

## Full Board Meeting

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020

At 9.15 Via Microsoft Teams – Meeting Closed 11:22

### Present:

Nick Tallamy (Chair) NT Pat Henchie (PH) Chantelle Mashiter (CM) (left at 10.52) Paul Lilley (PL) Vic Millard (VM) Jan Caig (JC)	Valerie Jeffery (VJ) Sam Trevorrow (ST) Katy Quinn (KQ) Jon Newman (JN joined after item 3) Scott Deeming (SD joined after item 3) James O Connell (JOC Joined for item 3)
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Louise Hart (LH) - Clerk

**Apologies:** None

**Declarations of Interest:** None

Item		Action
1	Nick Welcomed everyone to the meeting.	
2	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting:</b> Minutes have been on the Governance Portal – all were happy with these. <b>Matters Arising:</b> KQ sent a message to all staff on behalf of the Directors of the Board thanking them. Part II discussion, there has been an email votes on two of the three cases regarding the TCS restructure. Votes carried.	
3	<b>TSC Restructure - See Part II minutes</b> James joined the meeting and left after the discussion	
4	<b>Feedback from FAR Committee Meeting</b> JN went through the questions raised at the meeting as follows: <b>Q1. Alive!</b> – what is the liability going forward? Depending on how long we're closed for. It's not looking likely that Alive will reopen before September. Staff costs are around the £4K mark with around £2500 being met by furlough assistance. It is unclear how Furlough will continue after June and rules are subject to change. We are currently receiving around 60-70% as while the government say it will pay up to 80% that only includes a maximum of 3% pension contribution. Going forward we are looking at a shortfall of £1500 a month which could be around £7 – 8k in 5 months <b>Q2. Liability Exeter Rd TES</b> – some costs are being reclaimed e.g. Furlough. We are looking at around 30k per month due to lack of income, however there will be some savings to mitigate this. As mentioned, furlough payments, plus no expenditure on catering provisions, utilities costs, additional staffing costs. Catering might be required following half term depending on who will be back and how we provide food. Costs are around 150K by June and can be mitigated as above. The advice is that existing contracts should continue to be paid as normal. We can support K&K with their catering, plus ask Hazledown to pass on their free school meals income. SDS has a good relationship with Hazledown so we will need to go back and negotiate a reasonable amount for the free school meals.	

<p>These are constantly changing times so it makes it difficult to model.</p> <p>VM: With TES and Alive, what is the worst-case financial risk if this continues for a substantial part of the year. Is there any action that we could take to remove the risk? For example, a decision to close Alive and the Astro</p> <p>JN: There are 2 main parts, Alive and Catering.</p> <p>Catering is likely to break even with the additional income from Hazeldown and costs at Mill Lane not being high</p> <p>Alive has a 1500 shortfall, one option is to reduce staffing however government advice is to avoid redundancy and we wouldn't be in a position to reopen and take advantage of any gains.</p> <p>KQ: we have schools opening on 1<sup>st</sup> June and the guidance is that gyms will reopen on perhaps by early July, we would hold fast. If it goes on into the summer then we would revisit. Summer would be a great time to reopen with everyone wanting to lose the lockdown pounds!</p> <p>VM: This is not a normal gym, this is a struggling gym and this may be an opportunity to remove the risk, however, I am happy to let it roll.</p> <p>KQ: we are looking at streamlining staffing at Alive and are waiting for the government guidance on the 28<sup>th</sup></p> <p>NT: Are there any funds that the government have released that we could apply for to cover some bills?</p> <p>JN: Not initially as the teachers are paid from grant income. Furlough came later for catering and fitness under certain conditions. The professional associations are giving weekly updates</p> <p>KQ: there is a fund from 1<sup>st</sup> June to cover additional cleaning and security.</p> <p>JN: These funds including furlough are tightly audited</p> <p>PL: Does Alive sit within its' own business identity – could it possible attract grant money from Teignbridge or the Bounce Back Loans?</p> <p>JN: Yes, Alive sits as a separate identity,</p> <p>PL: Bounce Back loans started about a month ago and the help from the Local Authority is pretty straight forward. The loan has a minimal interest rate with long repayment terms</p> <p>JN: Trusts are unable to borrow money – you have to get permission from the Secretary of State.</p> <p>VJ: Alive doesn't pay separate business rates so won't be eligible</p> <p>ST: Alive is running as a subsidiary and therefore might not require permission from the Secretary of State</p> <p><b>Q3 MAT Central Costs:</b></p> <p>JN Clarified that this budget was set with no previous budget information as it was brand new. Some costs have been more, some less, clearly, we have a much better picture now.</p> <p><b>Q4 Internal Audit ref Trips</b></p> <p>JN: There have been no trips since then, we can model the new process when there is one with Ron Weston and JOC. I will scrutinise before signing off and we will be using the Devon CC system 'Evolve+'</p> <p>VM: Queried if there had been a policy change</p> <p>KQ: Evolve is the operational procedures that sits under the policy; the policy is unchanged. Evolve slows the process to ensure that all stages of finance sign off and risk assessment are complete.</p> <p>VM: We haven't looked at the policy – are we satisfied that our current policy is fit?</p>	
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KQ: The policy needs looking at and to come to Board. Evolve is a very robust system for both risk assessment and financial control and has somewhat over taken the policy.

