

# Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes

Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February  
at 16:00

Virtual Meeting via Zoom  
Transforming Futures MAT  
Unit 3 Ensign House, Parkway Court,  
Longbridge Road, Marsh Mills,  
Plymouth PL6 8LR

## **TRUSTEES IN ATTENDANCE:**

Dr Clive Grace (CG) – Chair of the Board of Trustees  
Mrs Carole Burgoyne (CB) – Trustee  
Mr Peter Cubbon (PC) – Trustee  
Dr Karen Deeny (KD) – Trustee  
Mrs Geraldine Herage (GH) – Trustee  
Mr Peter McDonnell (PMD) – Trustee  
Mr Graham Oliver (GO) – Trustee  
Mr Denis Parsons (DP) - Trustee  
Dr Tim Searle (TS) – Trustee  
Mr Tim Thexton (TT) – Trustee

## **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Gavin Gracie (GG) – CEO  
Ms Josie Medforth (JM) – COO  
Ms Diane Dimond (DD) – CFO  
Mrs Hannah Smart (HS)– Headteacher  
Mr Matt Bindon (MB) – Headteacher  
Mr Lee Earnshaw (LE)– Headteacher  
Mrs Anna Tapley (AT) – Executive Assistant

Minute No.	Agenda Item	Action
1)	<p><b>Welcome, Attendance &amp; Apologies</b></p> <p>CG introduced the meeting.</p> <p>The video call was evidence of meeting attendance in which no apologies were received.</p>	
2)	<p><b>Declaration of Business Interests</b></p> <p>No declarations were received in relation to the items within the agenda. It was noted that the wider process of reporting Declarations of Business Interests would be formalised in readiness for the next Board meeting on 25/3/21.</p>	CG/AT
3)	<p><b>Consider and agree the minutes from the last Board meeting (21<sup>st</sup> January 2021), Matters Arising &amp; Actions</b></p> <p>An amendment was noted to update the header/footer to correspond with the date of the meeting held. It was highlighted that greater attention was required with regard to the presentation and distribution of reports. AT to review and implement improvements going forward.</p> <p>Subject to the above amendment, the Board agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021 as a true and accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>There were no further matters arising/actions.</p>	AT
4)	<p><b>The Future of Central Services</b></p> <p>The Board carefully considered the Report with updates on all three principal options, together with the detailed paper setting out the full business case for the in-house option. In view of the importance of the issue, after an introduction and initial exchanges and questions each Board Member, Head, and Senior Executive contributed their views and assessment. It was common ground that the option of looking to another Trust to provide our central services was not the best current option. The only offers from other Trusts would either add cost, and add delay to service improvement, and/or inhibit discussions with Trusts about possible merger. Both the Delt option and the in-house option are credible.</p> <p>The Board and Executives all considered that on balance the Delt option was to be preferred. It gets started on tackling the remaining outstanding issues with central services immediately, and adds no cost. It offers the realistic prospects of cost reduction and service improvement in the relatively near term, but being only a year long initial contract period avoids inhibiting discussions on possible merger. The in-house option would mean that all savings would accrue to the Trust, rather than being shared with Delt, but an up front investment in senior/middle managerial capacity would be required, with associated delay in getting that capacity in place and 'up to speed'. The</p>	

