



LEARNING ACCORD MULTI ACADEMY TRUST
COMPANY NUMBER 10261517
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF TRUSTEES
11 DECEMBER 2017 AT SCISSETT C.E. ACADEMY

Minutes of a meeting of the directors (the ‘Trustees’) of the above named company (the ‘Company’) held at Scissett CE Academy on 11 December 2017 at 6.00 p.m.

Present:

Gillian Hamer (Chair), Simone Bennett, Julie Bowdidge, Theresa France, Dorothy Gott, Steven Horne, John Knox, Elaine Watson and Stephen Waud.

In attendance: Janet Edmunds (Meeting Clerk), Gemma Faulkner, (Trust Finance Officer)

96. Welcome and Opening Prayer

96.1 The Chair welcomed Mr John Knox to the meeting and Mr Stephen Waud, who was expected to join the meeting late, both new Academy Ambassador Trustees.

96.2 The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and opened with a prayer.

97. Apologies for Absence and Consent

97.1 Apologies were received from Nicola Evans (consent). Apologies for expected late arrival received from Julie Bowdidge and Stephen Waud.

98. Declarations of Interest

98.1 There were no declarations of interest.

99. Representation

99.1 Appointments

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	
Mr John Knox	11 December 2017	Academy Ambassador Trustee
Mr Steven Waud	11 December 2017	Academy Ambassador Trustee

100. Minutes of the Meeting held 25 September 2017

100.1 RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2017 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

101. Executive Head Teacher's Report

101.1 The report was presented by the CEO. This had been circulated by email to the Trustees 7 days prior to the meeting.

The Report highlighted the following areas:

101.2 Assistant Head Teacher absences due to illness. One member of staff had now returned, one was expected to return in January, and it was unclear when the third would be back.

101.3 The audit had been a huge piece of work and had been vigorous and intense. The CEO wished to thank Gemma Faulkner, Trust Finance Officer, for all her hard work.

101.4 The Trustees had submitted a bid to CIF for some work across the Academies including the Nursery building roof and damp in the nursery building at Skelmanthorpe Academy; refurbishment of toilets at Scissett CE Academy and skylights/window replacements at St Aidan's CE Academy. Further bids would also be submitted as follows: Helme CE (VA) J & I School for rewiring and heating. Although Helme had not yet converted because Academy Orders have been issued they were eligible to apply for CIF funding via the MAT.

101.5 The first external audit was completed in November by Simpson and Wood and the MAT was declared to have a clean set of accounts.

101.6 The MAT's first Trustees' Report and Audited Accounts had been completed. These would be submitted to Companies House following approval at this meeting and the Annual General Meeting with Members was on 18 December 2017.

101.7 A change in the Finance Handbook stated that all letters received from the Accounting Officer, must be Minuted as having been received by Trustees.

RESOLVED: The following letters from the Accounting Officer were received and acknowledged by the Trustees:

- 17 March 2017. This letter had informed the MAT they had to do the budget forecast return outturn submitted by 19 May 2017 and the budget forecast return submitted by 28 July 2017.

- 30 June 2017. This letter was a reminder of compliance. It gave a reminder of deadlines, the lands and buildings collection which was submitted 31 October 2017, the financial statements, the Accounts return (January 2018) and the deadlines for the next budget forecast return outturn and budget forecast return.

101.8 A letter had been received from the Regional School Commissioner, Vicky Beer, formally approving Learning Accord as a sponsor.

101.9 The report outlined pupil numbers for 2017, currently totalling 504.

101.10 A full Business Plan had been put in place for 2017-18 and Trustees were presented with a copy, also emailed to them 7 days prior to the meeting. This provided an update towards priorities including:

- Establishing governance
- Development of local governing bodies
- School improvement and effectiveness
- Financial management efficiencies and effectiveness.

101.11 Growth Strategy. The Business Plan set out the growth strategy.

Mr Steven Horne joined the meeting.

Q. Who decided on the growth strategy?

A. The CEO. The predictions were made being mindful of the MAT being a new Academy and being cautious initially about not growing too quickly.

Q. As we move through the 3 year plan, do you think the Trustees will become more confident and efficient and effective at introducing new academies to the MAT?

A. Yes, it is hoped we will become slicker and more confident in the processes. Any predicted figures around growth may be amended as the MAT develops.