PL: Sent KQ an email with the bounce back information

Operating Lease

JN: The policy was not so specific so it is not clear whether or not there has been a breach. There have been some unintended consequences which we will learn from. The policy has been in place since 2012 and the previous auditors were ok with it. The new auditors want more security and so we will look at it in September ready for Board in April.

KQ: Previously the philosophy was to purchase capital items however there are not the cash reserves anymore so we are looking to leasing. That's why it's not as clear in the policy. We will look at the finance policy going forward to reflect.

#### **Budgets 20-21**

JN: There are 6 budgets in total – 4 from the schools and then the MAT central and TES. The 4 are balanced or close to be balanced (with Cockwood as the possible exception) TES budget is comfortably balances with a small surplus to spend or save. We are working with the Chief Accountant of the Ted Wragg Trust who is advising how to set up systems for TES Alive, Catering and Support to sit outside the school's budget.

KQ: Budgets go to the LGB in June and then to the FAR and Board in July for final sign off.

JN: The other area Exeter Rd being much closer to balancing and the restructure will save around 200k for the 20-21 year. In addition, removing TES, changing the curriculum to a 2 week timetable and having options in year 9 rather than 8 have all produced savings;

VM: This is about experience. There is a danger that the timescales mean that the board no more than rubber stamps the budgets. This wasn't the case as previously the Chair and the Vice Chair were involved in the budget setting. Also, the inexperience of the new principal at Exeter Rd. So yes, the budget was easy to balance but what is happening underneath with curriculum and staffing etc. KQ and SD have experience but we need to make sure that we have oversight.

Historically the FAR committee have been involved in setting budget.

KQ: We're in a different world now with the Board and the LGB's. The LGB's will have input and oversight of the school budgets at the finance LGB's and then that comes to the Board via the FAR committee. Be assured that there is robust scrutiny at the LGB level. JN attends the LGB meetings to ensure scrutiny prior to them coming to the FAR committee.

JN Exeter Rd will be making significant savings due to the restructure and options and although some money has been recycled the budget balances. Class sizes, curriculum, and no of groups all go to LGB's.

KQ: Without the restructure at TCS there would be massive ongoing costs, so if the LGB agreed their budget would be far from balanced.

NT: LGB's still have financial responsibility for their budgets; it was part of the joining agreement that the LGB's wanted to retain financial responsibility.

JC: I have no problem with K&K and Cockwood, however Exeter rd. seems to be haemorrhaging – will the restructure be enough? And with regard to the TES surplus, I personally don't think that how and what to spend it on is always appropriate, as what may come up in the year? Save it and see what we need it for. Also, what if the repayments aren't so easy to accomplish. I'm becoming

	<p>more cynical about the finances that we have walked into and it will take some time before I am reassured. How long will it take to turn the culture from spend to save?</p> <p>JN: The issue had been that the culture for the last 5-6 years has been that everything that came in should be spent and the Board agreed a lower level of reserves of 200k, a couple of years we have dipped below this and it is now around 100k. We have spent what came in because we needed it to fund the changes and improvements.</p> <p>There is the leadership restructure, The change in options year (which has saved 1.5 teacher) and Extracted TES – previously not set up as a separate entity as it was seen to increase staffing capacity for the schools and was made a subsidiary wholly due to corporation tax. We recognise we need to treat it as separate and finances have been run on a very tight line. The culture to spend not put away was also necessary to improve the school and make use of resources.</p> <p>KQ: TES and Exeter Rd are for the first time very clean. Exeter rd. now has all the lines taken out that aren't part of the school. Now it has all schools being able to set clear budgets based on discreet funding. We can now start thinking about building reserves. Had we not worked in that collaboration we would not have seen the improvements at Mill Lane.</p> <p>JN: We have never been in debt or made a redundancy; 50% of all Trusts have done one or both. That's not to say that we're sitting on our laurels, however small reserves are common in the sector.</p> <p>JC: reiterated the need to protect own LGB and school while being part of the Trust</p> <p>NT: We can all understand these points</p> <p>VM: With respect I don't think that the original question was answered. The scrutiny of the budgets will not be sufficient to get an understanding on what is going on in the individual budgets.</p>	
5	<p><b>CEO Report</b></p> <p>KQ: This is a quickly changing situation with issues from Furlough to vulnerable children. I have met with Deb Wring (Virtually) with regard to the Schools Improvement and curriculum planning at Exeter rd. we have been looking at the humanities and vulnerable children which James is looking at. Amanda fed back that it felt good to get back to business! Deb will come back to do learning walks and talks with the kids and collaboration across the Trust. All of you will have seen the RSC letter.</p> <p>The Covid-19 action plan is a framework for the Schools Leadership to use as the situation impacts schools in different ways, e.g. Cockwood is a tiny school where distancing is impossible, Mill Lane is larger so it's not so much of an issue.</p> <p>Heads are meeting virtually at least once a week.</p> <p>The week beginning June 1<sup>st</sup> the schools will reopen for some children; Mill Lane has a phased approach, K&amp;K have delayed the start until Thursday and are using the house system to implement a family grouping Cockwood – reception and year 1</p> <p>This is all subject to Government Guidelines in this very fluid environment. There are the logistics of keeping 5-year olds apart and much talk about 'bubble's and not breaking bubbles. LGB Chairs will be aware of the curriculum provision in school and at home, maintaining online learning and PHSE.</p>	

