

BEST Trustees' Meeting

22nd June 2021, 10:00-11:55

Virtual Meeting via Google Meet

Attendees: Ilona Bond (IB), Paul Walker (PW), Alan Lee (AL), David Morgan (DM), Tony Sanderson (TS), Jerry Tonge (JT), Claire Mycock (CM), Craig Smith (CS), Alison Wilshaw (AW) and Nafia Baust (NB)

Chair of Trustees: Ilona Bond

Vice-Chair of Trustees: Paul Walker

Clerk: Yvonne Humphries

Notification of any perceived conflicts of interest: None

Approval of Minutes:

Trustees' minutes (11.05.2021) approved and signed electronically.

Trustees' Extra-ordinary minutes (10.06.2021) approved and signed electronically.

The CBC Officer's 'Action' to provide an update on the five '2-tier' pledges by this meeting has not happened.

BGHB 2021/22:

Pre-read: 'Draft' BGHB 2021/22 distributed prior to the meeting.

Decision: Whilst it does currently take place, the Finance Committee is to consider whether from 2022/23 the BGHB should look to formalise LGB consultation in regards to budget setting.

Decision: Trustees' unanimously approved the nominated Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees and the Chairs of the Standing Committees (in advance of BGHB 2021/22 going live on 1 September 2021). IB and PW to remain the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Committee Board Chairs for 2021-22 = Finance: DM. Performance: CM. Capital & Estates: TS.

BEST are currently reviewing their internal process for logging 'Ofsted' complaints – once complete AL would like to include reference to it within the BGHB 2021/22 (this will be actioned prior to distribution at the end of term).

Decision: Trustees unanimously approved the BGHB 2021/22 (with the inclusion of reference to Ofsted complaints) to be adopted across the trust from 1 September 2021.

Guest Speaker Maggie Farrah joined the meeting

Developing Leadership Presence at BEST – Maggie Farrah (MF):

Pre-read document: 'The BEST Community – Thriving and Flourishing at times of change' distributed prior to the meeting. See document for more detail.

MF welcomed to the meeting and introductions completed.

MF has facilitated a mindfulness programme with the BEST leaders (15 members of the Executive Team) to focus on their wellbeing during times of uncertainty both with the pandemic and as they transition from three to two-tier. The work undertaken will help leaders present a persona of calmness and support by "staying present and alert to the inner and outer world" i.e. not going through the motions but providing real leadership presence so that those who encounter them can feel that they are available and present. Areas covered and strategies used were discussed.

Following the success of the programme (evaluations discussed – see pre-read document for more details) – more programmes are being offered: 1. Trustees/LGB Members 2. Middle and Senior Leaders.

Action: Trustees to let YH know by 25 June if they would like to join the programme.

AL discussed the various Mindfulness programmes and initiatives taking place across BEST. MF confirmed that BEST are leading the way in this field on a national scale and setting an example.

MF explained core practices are the same but the programme/approaches pivot dependent upon the job role/context. Regardless of job role – the programmes provide a collective energy; thus enabling decisions to be made with clarity and not stress. MF offered to meet a sub-team to agree the scope of the programme. Next steps will include embedding Mindfulness through teaching and embedding the belief and practice of compassion as per the new BEST value:

Have the courage to be compassionate

Our community treats all with trust, kindness and honesty

Mindfulness is not therapy, it is a practice – ongoing observations will take place to ensure delegates are getting what they need for the programme and if necessary, they will be signposted to a more suitable options for support.

Trustees commended the work that is taking place. MF thanked for her time and left the meeting.

Performance Committee Update:

Pre-read document: 'Committee Minutes' distributed prior to the meeting. See Minutes for more detail.

- Schools working together and supporting each other more was evidenced
- SIA reports positive – discussion had in regards to triangulating and validating what is said
- Discuss concerns regarding CBC SEND timelines – appears to be a national problem
- No secondary data available (Standing Committee Agendas have been agreed in advance for 2021/22 to address this) - the data is now available and should be uploaded onto the data dashboard by the end of the week
- Going forward SEFs will be signed off by LGBs
- Schools have been engaging and supporting pupils with mental health.

Finance and Audit Committee Update:

Pre-read document: 'Committee Minutes' distributed prior to the meeting. See Minutes for more detail.

- Stevenage Leisure/Pendleton Centre have been added to the Risk Register
- Reviewed 5 year budgets to include 2 years of assumptions in regards to two-tier
- The Committee members approved the 3 years consolidated budget for submission to the ESFA
- BEST House sustainability discussions brought to this meeting.

