

BEST Trustees' Meeting

24th January 2020, 9:30-12:20

Room 914, Block 20, SWA



Attendees

Alan Lee (AL), Ilona Bond (IB), Paul Walker (PW), David Shelvey (DS), Tony Sanderson (TS), Claire Mycock (CM), David Morgan (DM) and Craig Smith (CS)

Minute taker: Yvonne Humphryes (YH)

Approval of Trustees minutes: Previous Trustee (20.9.19) and BEST AGM (4.12.19) minutes approved and signed

Notification of any perceived conflicts of interest: DS declared that he is the Chair of Overview and Children Services Scrutiny Committee for Central Bedfordshire Council.

Monthly cash flow and management accounts: The monthly cash flow and management accounts for BEST are received on a monthly basis by IB, PW, DS, DM and AL on behalf of the board of Trustees, all of whom confirmed that they are happy with the accounts and are satisfied that the Trust is financially sound.

Two Tier

With the guidance and approval of all Trustees, AL and IB submitted a response to the CBC Schools for the Future 2 tier consultation process. The response has been shared with BEST employees, CBC, DfE, RSC, Local Councillors and the new schools network.

AL provided an overview of the sequence of events and actions undertaken by BEST to date. AL has received some positive responses from local councillors and the DfE. Henlow Academy/two tier does not feature on Headteacher Board agenda for January 2020.

CS met with two CBC officers to review the formula used for pupil forecasting and to look at various models for pupil placements. CS felt that none of the models explored offered a suitable solution.

AL advised that SWA are unsure as to whether a 'sixth form college' offering level 2 courses is something they'd wish to explore. Mindful that ETA may be in the most challenging place, with regard to CBCs two tier plans, Trustees considered whether there was potential to review the sixth form provision at ETA. Already, ETA is a designated 9-19 provider. The future of the Sixth form provision within BEST needs focus; to support with this BEST will contact CBC regarding a feasibility report.

AL, CS and the Principals of RBA and SWA visited an all-through school, 'Wootton Park School'. The visit was interesting but it was acknowledged the context of the school was very different not least because of pupil numbers. Furthermore, some members of the RBA LGB are keen for RBA to become a Secondary School.

Decision: BEST will continue to work with the CBC, whilst advocating a co-ordinated single move for all schools.

Action: BEST to determine the position regarding LVA. The LVA LGB have raised concerns regarding the pressures on the Principal managing two separate schools that are working to different timelines.

Action: BEST to contact CBC regarding a feasibility report for the BEST sixth form provision.

BEST Action Plan

AL presented Trustees with the 'Rag Rated' Action Plan. AL provided a headline overview; the Action plan dates back to 2016, when AL joined the Trust and includes the following:

- Convert from BEMAT to BEST – Action completed.
- Grow from six to ten schools by 2023; BEST has grown from six to nine schools.
- All schools to have an Ofsted rating of at least 'Good'; ETA should receive their next Ofsted inspection by May 2020, AL believes that the school has worked hard and should succeed in achieving 'Good' as a minimum.

- Move from three to two tier schools; in accordance with the CBC proposals BEST schools should become two tier.
 - All BEST schools to be financially stable; NB works closely with the schools to ensure this is the case.
- AL advised that BEST will be working towards achieving a Safeguarding award by 2020-21.

AL advised that BEST will be moving towards more standardisation across the trust as requested by the Principals.

The architecture has been put in place within the School Improvement provision; courses are being run and networking opportunities are being provided. However, more needs to be done to push educational outcomes to the next level. BEST have commissioned an Ofsted Inspector to visit all BEST schools to offer an opinion on next steps.

TS asked at what point do we start taking action and what does that look like; AL feels much of the drive and challenge needs to come from the Principal and LGB. BEST is providing significant levels of support to both. The Performance Committee will discuss educational outcomes further.

Trustees reviewed the stakeholder feedback for shared services. The Trustees commended the Finance Department on their effectiveness, high levels of customer service and ability to adapt and flex in times of need.

CS has spent time implementing new contracts and SLAs for our external providers. Compliance, Health and Safety, and ICT have all scored well. Some dissatisfaction has been encountered with EPM and AMR – this is being monitored. The Apprenticeship programme has not been fully utilised resulting in tax needing to be paid; the Operations Officer has the task of improving the apprenticeship uptake across the Trust.

Action: CS to amend the colour coding within the document to make it easier to read.

AL is working towards implementing a new stakeholder/feedback schedule with effect from September 2020.

RSC Feedback

AL as CEO and IB as Chair of Trustees attended a meeting with RSC towards the end of November. The Trustees reviewed the letter sent to BEST following the meeting:

1. The outcome results are fairly static over the last 3 years but compare well nationally
2. The Trust is financially secure
3. BEST is a stable Trust, with a clear strategic plan for the future.

AL commented that the RSC looks at progress outcomes, this is contradictory to the new Ofsted Framework. School leaders are having to accommodate messages that are often contradictory from the DfE, Ofsted and RSC.

Policies for Approval

Admissions Policy 2021/22

Decision: Consultation feedback reviewed. Trustees unanimously approved the Admission Policy 2021/22.

Redundancy Policy

Decision: Annual review – no changes made. Trustees unanimously approved the Redundancy Policy.

Health and Safety Policy

Decision: Trustees unanimously approved the Health and Safety Policy.

NQT Policy

Decision: Trustees unanimously approved the NQT Policy.

Trustees have approved all of the above policies for distribution and use across the Trust.

COO Update

CS advised Trustees that the PBA permanent build is progressing well and asked subject to the permanent site being ready on time, what the plans would be for the PBA temporary build.

Decision: Trustees have agreed that once PBA has relocated to its permanent site, ETA may use the temporary building for the time being.

The planning officers have asked for a ten-day extension in relation to the Langford Nursery planning application, CS awaits the decision.

Campton Lower School have confirmed that they wish to submit an application to join BEST.

Matters arising

Health and Safety

- CS advised Trustees that they would receive a termly Health and Safety Report.
- Smartlog is a compliance system that facilitates on-line training and much more. Smartlog to be used across the Trust from February 2020; training has taken place.
- Health and Safety Audits completed across the Trust – Action Plans are in place.

Riddor

1. Staff member fell and fractured their elbow in the SWA carpark
2. A child trapped their finger in a door at RBA – this happened during a community event outside of school hours.

CM asked whether there is a process for linking accidents involving children to safeguarding. **Action:** CS to find out.

GDPR

No reportable incidents.

Appraisal summary

AL asked the Principals and Chairs of LGBs for their feedback on the Principal Appraisal Process; feedback has been very positive.

Any financial issues identified are included within the Principals' appraisal. This said, finances are tightly monitored by the central finance team and there is little opportunity to overspend.

Horizon HR support Trustees with the CEOs appraisal. From September 2019, Horizon HR now also support the CEO with the Central Team Executive appraisals to ensure that BEST can demonstrate that they follow a robust evidence-based process in relation to executive pay and appraisals.

Confidential Item – AL and CS left the room

[REDACTED]

AOB

One of the six BEST Members recently resigned; BEST are to recruit a new Member to ensure the proportion represented by Local Authority is below 19.9% (currently 20%) as per the Articles of Association.

Action: YH as Clerk to investigate recruiting a new Member. Trustees to send any recommendations to YH.

Date of the next Trustees' meeting: 20th March 2020

J. Bowd

Minutes Approved and Signed 15/05/2020