

Full Board Meeting of Osprey Learning Trust

Tuesday 14th July 2020

At 09.27 – Meeting Closed 12.00

Present via Microsoft Teams (Due to Covid-19 Social Distancing)

Present: Nick Tallamy (NT) Chair Sam Trevorrow (ST) Chantelle Mashiter (CM) Jan Caig (JC) – Joined meeting as stated Vic Millard (VM) – left meeting as stated Paul Lilley (PL)	Pat Henchie (PH) Valerie Jeffery (VJ) Katy York (KY) Katy Quinn (KQ) Scott Deeming (SD) – left meeting as stated Jon Newman (JN) – left meeting as stated
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Louise Hart (LH) - Clerk

Apologies: None

Declarations of Interest: None

Item		Action
1	NT - Welcomed members to the meeting	
2	NT - Minutes of previous meeting agreed no matters arising.	
3	<p>Proposed Board Member</p> <p>NT welcomed Katie York to the meeting and brought attention to the pen portrait.</p> <p>KY Hello – I retired in 2016 and following some time away from education now feel ready to join OLT.</p> <p>NT Thank you – I need a proposer and a seconder</p> <p>PH – Proposed</p> <p>NT, KQ and PL – seconded</p> <p>Katie York voted on to the board.</p>	
4	<p>Trust Governance Review.</p> <p>NT gave verbal update:</p> <p>We’re celebrating our 1st anniversary in our current governance format. I have been looking at Best Practice for Internal and External reviews for Governance. For Best Practice I have looked at Accountability for Financial Board, Charities Commission, Government Handbook, and the Finance Policy. The recommendation is for a review every 3 years or a time of significant change. There has been no review since 2011; now is a good time for external review. Ref Scope: to include Trust Board, Effectiveness, Composition and Government Guidelines with a view to actively adopt best practice for Governance and to actively recruit skills to the board from business and moving away from LGB members being on the board.</p> <p>The review is intended to enable us to become the best that we can be, identify opportunities for growth and efficiency and to also look at the LGB’s along-side the Trust review.</p>	

	<p>We can't look at all LGB's at once so adopting a cycle of review to start with the TCS LGB because;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's the longest serving member of the MAT • There is a significant leadership structure change • Level 3 of OFSTED grading <p>*JC joined the meeting*</p> <p>Looking at separating the LGB for ML and ER. We anticipate that the review will show us what we excel at and what we need to address and the learning can spread across the Trust.</p> <p>I have looked at 3 potential providers for the review and only 1 could do everything – Sally Timmings – Bishop Flemming who is a national leader of Governance.</p> <p>I will put the full scope for review on to the portal. It will involve board members being interviewed over the next few weeks. Any Questions?</p> <p>VM Firstly it's long overdue. If members aren't familiar with the LGB at TCS it's in flux and the Governing body is being split into ML and ER</p> <p>NT Thank you VM and you standing down as chair is one of the reasons we have selected TCS</p> <p>PL: These reviews can be clunky and bureaucratic. We need to be clear what we want and what will move us forward. We all need to be clear from the outset of expectations rather than a document that just gathers dust.</p> <p>NT Yes, I've looked at this to ensure that we are successful on a strategic level rather than reactive as we have been in the past. The recruitment of the Governance Officer will take away some work from the Directors. Any other comments</p> <p>VJ How much will it cost and how will it be split</p> <p>NT It's a Trust cost and will be top end 10K although it's thought it will significantly less than this depending on how much preparatory work we do</p> <p>KQ Yes, it's a sizeable sum but it won't cost that much as we will provide plenty of pre-reading. She'll be spending her time talking to members. We anticipate that the actual cost will be half that (5k) She will then give an action plan / road map and scope how to recruit new directors and support the LGB at TCS and generally to ensure that we are supporting them to improve.</p>	
5	<p>CEO report</p> <p>KQ presented the CEO report. In such a period of flux re Covid-19 and this has caused us to go into silos of individual schools, however this is what has been required.</p> <p>You can see from the compiled reports on how children have engaged in online learning and how schools have supported vulnerable children. Primary data is available nationwide and we are above Devon and National levels of engagement – the figures are positive. The secondary school held review meetings and assessment of years 10 and 12 and show 80% attendance - the figures are positive and are shown on a sliding scale of engagement.</p> <p>The final report is from Deb Wring looking at the school improvement plan e.g. curriculum planning and development. It gives an overarching view with the 3 main areas being vocabulary development, developing subject leaders and adapting the curriculum for all, which are all key things that came out of the OFSTED report at ER but need to be explicit across the Trust.</p>	