101.12 The CEO reported that due diligence had now been completed for Helme CE J & I School. The completed due diligence report and a 2-page summary setting out the risks and mitigating factors had been provided for trustees' information. The target date for conversion was 1 March 2018, however, the CEO felt this might be subject to change as there were issues which needed to be resolved. A series of consultations had taken place during the first week of December and a meeting with the local governing body. Planning meetings had taken place with the school, Department of Education, Kirklees LA and the Diocese of Leeds and the solicitors during November, with the next meeting scheduled for 11 January 2018. The outstanding issues included

an unoccupied house attached to the school buildings, accessibility issues with footpaths across the land and lease to the playing fields.

Mr Stephen Waud arrived.

101.13 An application to the MAT Development and Improvement Fund had been submitted which would be used to strengthen the central team. This funding would be used to employ a School Improvement Officer. This would be a temporary post. A decision would be received in March 2018.

101.14 The CEO thanked the Trustees for all their hard work and particularly for the work carried out by the committees.

Mrs Julie Bowdidge arrived.

102. MAT Budget & Audit Report including Annual Trustee Report

102. 1 Gemma Falconer, MAT Finance Officer, presented the report which had been circulated to Trustees 7 days prior to the meeting, and focussed attention to the Executive Summary.

102. 2 The Audit had been declared “clean” with nothing qualified.

102.3 Recommendations had been made which included:

VAT control accounts as these did not balance. The Finance Officer now knew how to deal with this.

- Debtor accounts and this was the result of using a new system, but again this could now be resolved.
- School funds to be put onto HCSS, and this would commence from start of new school year in September 2018.
- Operating a standardised filing system – this would be considered and tweaks made to the systems at the 3 Academies.
- Entering invoices on the system when they were received rather than when paid.
- Internal audit, as well as external audit, should be done by someone external to the Trust. The Auditors felt that for the Trust Finance Officer to carry this out was not appropriate.

102.4 Following approval by Trustees, the report would be presented to the members at the Annual General Meeting and must be posted on the Learning Accord website by January 2018.

Q. With regard to debtors, how much money is involved?

A. This relates to Parent Pay and is a maximum of approximately £200 per school.

Q. Is there a policy in place what will not let this debt escalate?

A. We have developed a policy regarding Parent Pay debtor. A 3-week cycle has been put in place to engage with any parents with monies unpaid. At the end of this period, a child would be moved to sandwiches, providing this was not detrimental to the child/children concerned.

Q. The reserve of £54,000, is this adequate or not?

A. Ideally we would like this to be more. However the budget is manageable.

Q. Under reporting standards FRS 102, there are particular ways of recording grants, land and property. Have the auditors taken this into account?

A. Yes this was considered.

Q. Unless land and property of a charity is defined in the Reserve Policy, this would need to be re-valued every year. Has this happened?

A. We have not yet been able to access the conversion value, and so we have used the insurance value for two of the academies. By next year we should have received the DFE valuation and should be able to re-state this.

102.5 The Report needed to go to Companies House before 31 December 2017 and to the DFE by 1 January 2018.

RESOLVED: Trustees agreed to approve the Audited Accounts including Annual Trustee Report and this to be signed by the CEO and Chair of Trustees.

103. Update on MAT visits to schools

The CEO presented Notes from Visit for all 3 Academies and these were emailed to Trustees 7 days prior to the meeting.

103.1 Visits had focussed on lesson observations on the main, with every teacher in all 3 academies being observed. The observations were very positive throughout the Trust.

103.2 Future actions and recommendations had been made and documented.

104. Update from MAT Heads Group

104.1 The CEO reported that the Heads Group had not met since the last Trustee meeting but work had continued in the background.

104.2 A meeting had taken place involving all teachers on 15 November 2017. This had focused on reading and phonics. The feedback received from teachers was that this had been very beneficial.

104.3 Face to Face Safeguarding and Prevent Training had been arranged for May 2018.

104.4 Head Teacher appraisals had taken place.

104.5 Work had taken place around the Conditional Improvement Fund.

105. Reports from Committees

105.1 Finance and Resources Committee – 21 November 2017

Mrs Theresa France presented the report. The meeting had focussed on the following areas:

- Representatives from Simpson Wood Auditors had attend the meeting and explained the Trustee Report and Audited accounts.
- The Minutes outlined the recommendations from the Regularity findings (Min 102 refers).

