has all the aims completed which is good.

Mrs Lawson joined the meeting at 6.16pm.

- e) Confidential appendix.
- f) Safeguarding
Safeguarding Reviews are happening across the Trust and Ofsted have reviewed safeguarding during their visits. Mr Carrington explained that as part of being in a Trust, there are benefits from staff doing similar roles and there is a shared understanding of the challenges for students and that we need to have Trust wide approaches. Schools are using the same online platforms and data is being recorded in the same way and this will offer more information to allow us to assess issues and identify trends and then use our limited resources in the best way. Mr Buckley added that there have been detailed conversations which have allowed us to make the changes.
- g) SEND
There are strong SENDCos in all the secondary schools and a SENDCo is working across the three primaries. The SEND group meet regularly and are working together. The Local Authority have requested us to increase places in the ARBs (Area Resources Bases) in Liskeard and Saltash.
- h) **A Trustee asked about places in special schools for students.** Mr Buckley explained there has been a doubling in the number of EHCPs and there is not enough provision in terms of special schools. We are over capacity in terms of physical spaces in the schools and staffing ratios. The severity of need of students is also not what the schools have been designed for.
- i) **A Trustee asked about funding for building special schools.** Mrs Lumbard explained that Cornwall Local Authority are extremely underfunded and Cornwall Schools Forum have reviewed the High Needs Funding and acknowledged that half a million pounds has not improved the SEND deficit. Mr Buckley advised that CACE have brought together all the SEND teams across the county. Mr Carrington explained that the transport costs for SEND students alone has been crippling for the Local Authority. Mr Buckley explained that the exclusion cases in the Trust have found that a large number of students are not suitable for mainstream.

28. Risk Register – Review and consider recommendations from committees

A document was circulated in advance of the meeting. From this:

- a) Mr Buckley explained that the Risk Register has been valuable. It has been found that risks should not be allocated to committees and therefore can be reviewed by any committee.
- b) **A Trustee asked about EHE (Elected Home Educated) students and the risks.** Mr Buckley advised that the rates of EHE is still too high and there are some genuine risks here. Mr Buckley explained that only a small percentage of students which are EHE are due to anxiety. Mr Carrington advised that we are working with families to encourage students back and feel supported by the school and this a Trust wide approach.
- c) **A Trustee asked if the schools are expected to encourage the student to re-join the school.** Mr Buckley advised this is not the schools' responsibility but this is an expectation of the Trust. Mr Carrington explained that schools do go above and beyond to help the parents to get the student back into school. Mrs Lumbard explained that students do not attract any funding once they are out of education so this adds additional pressure on to the Local Authority.
- d) **A Trustee asked about missing data on the report for Saltash and Liskeard.** Mr Buckley advised that Liskeard have an issue in the formula which he can correct. This is also the case for Saltash.

Mr Buckley advised that he will discuss during the next TSLT meeting.

Action: D Buckley

29. **Update on Saltash Rapid Improvement Plan and partnership with Greenshaw Learning Trust**

a) Rapid Improvement Plan

See item 27.

b) Greenshaw Learning Trust

Mr Buckley explained that the Trust Board are required to attend a Greenshaw Trust Board meeting and this is the only condition that we have not met yet on the RIP. The meetings are held virtually and Mr Buckley explained that Trustees only need to observe the meeting but it would be useful to share any best practice.

30. **Update on DfE Feedback and Trust Mergers**

a) Confidential appendix.

31. **Items from Chair**

Trust Monitoring Plan, Members Informal meeting

a) Mr Hallam was not present.

32. **Adoption of Policies**

Documents were circulated in advance of the meeting. From these:

a) Charging and Remissions policy

Counter theft, fraud and corruption policy

Donations policy and procedure

Financial Regulations procedures and policy

Financial Scheme of Delegation

Trustee Governor Expenses

b) Reserves & Investment policy

A small change of wording for Trusts holding 8% to 12% reserves and this is due to more guidance being provided on what level of reserves a Trust should hold.

c) School Meal Debt policy

This is a new policy. Any debts are the responsibility for the school to chase. Having a policy will allow the Headteachers to communicate clearly with parents what expectations are and how to apply for Free Schools meals.

d) All Trustees were content to approve the policies.

33. **Items from this meeting for report back to LGCs**

a) Trustees noted that Local Governors should be challenging any red areas on documents or missing data.

b) Trustees noted that the SEF in Liskeard and Saltash has not been changed and requested that this is reviewed at the next LGC meeting.

c) It was noted from the Headteacher's Report that governors have not completed any training in Saltash. Governors need to regularly undertake training as part of their role.

34. **Agreements made by email**

a) None.

b) It was noted that the Resources Committee will be considering the Energy contracts and this will need to be approved at the next Trust Board meeting.

35. **Date of next meetings:**

18-07-2024 at 5.30pm.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm.

Action Summary	
M26. CEO summary of HT Reports – focus on Pupil Progress f) A Trustee referred to the number of training opportunities for governors and asked if Trustees are included in this. It was noted that they are not and that Saltash has not completed any training which Mr Buckley will discuss further.	Action: Mr Buckley
M27. Consider and review the SEF c) A Trustee noted that there have not been any changes to the Liskeard SEF. Mr Buckley will follow this up with the Headteacher.	Action: Mr Buckley
M28. Risk Register – Review and consider recommendations from committees d) A Trustee asked about missing data on the report for Saltash and Liskeard. Mr Buckley advised that Liskeard have an issue in the formula which he can correct. This is also the case for Saltash. Mr Buckley advised that he will discuss during the next TSLT meeting.	Action: D Buckley