	<p>In November we will do some shared learning walks with heads visiting other schools. There is a steep improvement curve at ER and a progress group is to be set up with Rob Harris from West Country Schools Trust</p> <p>KQ and RH to form a progress group with members of the board. I have spoken to KY about joining that group and open it up to other head and chairs of the LGBs. It will report on a Termly basis. Any volunteers, please let me know.</p> <p>JC I haven't seen the Deb Wring report at the LGB. Cockwood have been praised for their Somerset Literacy and AR work but we at Kenn and Kenton have been using this for years</p> <p>KQ That's a question for Amanda (AS) - maybe it's just not in the schools improvement plan or perhaps she (AS) may not have mentioned it - please check with AS.</p> <p>JN The TES (Teignmouth Education Services) which is a subsidiary has been changed to OES and all non-school based activities now sit here including catering, IT support services and Alive Health and Fitness. All of these lines have now been removed from the school budget and have their own budget.</p> <p>Line management is now Trust line management rather than ER and this will enable greater focus on improvement of the school.</p> <p>OES represents 502k income generated which is not part of the teaching grant. VM Well done.</p> <p>KQ It means that we have a really tidy budget. We have been successful in applying for condition improvement funds – one of only 5 schools, from the SIFT fund. This is to replace a damaged wall at Kenton which is complicated at it is over 500 year old building with lots of issues. Being part of an academy enabled Kenton to apply for the grant. The Gym is reopening as from the 25th work is underway to see what we are able to offer. Survey has been undertaken and shown that members are concerned with the gym opening but can take or leave classes. There is a big book of guidance to look at prior to opening on the 25th.</p> <p>KQ What might September look like?</p> <p>There are many uncertainties. Previously we have been operating under guidelines from the DfE but now there are 6 actions that schools must take which include good hygiene, hand-washing and cleaning etc., forward facing desks, staff and children arranged in bubbles, staggered start and finish times, mandatory school attendance and uniform. With regard to shielding staff – they are expected to return with a risk assessment and we will be looking at that at the end of the summer – over the whole of OLT is 5-6 staff, Full curriculum prioritising gaps in key areas (English, Maths, Science, Vocabulary, Reading).</p> <p>There has been funding of 650 million announced for catch up but schools have yet to have this confirmation. There is apparently £80 per pupil but this is unclear whether it is for each pupil or for pupil premium children – this could be the difference between employing a TA or a teacher.</p>	<p>KQ</p> <p>JC</p>
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	<p>Behaviour expectations are to reflect that children have been away from school for a long time and children might also be experiencing anxiety. We also anticipate that lots of safeguarding issues may come.</p> <p>OFSTED inspections will be suspended until Jan 2021 but there will be 'see how you're getting on' visits during the Autumn term so see how the recovery curriculum is going.</p> <p>Assessment – All primary assessment (Phonic and yr 2 and 6 SATS) will take place with children who missed their phonic assessment doing it in year 2 alongside the SATS</p> <p>Secondary assessment - A levels and GCSE's will go ahead a month later with the content also taking into account what might have been missed.</p>	
6	<p>Finance Report</p> <p>JN you have the FAR minutes. The main points are the Covid-19 situation and the income reduction as a result There have been some significant liabilities e.g. cafeteria, and Alive, plus some smaller liabilities that would not be met by income.</p> <p>There is a 150-160k liability however in the primary schools this has been mitigated by lower costs in this challenging and changing situation.</p> <p>DCC said that the Easter and half term costs would be met however it became clear that staff costs could not be claimed and schools closing with a surplus would not be able to claim. We did not close with a surplus so we are able to claim in the region on 17k</p> <p>There are also savings in respect of utilities. 10 staff have been furloughed fully since April and then flexibly since June and continuing through August.</p> <p>Management accounts of the other schools running costs are lower in April and May but now are rising with the schools opening and gearing up to be open in September.</p> <p>Monitoring reduced costs with further mitigation of loss of income.</p> <p>Benchmarking data looks at historical information</p> <p>Teachers' costs have increased by 2.75% pay award and pension costs have increased due to auto enrolment into pensions.</p> <p>Cockwood's teaching costs are higher showing 60K against 50k for the other schools, they also have larger class sizes.</p> <p>KQ National benchmarking for primary schools is more difficult and that's why they've been categorised into their Free School Meal levels.</p> <p>VJ Looking at Cockwood the situation is concerning. I imagine you will be working with them</p> <p>KQ Yes we will be working with the Cockwood finance committee re their future plans.</p>	
7	<p>Budgets 20 -21</p> <p>JN all the papers have been available on the Portal. We have to agree a balanced budget. The worksheet on the portal shows a consolidated budget with at 14k deficit, this is due to Cockwood.</p> <p>There is a planned underspend of 8k plus the surplus from OES which should give a balanced budget.</p> <p>The ER is the biggest budget and the restructure has removed 200k spend.</p> <p>Support staff pay award has yet to be agreed – the unions are balloting members after rejecting the pay increase in April – we should know by September. There will of course be back pay to come.</p>	