Q. What would the consequences of not complying with any of these regulations be?

A. We have received a letter containing a statement of recommendations, and we need to respond to this. We will inform them which of these we will be rectifying immediately, those which we will apply in September 2018 and those which we have taken on board, considered and will be making some amendments. We would qualify if we did not consider the recommendations. We will be following good practice.

- Accounting Officer letters of 17 March 2017, 30 June 2017 were received by Trustees and outlined in the Minutes (Min 101.8 refers).
- Discussion around the application submitted to the MDIF.

105.2 Pay, Personnel and Performance Committee – 22 November 2017

Mrs Gillian Hamer presented the report.

- There is currently space for an additional Trustee on this Committee.
- The following policies had been reviewed and accepted without amendments:
 - Updated Pay Policy
 - Travel and Subsistence Policy
 - Training and Professional Development Policy
- Gillian Hamer had agreed to seek advice from Nicky Evans around Executive Head Teacher pay, and would report this back to Trustees under Any Other Business.

- Gillian Hamer thanked Nicky Evans for her valuable contribution towards HR issues and reviewing policies.

105.3 Standards & Effectiveness Committee – 30 November 2017

Julie Bowdidge presented this report. The Committee had:

- Reviewed the revised headline data. This presented an even more positive picture with all outcomes for the MAT being above the National and also Local Authority figures.
- Reviewed the Analysed School Performance reports for the 3 academies and noted some differences in the cohorts of children across the MAT with 8 disadvantaged pupils in Y2 cohort at Scisseett, 4 at Skelmanthorpe and 0 at St Aidan's. It was reported that cohort sizes at Skelmanthorpe had an impact on overall percentages. Trustees had looked at the boy/girl gender gap in attainment, for reading, writing and maths, this being most marked in the area of reading.
- Reviewed Data Summary Reports. Of particular note was that prior attainment charts indicated an improving picture at Skelmanthorpe Academy.
- Looked at School Notes of visits.

RESOLVED: The Trustees were thanked for the reports from the Committees.

106. Growth Strategy

106.1 Update Helme CE (VA) J & I School

This item had been outlined earlier in the meeting (Min 101.12 refers).

Q. If the house attached to the school is handed over to the MAT what would the purpose of this building be? Could it be used to increase income?

A. It would need to be used for educational purposes. It could not be rented out as a house as having a tenant would present safeguarding issues. There may be other ways to use this space to create income.

106.2 Minute deleted

106.3 Update St John's CE Infants, Dewsbury

The Head of St John's had requested a meeting to consider conversion, and the meeting would be held in January 2018.

107. Any Other Business

107.1 Facilities Management

Both Scissett Academy and St Aidan's Academy had not paid into trade union facility time from April 2017, believing this not to be necessary if trade union meetings were held outside of school time. However, it now transpired this was a more complex matter and the trade union had deemed it to be a "measure" (change in terms and conditions). The CEO said she had referred to 2014 DFE Guidance and had written and asked a number of questions for which she was now awaiting a response.

107.2 Minute deleted

Elaine Watson left the meeting.

Elaine Watson re-joined the meeting.

107.3 Trustee request

The CEO reported that Helme CE J & I School had made a request to ask if any Trustees would be willing to attend their Governing Body meetings as either a one off or on a regular but temporary basis to help strengthen the Governing Body. Trustees were asked to consider this and email the CEO if they were able to help.

107.4 Late Declaration of Interest

Mr John Knox made a declaration of interest, that his daughter was a pupil at St Aidan's Academy.

108. Dates & Times of Future Meetings

RESOLVED: That future meetings of the Learning Accord Academy Trust would be held at the following times at Scissett CE Academy:

Full Trustee Meetings:

Monday 19th March 2018 6.00pm

Monday 18th June 2018 6.00pm

The following item to be added to the Agenda for 19 March 2018: Facilities Management

109. Agenda, Minutes and Related Papers – Academy Copy

RESOLVED: Minute 106.2 and 107.2 to be excluded from the copy to be made available at the Academy schools, in accordance with the Articles of the Trust.

There being no further business the meeting closed.

Meeting closed at 8.00pm