	<p>discussions on possible merger would also make recruitment sub-optimal. Delt has a relatively narrow base of educational experience, but it is now as wide as the Trust's own experience, and it provides a stronger and broader organisational context through which to accomplish service change and staff career development.</p> <p>Accordingly, the Board resolved that it provisionally selects Delt as its preferred central services provider but subject to a further Report from the CEO to the Central Services Working Group (Chair, Chair of Finance, Tim Searle, and Peter Cubbon) covering the following issues which Trustees and Executives raised during the debate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Further analysis of the impact of the Delt arrangement on educational delivery, and the steps to be taken to ensure that the impact of the new arrangements are optimally positive in that regard.</li> <li>2. How it is intended to accomplish the 'culture shift' which the CEO's analysis of the current position of our central services requires.</li> <li>3. How the core HR provision will achieve the high standards to which we aspire, and which are currently WiP even under the temporary Delt management arrangements.</li> <li>4. What arrangements the Trust will need to put in place for the duration of the contract to ensure effective client-side management.</li> <li>5. What arrangements will be made to ensure the full involvement of the Trust and its key staff in service improvement and development.</li> <li>6. The best estimate of central services costs for 2021/22 to provide a firm basis for budget planning.</li> </ol> <p><b>As necessary, the Chair will arrange for a further one-issue Board meeting or for consideration and decision by circulated Report in order to complete the Board's decision in relation to the future of central services.</b></p>	CG/GG
5)	<p><b>Reforecast of Financial Performance for the year to 31 August 2021</b></p> <p>DD introduced the report outlining key points for Trustees. GO noted that the Finance and Audit Committee had gone through each item in detail and that the Committee were satisfied with the approach taken around the re-forecast.</p> <p>Trustees explored the impact of any covid related payments and catch up funding however it was noted that this was likely to be low level and no clarity was yet available on how funding maybe utilised. A query was also raised in relation to whether the level of working capital (currently recorded at £1m) was desirable for the Trust. It was noted that this fund enabled the Trust to deal with fluctuations in terms of income streams/expenditure throughout the year and prompted the requirement for a Trust Reserves policy to be developed and submitted to Board at a future meeting.</p> <p>It was agreed that the Trust's financial position and performance should be considered in the context of educational outcomes and safeguarding &amp; wellbeing as well as against the Trust Risk Register. CB and GH to consider how to monitor and link this within the remit of their respective committees.</p>	DD  CB/GH

	<p>In summary Trustees expressed gratitude for the level of detail and explanation provided. It was recommended that consideration for future reports include shared work streams within reporting rather than individual academies alone.</p> <p><b>The Board approved the reforecast (RF1) for financial year 2020/21.</b></p>	DD
6)	<p><b>Framework for exploring a possible merger</b></p> <p>CG/GG provided background to their discussions with the RSC. On discussion of the framework presented, the Board summarised the following key considerations to be satisfied going forward:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Role of the 3 commissioning LAs and a need for capturing their views/opinions on a potential merger;</li> <li>• Increasing need for AP within the national framework and demand for special schools in the future;</li> <li>• Retention of the Trust’s core purpose and values to be made explicit with clear link to the education strategy within the framework;</li> <li>• Consideration re. timing of any potential merger and in the context of further change vs stability for TFT;</li> <li>• Emphasis based on mutual benefit i.e. strength of TFT’s AP/SEND offer vs potential merger partner’s school improvement/implementation of proven pedagogy enhancing educational outcomes.</li> </ul> <p><b>The Board considered the proposed framework and adoption as a basis for continuing discussions with a number of potential merger partners.</b></p>	
7)	<p><b>Education Strategy for the Trust</b></p> <p>On discussion of the paper, Trustees expressed that it was a good starting point to set out the Trust aspirations. It was agreed that a working group would be set up to develop the strategy taking into account the following key points:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear link to the Trust’s vision, values and strategic objectives and standards the Trust is seeking to achieve;</li> <li>• Evidence base to be made explicit and context to be provided e.g wider drivers as well as the ‘how’ in terms of what needs to happen to achieve improvement;</li> <li>• Commissioning responsibilities linking in with the DfE’s requirements;</li> <li>• Educational, safeguarding &amp; wellbeing outcomes for children to be clearly defined;</li> <li>• Qualitative as well as quantitative metrics to be developed to enable performance against the strategy to be analysed effectively;</li> </ul> <p><b>It was noted that further work to scope the required strategy development would be delegated to a working group of Trustees/Executives and discussed at the forthcoming Education &amp; Outcomes Committee meeting. A progress report to be presented to the Board at their meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021.</b></p>	

8)	<p><b>Any Other Business</b></p> <p>a) CG to agree papers to be circulated to TFT's Members ahead of the Members meeting on 8/3/21.</p> <p>b) JM informed the Board that the Trust had received a letter from the ESFA following random checks that they had carried out on TFT's Academies websites. It was noted that they were not compliant in that old complaints policies were published. It was noted that the issue had been resolved internally however that a formal response from the Trust would be required.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 18:58.</p>	<p>CG</p> <p>JM</p>
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Signed:

Date: 25/3/21

Dates of Future Meetings: 25/3/21