

## STAR MAT Board of Trustees meeting

### Minutes of the meeting held on 5th April 2022 at 5.30pm

**Present:**

Clare Thornton-Eckford (Chair)	Simon Peacock
Alison Smith from 17.33pm	Tom Fielden
Nick Sheppard	Julie Charge
Deborah Hastie	Richard Coy
Peter Wilson	

**In attendance:**

Ian Yapp, CEO STAR MAT  
 Melissa Boyes, COO STAR MAT until 20.33pm  
 Sam Vince (Clerk)

1.	<p><b><u>Welcome, Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest</u></b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. All Trustees were present.</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest in regards to the items on this agenda.</p>																						
2.	<p><b><u>Minutes of the full Board of Trustee meeting held on 7th December 2021 (including a set of confidential minutes which had been previously distributed) and the Extraordinary Board of Trustee meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022 – previously distributed</u></b></p> <p>The Trustees were in agreement that all three sets of minutes were a true and accurate record of the meetings.</p> <p><b>The Trustees duly approved all three sets of minutes.</b></p>																						
3.	<p><b><u>Action Plan and Matters Arising</u></b></p> <p>With reference to the Action Plan:  <b>[Alison Smith joined the meeting at 17.33pm.]</b></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <thead> <tr style="background-color: #cccccc;"> <th style="width: 5%;"></th> <th style="width: 75%;">Action</th> <th style="width: 20%;">Status</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">1.</td> <td>Ensure safeguarding audits happened by early Spring term</td> <td>Completed.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2.</td> <td>Further model option 2 re: DBS renewal policy</td> <td>Closed - on this agenda.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">3.</td> <td>Ascertain whether Every could be used as a training and compliance tracker for governor CPD</td> <td>Closed – a new CYC tracker would be used instead.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4.</td> <td>Further explore option 5 with regards continuation of the Safeguarding and Inclusion Lead post</td> <td>Completed.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">5.</td> <td>Speak to SHS Headteacher about their decision to remain outside of procurement exercise and relay Trustees concerns therein.</td> <td>Completed – the rationale was understood and they had aligned moving forwards to a two year procurement.</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">6.</td> <td>Check on Trustees role in Riverside process</td> <td>Completed – but not</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Action	Status	1.	Ensure safeguarding audits happened by early Spring term	Completed.	2.	Further model option 2 re: DBS renewal policy	Closed - on this agenda.	3.	Ascertain whether Every could be used as a training and compliance tracker for governor CPD	Closed – a new CYC tracker would be used instead.	4.	Further explore option 5 with regards continuation of the Safeguarding and Inclusion Lead post	Completed.	5.	Speak to SHS Headteacher about their decision to remain outside of procurement exercise and relay Trustees concerns therein.	Completed – the rationale was understood and they had aligned moving forwards to a two year procurement.	6.	Check on Trustees role in Riverside process	Completed – but not	
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		progressed as not required.
7.	Amend Whistleblowing policy	Closed - on this agenda.
	<b>8th February 2022</b>	
1	Confirm with the Chair of Governors at Riverside whether L21 could be offered to Mr Styles if required.	Completed.
No actions were recorded on the confidential minutes from 7 <sup>th</sup> December 2021.		
Matters arising: None were raised.		
4.	<p><b><u>Governance Matters</u></b></p> <p><b>4.1 Welcome to Julie Charge</b> The Chair welcomed Julie Charge to the Board of Trustees and Trustees briefly introduced themselves.</p> <p><b>4.2 Update on Trustee membership and recruitment</b> The Chair informed Trustees that Deborah Hastie would be standing down at the end of the 21/22 academic year. Alison Smith was also confirmed as having been re-appointed as a Trustee for a further four year term by the Diocese. Trustees agreed succession planning needed to be considered as they moved through the next four years.</p> <p><b>4.3 CASC membership</b> Membership was confirmed as three Trustees (Alison Smith, Clare Thornton-Eckford and Nick Sheppard), all three of which would have to attend meetings in order for the committee to be quorate. The School Improvement Officer would join the committee 'in attendance' only. The clerk advised against having a Trustee as a reserve and Trustees agreed to proceed with three committee members for now.</p> <p><b>4.4 Scheme of Delegation review (for approval)</b> The CEO confirmed this had been out for consultation with Chairs of governors and Headteachers. Headteachers had raised a concern about changes to how the Trust operated in future. However the CEO had reiterated the Trust had very strong vision and values which would remain and were unlikely to change without consultation. The changes to the Scheme of Delegation were clarified; removal of the terminology of autonomy from the preamble of the Scheme, clarification of when controls were taken off schools through the implementation of a CAT and how the Trust operated. The governance chart had also been updated. <b>Trustees approved the Scheme of Delegation with no changes suggested.</b></p> <p><b>4.5 Consider meeting schedule 22/23 and approve meeting dates 22/23</b> Approved.</p> <p><b>4.6 Consider the need for any working groups and whether specific delegation to groups/Trustees required for 22/23</b> No need identified. Trustees agreed to consider this as they worked through the agenda.</p> <p><b>4.7 LGB Risk register</b> It was noted there had been a resignation of a Trustee-appointed governor at one of the High schools due to a lack of time to commit to the role. An external review would also be commissioned at one of the Primary Schools. Recruitment and succession planning of governors, particularly for Chairs and Vice Chairs, were discussed and it was noted that one larger governing body of a Primary school was being kept under observation due to the potential number of vacancies it could be holding by the end of the academic year. This body should be considered when reviewing governor applications. Trustees discussed the application of a new governor (A. J. Reynard-Pearce), with the Trustee who had interviewed the candidate recommending the appointment of them based on their skills and</p>	

