

## **BEST Trustees' Meeting**

14<sup>th</sup> March 2018, 15:30-18:10

SWA, Block 20, Room 914

### **Attendees**

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

**Apologies:** Julie Hollings (JH) and Sharon Jeffs (SJ)

**Minute taker:** Yvonne Humphryes (YH)

**Notification of any perceived conflicts of interest:** None

**Approval of Minutes:** Previous minutes (22.1.18) approved and signed

### **Agenda items:**

1. Performance Committee feedback – CM
2. Finance Committee feedback – DS
3. RBA Update  
Principal appointment – YH  
Challenge Partners report – AL
4. Policies for approval – CS
5. Scheme of Delegation – AL
6. Governance – CS
7. Communications – CS
8. AOB  
Pix Brook Update

### **Update from the previous minutes**

**Etonbury Nursery:** Planning Permission has been approved. However, the attached conditions may prove too expensive to allow the project to continue.

**Previous minutes signed off.**

**Action:** YH to contact IT to set up permanent WIFI access for all Trustees of the Board.

## **Performance Committee Feedback**

The progress, plans and measures that have been introduced at Etonbury following their Ofsted Inspection in November 2017 were discussed at length. The Committee are satisfied that AL as a National Leader in Education and CS as a National Leader in Governance have put the correct support and strategies in place to address the key issues raised by Ofsted: Leadership and Management; Teaching Learning and Assessment; and, Behaviour and Attendance.

CS is working closely with the LGBs to improve Governance across the Trust. CS is beginning to witness more challenge and awareness from the Governors.

Appraisal Targets are currently being reviewed, with a view to broadening the criteria included in the 20:50 BEST philosophy.

## **Finance committee Feedback**

**Decision:** All involved in governance at BEST to complete compulsory core training.

All schools are still on target to achieve an in-year surplus; this looks to be approximately £39K.

Next year will be the last year we receive growth funding for Etonbury. AL feels that resources have been tight and that a strategic plan is required for the next 1, 2 and 3 years to help deliver the curriculum. ETA LGB now has a Finance sub-committee to provide more rigor and interrogation.

**Decision:** A 'Cause for Concern' section which relates to the loss of autonomy for schools at risk of becoming Ofsted rated 'RI' is to be referenced within the BEST scheme of delegation and explained in more detail within the Finance Policy.

SCA has a deficit outturn as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2017 of £122K as opposed to the £10K they had predicted. If a Financial Notice to improve is issued, this will not affect the financial reputation of BEST, as it relates to the period prior to SCA joining the Trust.

A recent Benchmarking exercise shows that BEST falls in line in most areas – reserves are lower.

Discussion re: Tiered membership to the Trust. The schools pay 5%. The running costs to the Trust are 3.1%; the remaining 1.9% is spent on school improvements. The 1.9% allows services to be directed to where they are needed; this may change over time as our Principals' become more experienced. Standalone schools would not get the same service or the same quality for less than 3%.

**Action:** YH to schedule a meeting with Alan and Debbie to discuss PAN at LVA.

## **RBA Update**

RBA have recently completed their Challenge Partners review and achieved an 'Outstanding' in all areas. RBA have a great understanding of data and were able to articulate the journey of their pupils from years 5-8.

Julian Axford has tendered his resignation as Principal at RBA and will leave at the end of the summer term; there has been a lot of interest. The news of JA's departure has highlighted the need for succession planning, perhaps a deputy. AL is currently reviewing the options and is in conversation with a senior staff member at SWA, who may work across the two schools. RBA has very good Heads of core subjects.

## Policies

### Health and Safety

CS attended and passed IOSH training facilitated by Sherryl Cousins from Cousins Safety in January 2018.

CS has conducted a complete review of the Trust's Health and Safety and with the help of Sherryl Cousins has put together a new policy. The Central team and Principals were consulted on the proposed Health and Safety Policy. The final draft of the policy was shared with the Trustees for review and approval.

**Decision:** The Trustees unanimously approved the Health and Safety Policy. AL signed the approval form.

**Action:** CS to provide the Trustees with a Health and Safety update report and analysis every six months; a brief update will take place at the Trustees meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2018, this will be followed by a full update in September 2018.

CS will be working with Site Agents and Principals to ensure that the right people get the right H&S training.

There will be annual 3<sup>rd</sup> party external reviews of the Health and Safety policy and practice.

Principals will need to attend weekly site agent visits and walk round the schools every half term. In addition to this, each school will need an annual external audit to ensure all our obligatory rights are met. In the past the monitoring of this has been weak – LGBs will be responsible for monitoring this. If a Principal delegates the responsibility, they are still ultimately accountable to the LGB and Trust.

BEST have an external contract with Cambridgeshire County Council for fire safety, site security and asbestos etc.