Monthly Cash Flow and Management Accounts

The cash flow and management accounts for BEST are received on a monthly basis by IB, PW, DM, JT 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.

Chairs' Forum Update:

Pre-read document: 'Chairs' Forum Minutes' distributed prior to the meeting. See Minutes for more detail.

- Overview of Mindfulness programmes and initiatives discussed
- BGHB 2021/22 reviewed
- LGB Chairs' reminded to use their schools' provision maps, SIA reports and SEFs when working with schools to help devise their school improvement plans (SIPs)
- LGB Reports to be completed annually – 'Draft' pro-forma shared and Chairs present agreed to adopt the form. **Action:** CS to contact the LGB Chairs that are stepping down this summer to ask for a completed report prior to their departure.

Two-tier Update:

As part of the Biggleswade cluster, the LSA 12 weeks 'two-tier' consultation will start tomorrow; nothing contentious – both BEST and the LSA LGB support the plans. Edward Peake and Stratton will become secondary schools; in 2024, Edward Peake will move to a new site and LSA will occupy Edward Peake's current site in 2025 – this will provide a better location, an expansion and nursery opportunities.

LVA Planning permission has been approved for the temporary build (7 years) to address the 'bulge years' – CBC have approved £60,000 of funding for new computers etc.

A LVA parish council meeting took place last week to address the reduction in PAN at LVA from 45→30. BEST confirmed that they would be happy to become a two-form entry primary school – there is space but insufficient accommodation under the SFTF plans – more classrooms would be required. Cllr Steve Dixon agreed to set up a working party to review the options.

BEST have approached Connelly Homes for a grant to help fund a sixth form at ETA. CBC argue that they have no statutory obligations to fund sixth form places. However, the guidance is unclear and BEST believes that responsibility does rest with CBC. Advice has been sought from the DfE. Again, clarity was not provided and this remains a grey area.

At an extra-ordinary Trustees' meeting on 10 June 2021, CBC agreed to provide update statements against each of the five BEST pledges; the information would have been included in the BEST end of term newsletter. However, CBC have advised that they will send a CBC communication to the whole cluster, as opposed to specifically addressing the pledges.

Action: CS to contact CBC Officers (copy trustees into the email) to ask for an update on the pledges within two weeks for inclusion within the BEST termly newsletter. Update/or not, an update will be included within the letter.

Decision: Trustees may instigate a meeting with CBC members if the information provided is insufficient to make informed decisions.

Safeguarding Audits:

Pre-read document: 'Audit overview document' distributed prior to the meeting. See Document for more detail.

Safeguarding Audits have been completed trust-wide with a high level of success. AL commended the Compliance Officer for driving forward and raising standards. CS and AW also thanked for their involvement in the process.

Matters Arising:

- **Health & Safety:** Annual audits undertaken and followed up with an action plan – average 15% improvement on last years audits. Audits to be discussed in more detail at the Capital & Estates Committee
- **GDPR:** No reportable incidents since the last trustee update. Next working group meeting on 30th June'21
- **Safeguarding:** No reportable incidents since the last trustee update. Safeguarding reports available to review.

Policies for Approval

Travel & Subsistence Policy

Decision: Travel & Subsistence Policy approved for distribution and use across BEST subject to Union Consultation/approval

Sickness Absence Policy

Decision: Sickness Absence Policy approved for distribution and use across BEST subject to Union Consultation/approval. **Decision:** Absence data managed at school level, any problems to be raised at trust level.

Pay Policy

Decision: Pay Policy approved for distribution and use across BEST subject to Union Consultation/approval.

Staff Code of Conduct Policy

Decision: Staff Code of Conduct Policy approved for distribution and use across BEST subject to Union Consultation/approval. **Action:** 19.1 to be amended from 'she will liaise' to 'they will liaise'.

ECT (formerly NQT) Policy

Decision: ECT Policy approved for distribution and use across BEST subject to Union Consultation/approval.

Trade Union Recognition Agreement (TURA)

Decision: TURA approved for distribution and use across BEST subject to Union Consultation/approval.

Complaints Policy (Trust level only)

Decision: Complaints Policy (Trust level only) approved for distribution and use centrally.

AOB:

The draft admission arrangements for 2022/23 would normally come to this meeting, as yet CBC have provided no clear plans in regards to admissions. The BEST Compliance Officer is making contact with the Regional Schools Commissioner for advice. Approval (determined policy) required by February 2022.

Next Meeting: Tuesday 21 September 2021 @ 10:00am - BEST House, Conference Room

J. Bond Approved and electronically signed 21/09/2021