	<p>experience (safeguarding/SEND/pastoral experience) and their tight alignment to the Trust’s visions and values. <b>Trustees approved the appointment of A. J. Reynard-Pearce as a new governor to Riverside primary school.</b> Alison Smith was actioned with informing the candidate they had been successful and to inform the chair of governors at Riverside.</p> <p><b>Item of confidential business raised by the CEO – see separate confidential minutes for this and for item 4.8.</b></p> <p><b>4.9 CAT remit paper</b> A small amendment of how CATs were internally reviewed and whether the CAT was ready to be removed were highlighted by the CEO. <b>Trustees approved the CAT remit paper.</b></p> <p><b>4.10 Review of vacancies and appointments including applications, appointment of a new governor</b> It was noted the appointment of A. J. Reynard-Pearce had been approved in item 4.7.</p> <p><b>4.11 Review training matrices (Board &amp; LGB level)</b> The CEO confirmed there was a plan to launch a new training matrix in the autumn term. He also proposed that rather than renewing safeguarding training each year, a personalised training session would be included in the first LGB of the Autumn term with the expectation that online training would be completed every three years. <b>Trustees agreed to the proposal for Safeguarding training.</b></p> <p><b>4.12 Discuss/confirm/monitoring links for summer term</b> It was agreed the new Trustee Julie Charge would take on the link Trustee role for Kirk Fenton, sharing the role with Deborah Hastie until she left. It was agreed to review link Trustee roles at the July meeting in preparation for the summer term.</p> <p><b>4.13 Approve meetings schedule for the following year</b> The CEO proposed to reduce the number of LGB meetings per year from 7 to 6 which would remove the meeting congestion in the summer term with meetings currently in May, June and July and would allow for meetings to be held one week later in the term. The June/July meeting would have a combined agenda of resources and school improvement. Headteachers had provided positive feedback but consultation would also be sought from LGB Chairs. <b>Trustees approved the reduction in LGB meetings in principal depending on the consultation with Chairs.</b></p>	<p><b>A Smith</b></p> <p><b>Agenda - BoT</b></p>
5.	<p><b><u>Growth Mobilisation</u></b> – previously distributed</p> <p>See confidential minutes.</p> <p><b><u>Trust Capacity Fund</u></b> – previously distributed for information This item was not discussed but it was agreed to keep this under review as it would depend on growth mobilisation.</p>	
6.	<p><b><u>CEO Report including Safeguarding</u></b> – previously distributed (CEO report, Absence Data Spring term, Schools Week article regarding Covid absences tripling in 2 weeks, Tadcaster locality schools letter, Letter from RSC).</p> <p><b>6.1 School Improvement</b> (Brayton visit, Kellington succession planning, Peer review roll out 2022, Deep Dive 2022, Handing over Headship STAR, Schools White Paper incl higher maths and English targets).</p> <p><b>6.2 Update on central team and mobilisation</b> (Core membership welcome pack and Advert for Trust Digital Lead).</p> <p><b>6.3 Trust Strategic Plan KPI Tracking</b> (Operational Strategic Plan review)</p>	