### Safeguarding

AL advised that when he joined the Trust he devolved the responsibility for Safeguarding back to the Principals. In the past year, four BEST schools and one nursery have had an Ofsted Inspection in which safeguarding fared-very well. This year the Trust commissioned an external Safeguarding audit on all its schools and the Trust, to ensure compliance - only minor amendments were identified. Lisa Little has taken responsibility for ensuring the recommendations are addressed.

AL confirmed that any Safeguarding incidents would be dealt with at school level; unless the incident involved the Principal and/or the LGB in which case it would come to the Trustees.

**Decision:** Safeguarding will become a regular item on the Trustees' agenda.

**Decision:** The Trustees unanimously approved the safeguarding statement.

### Reserves and Investment Policy

The Finance Committee requested that a momentary value in relation to the Trust (single item?)reserves is put into the Reserves and Investment Policy; the only amendment relates to point.8 'working towards sustaining a minimum £750K reserves'

**Decision:** The Trustees unanimously approved the Reserves and Investment Policy.

### Disciplinary Policy and Procedure

The Disciplinary Policy and Procedure has been reviewed by Horizon HR Solutions. The revised policy was presented to Trustees for approval prior to consultation with Unions.

**Decision:** The Trustees unanimously approved the Disciplinary and Procedure Policy.

## GDPR

CS and Lisa Little have organised a working group with representatives from each of the schools to ensure GDPR compliance by the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018 deadline; the group have met several times. The schools are conducting their own surveys on how they hold and store data.

CS commended the work and level of detail being undertaken by Lisa.

The Trustees reviewed the draft policy and were given assurances that the project is on track. The final GDPR policy will be submitted to the Trustees for approval on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

The FOI policy may need reviewing and the Staff Code of Conduct will need updating.

**Action:** CS to coordinate the review/update of the FOI and Staff Code of Conduct Policies.

Any breaches would need to be reported to CS, who is the Trusts' appointed Data Officer. CS would need to report any breaches to the Data Commissioner Officer within 72 Hours.

GDPR has been added to the Risk Register at will be reviewed at the Finance Committee meetings.

## Governance Handbook Comments

During the summer term AL will be revising the Governor Handbook ready for release September 2018. The Principals, LGBs and Central Team have been consulted and a list of recommendations/queries compiled. AL shared the comments and proposed responses with the Trustees. **Decision:** The Trustees unanimously approved AL's responses and proposed updates for the 2018-19 Governor Hand Book. A draft copy of the revised handbook will be shared with all key stakeholders during the summer term. Action: LL to upload Consultation Paper on to GovHub.

## Governance

CS advised that there are good systems and processes, however, these are not always known or applied. A review of the Governor training Programme is currently being undertaken with a view of better understanding the training needs of Governors. CS with the support of AL proposes to run a mandatory Annual Governor Conference; this will include core training in: Governance in BEST; Performance/data; Finance; and, preparing for inspection.

There's an appreciation that LGB members are volunteers, however, the quest for Governance excellence requires commitment to the core training.

As part of the Governance review, code of conduct is also being assessed, it's imperative that the relationship between the LGBs and Trust is seamless. All members need to believe in the values and ethos of BEST and as ambassadors of the Trust, represent BEST in a positive way.

IB, AL, CM and PW are all interested in attending the Governance Leadership Programme and would like more information. **Action:** YH to find out more information and send an outlook invite to hold 11-12<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

**Action:** YH to contact Julie Hollings and Carrie Traill to formalize their resignations from the Board of Trustees.

## Communications

The BEST of BEST Brochure is almost ready for circulation. The brochure will be used for recruitment and shared with local councils, the Regional Schools Commissioner and Ofsted. To keep printing costs down, only 200 will be printed, as the brochure can be shared electronically.

To create consistency in both content and brand, all the lower schools (including Lawnside) will have updated

websites this academic year.

### **Pix Brook**

The Pix Brook opening is planned for September 2019; however, BEST have concerns that this date is becoming unachievable owing to delays at Central Bedfordshire. Communication offered by the Local Authority states that BEST and the LA are working closely; this is not the case as BEST are in the dark with developments.

CS will be writing a letter to Sue Harrison, the RSC and the EFSA, to express concern. The LA has a responsibility to place the children, however, there are serious concerns that the progress being made is slow and the only possibility for September 2019 looks to be a partial opening. BEST would like to ensure that we're doing the best by children locally – however, without Pix Brook there is no capacity within our schools or locally to accommodate the children.

BEST would have liked to have managed the build, but the LA wanted responsibility for this. The Trust needs to know what the plans are for September 2019.

**Action:** CS to compose letter for clarity around proposed plans in relation to Pix Brook/admissions for September 2019.

**Action:** YH to discuss Consultation dates re: admission with Lisa Little.

### **AOB**

**Action:** YH to make a reservation with the Chequers at Houghton Conquest for the Governors' meal of Thanks on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

**Action:** AL to explore putting an advert together based on required skill sets for new Trustees.

Y. Bond 9/5/18

**Next Meeting: 9<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