	<p>Exeter rd. has more space and will be looking to maintain curriculum and specialist subjects.</p> <p>School lunches – hoping for packed lunches outside.</p> <p>Catering for Mill Lane and K&amp;K (as their caterer is not yet ready) Cockwood caterers are ready but budget and how many children will need to be considered.</p> <p>Risk – Children / adults will have symptoms so what are we putting in place for staff working with children while waiting for a parent to come and pick up? Enhanced PPE and a ‘sickbay’</p> <p>Inevitably there will be some cases of the virus, we will be ensuring ordinary PPE ref handwashing, social distancing and non-face-touching. Office staff to have enhanced PPE while waiting with children who need to go home.</p> <p>Schools are completing the RA100 risk assessment form and KQ is visiting schools, however the situation is very fluid.</p> <p>JC: As well as PPE for staff we need to protect the mental wellbeing of all staff. Also, to communicate the masks are to protect you from infecting someone else not to stop you getting infected. How will this apply when children are unwell?</p> <p>KQ: It’s in our thoughts, JOC has sourced a visor which might be more child friendly. Facial expressions are very important, some staff have decorated their visors. Some kids have been frightened by staff wearing masks.</p> <p>JC: Will the children be wearing them?</p> <p>KQ: The advice is that the child would need to be sitting in a well-ventilated area. With regard to Mental Health, we have signed up as a trust a lady called Jazz who does a resource for wellbeing for staff. Still seeking PHSE / wellbeing for kids.</p> <p>PH: Love the idea of visors for staff- it’s important to see the face. I feel very much more confident that the Trust Board will be able to support all</p> <p>PL: I have 100% support for the Executive Team in their plans. It will be impossible to get everything right. I believe the government will push through the opening of schools as the gap between the middle class and the vulnerable is widening. How do we target those individuals so that the gap doesn’t widen further?</p> <p>KQ: Some say the gap has widened by 75% - we share these concerns. Also, gaps widen in area where we might not expect. For example, where well cared for children might have only one device in the house and so can’t access online leaning.</p> <p>VM: Is there consensus between the heads and yourselves in respect of the triangle of disagreement between government, trade unions and the Head Teachers?</p> <p>KQ: We’ve been given guidance by the government and I think we’d all rather a delay of a couple of weeks e.g. for clearing classrooms etc however we are united in that we want to get the children back to learning with their peers in a safe way.</p> <p>JN: From an employer’s point of view we have issues with staff – it’s all about Risk assessing we don’t know the answers so we follow the government guidelines.</p> <p>KQ: Schools are currently polling parents of the relevant year group and it’s looking like 50 – 60% will attend. Then we need to look at which children and are they safe?</p> <p>NT: Any questions?</p> <p>VJ: No</p>	
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	<p>ST: Can we accommodate it with staff numbers if staff don't want to come back?  KQ: That's why we're polling parents. We're also consulting with staff to see if they are happy to return. Some are happy, some are concerned / shielding / general anxiety.  PH: Communication is very important, we need clear systems of communication  KQ: Yes, Head teachers have a whole range of methods to ensure this</p>	
6	<p><b>Policies</b>  NT: I propose that we accept the policies.  <b>All in agreement</b>  NT: Going forward, while we are unable to meet are VM, PH and VJ still happy to continue to be members of the policy sub group and to work on a schedule of review going forward (ALL AGREED YES)  NT: I propose that we allow the admin / housekeeping changes to be made  <b>All agreed</b>  A discussion then about separate Safeguarding guidelines sent to schools  <b>To check that this has been discussed at K&amp;K</b></p>	JC
7	<p><b>Feedback from Local Governing Bodies.</b>  No questions from Cockwood  Kenn and Kenton. – Insurance issues query as the Kenn site is partially closed. Insurance company confirm that it is termed as restricted usage as per school holidays.  Consideration ref the RA for opening and the curriculum – what's delivered faced to face – blended offering so we're not left with the huge gap of Key workers / Vulnerable. – Devon Collect information on a daily basis. RED RA children will be checked on a weekly basis with visual contact.  Add H&amp;S – this will be covered in the RA  <b>There will need to be an amended Fire Evacuation Procedure</b> to take account of more fire marshals etc to be help in the first 2 weeks of being back.  Additional cleaning in high traffic areas in K&amp;K and ML  <b>PPE – schools to source their own. Head teachers know to order theirs before half term</b></p>	
8	<b>Date of next meeting 14<sup>th</sup> July – Virtual Meeting 9.30 am</b>	

**Meeting closed at 11:22**