	<p>Teachers will receive a 2.75 increase however this % is greater in the lower scales and squeezed in the middle levels on account of the Government aim to make the starting salary 30k.</p> <p>The contribution of ML to the Trust is higher than ER and other schools. Staff at ER support ML</p> <p>JC it states that Kenn and Kenton are getting money for fibre optic internet – for clarity it is for Kenn</p> <p>KQ yes that’s been approved</p> <p>KY ER staff are working at ML?</p> <p>KQ In 2011 when we became an academy we shared staff, back office staff and this was a cost effective way of improvement and resulted in ML gaining a Good result from OFSTED. Working across the sites has eroded over time and ML is now a stand-alone school. Separating them with enable ER to focus on improvement. Previously 12% was paid in to MAT fund with just the one head for both schools but things have changed. Teignmouth schools have had the furthest to travel since becoming an OLT</p> <p>JN Periods of school closure have put pressure on OES and the assumptions therefore for catering and Alive. If schools close then infant meals and free school meals money will still be paid, however the parental income will reduce. With regard to Hazeldown, how much money will be passed over if the schools are closed?</p> <p>VM There are 2 observations, for the record when we first started talking about the restructure at ER in Nov 2019 the saving of leadership costs were to be reinvested further down in teaching lines. The reality is that savings are not going to be reinvested in the teaching line. It’s not anyone’s fault as the money just wasn’t there. There might then be tension from frontline teaching staff due to repaying the loan and OES money being moved away from the budget.</p> <p>Secondly the OLT FAR committee is looking at limited information for the schools’ budgets e.g. just 2 lines and we are reliant on the work that JN does with the LGBs and therefore are accepting the integrity of the LGB and JN.</p> <p>NT do you want to respond JN?</p> <p>JN The budgets that come to the FAR have been looked at in depth by the LGBs but if there is a smarter way to do this in future we are open to ideas. In different circumstances there have been informal meetings where we have been able to go through the budget lines in more detail. However the current method is in line with our Terms of Reference.</p> <p>KQ we Trust the LGBs to do the budgets</p> <p>ST queried the MAT contribution of ER of 5.5%</p> <p>JN 5.5% of the same lines were used for the other schools; we used exactly the same lines.</p> <p>KQ we only take that % from the general grant</p> <p>ST Is the 2.75% increase for all staff or just teachers</p> <p>JN We haven’t got a figure for support staff as it is still with the unions but it was the final offer.</p> <p>General discussion around different ways of accounting for pay increase and incremental drift where staff move up the scale as this can cause cost pressures however it is usually balance overall by staff leaving in year.</p> <p>JC staffing costs – we can’t possibly know what’s going to happen in year however we can look at what has happened in the past. Ref VM comments about the budget – it would be a good idea for the full budgets to go to OLT</p>	
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	<p>board; in return the LGB's could have a breakdown of the MAT budget to provide a good picture of how the money is being spent.</p> <p>KQ Happy with that – we can discuss that at the next FAR meeting.</p> <p>JN I have previously brought the MAT budget to LGB's for transparency. OLT can have more detail, we need to ensure that things get done in a timely manner with good information.</p> <p>ST yes that would be good.</p> <p>NT I propose we accept the budgets</p> <p>CM seconded</p> <p>All agreed.</p>	
8	<p>Monitoring of Local Governing Body Minutes.</p> <p>KQ LGBs questions largely discussed information sharing and the 5.5% top slice. This won't be increasing.</p> <p>JC We want a list of services and any changes in services and changes in staffing that may impact on the overall cost. E.g. job adverts not done with consultation with the schools and might impact on our school budgets. Some jobs might seem expensive especially if there are comparable roles at the school</p> <p>KQ I challenge the impact on school budgets as we haven't increased the 5.5%. As the CEO it is for me to put in place my team</p> <p>JC At the time we didn't know the %</p> <p>KQ It's a fixed %</p> <p>JC I wasn't aware</p> <p>KQ also, for example, the School improvement on the MAT line, we're not expecting the schools to contribute to that.</p> <p>There are also ideas around jointly appointing a Speech and Language Therapist, something that could come from OES.</p> <p>JN Thank you KQ. As and when we increase the top slice we would let you know the reason. E.g. it could just be an increase in costs.</p> <p>KQ If we were to increase the top slice we would consult with the schools. We are hoping to grow the MAT by maybe 2 or 3 schools rather than take it away from the current schools.</p> <p>NT Thank you. Cockwood review took place, F&R asked some questions of the OLT FAR. When they've responded it will be made available</p> <p>TCS – no questions but VM confirms that he will be standing down as Chair – he has worked with us for 10 year – Thank you for all you work. Would you like to say anything?</p> <p>VM No. The driving force for stepping down from LGB is that there will be no dual role on the OLT and LG boards.</p> <p>NT Thanks VM. We have 2 new Governors on the Cockwood board. Gareth Harris and Neil Barnes – can someone propose please</p> <p>VJ proposed</p> <p>Seconded by KQ and VM</p> <p>Agreed by all</p>	
9	<p>NT went through the dates of the next meeting.</p>	
10	<p>Chairs Remarks</p> <p>NT regarding the external review – best practice for the Governance review, I will not be standing again for the role of Chair of OLT. Consider please who would be best for nomination and I'm happy to discuss the role privately if you wish.</p>	

Education and Skills Funding Agency have received complaints on a functional governance level

7 allegations – 5 aimed at one member of the school. They've not been able to enter school due to Covid-19 situation. We have completed the investigation regarding the internal allegation and have replied within deadlines with supporting info

Allegations are not founded. We've not heard back from them other than acceptance of our documentation. We are not able to go into the allegations just now until the ESFA findings but will let you know prior to the October meetings of the findings.

Finally with regard to the recent redundancy process JN and SD will you please leave the meeting and also VM, as the LGB chair, please will you leave the meeting too.

SD and JN left the meeting

VM I'd like to understand the Terms of Reference of what is to be discussed.

NT Processes that have involved the LGB

VM I am not aware of what that information will be but will relate to criticism of the LGB or myself I'm wary of possible allegations regarding exiting without the right of reply.

NT At this point I want to give information to the directors and it does implicate discussions at LGB level.

VM Facts? Couched with opinion. I am not comfortable to willingly withdraw

NT I am impartial. I do allow all directors to have their comment and opinion known. I want to relay the information to the Board.

VM I am here as an OLT board member, not a LGB and I am not willing to be removed from meeting

NT I am not calling into question your integrity. If this had happened in my own LGB then I would request to step away

VM It's the wrong way round. I can only surmise, if you are telling me to I must withdraw then I will.

NT I would like you to withdraw yourself

VM I would like the board to be objective and deal with facts not opinion

NT Thank you VM

***VM Left the meeting* 11.20am**