<p><b>6.4 Update on 6<sup>th</sup> form strategy</b> – for information It was noted that items 6.1-6.4 were for information only and no questions were raised by Trustees.</p> <p><b>6.5 Safeguarding</b> (Safeguarding report Feb 2022, DBS Modelling, Operational reviews for TGS and SHS - for information only, SHS draft report - for information only) <u>DBS Modelling</u> The CEO noted there was no detailed cost breakdown proposal for option 2 as it was too complex. He stated that DBS Modelling would be less costly than first appeared as over the cycle everyone will have been paid for through the sampling. The CEO proposed using the three year model which cost just over £30,000 (£10,000 per year over three years) which allowed all staff DBS checks to be refreshed on a three year cycle. <b>Trustees approved the proposal to adopt DBS Modelling on a three year model.</b> It was also agreed revisions to the DBS policy would be brought to the next meeting to enable DBS renewals to begin from September 2022.</p> <p><u>Safeguarding audits</u> The CEO explained to Trustees that audits in the two High schools had been commissioned by the Trust with reports due for factual accuracy checking week commencing 25<sup>th</sup> April (and a final report the week after that). He agreed to bring the final reports to the next meeting for review. However schools were already actioning items raised, with one school progressing an action plan against some significant actions they needed to address. The other High school’s initial findings were generally positive with their safeguarding expressed as being effective. Areas in the safeguarding curriculum and life skills were flagged as needing more development but they were known by the school and would be further accelerated.</p> <p>The High school with more significant actions to address had also had their PSHE and life skills curriculums flagged as an area for development. For this school, key issues raised were concerning the SCR (Single Central Record) being inaccurate at several levels and the layered approach to site security not being effective or able to be effectively articulated within school. However no-one stated they did not feel safe. In regards to the SCR, there had been a failing at the point of transfer from the old excel system to a new online system and work was in progress as to how this failed. The school was rebuilding the SCR. In terms of next steps, the CEO stated he needed to review any Trust-wide lessons which could be learned from the reports and also implement a post migration review of the SCR transfers with Internal Audit, EPM, the Headteacher and the relevant link governor. The CEO would also continue to meet with the Headteachers to review progress against action plans. The LA designated officer may also be asked to re-audit the schools to ensure actions had been completed satisfactorily, but a whole review would also be commissioned again before the end of the summer term. He acknowledged that the situation was not where the MAT hoped to be but actions were in place to rectify issues raised. He confirmed the chairs of governors were fully informed.</p> <p><i>A Trustee asked what the finding ‘greater clarity required of the relationship between LGB and trustees’ meant.</i> The CEO suggested the Trust needed to be very clear about their scrutiny of safeguarding, how they supported and challenged the schools, roles and how the LGB and Trustee strategic plans linked, but this would become clearer now the Trust had appointed a Safeguarding lead. The COO noted the Trust currently allowed schools to hold records however they wished as long as the data was correct and perhaps this should be reconsidered. Safeguarding information on school websites should also be easier to locate. The CEO confirmed the Safeguarding lead would lead an investigation into the SCR situation at the high school noted with significant issues to address and would ensure there were no other impacts. It was noted link governors and LGBs had been given a significant amount of responsibility but the Safeguarding lead needed to assure this was working and effective and would put a structure and calendar of activity into place. The CEO committed to providing a progress update to Trustees after Easter.</p>	<p><b>Agenda – BoT</b></p> <p><b>Agenda – BoT</b></p> <p><b>CEO</b></p>
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	<p>Trustees also requested the CEO asked all Headteachers to check their SCR to ensure they were correct.</p> <p><b>6.6 Parent/Carer Survey</b> (for information)  The CEO noted the individual commentaries for schools would be reviewed by him and the Headteachers. He noted all LGBs had undertaken initial conversations about the numerical data and would review the more detailed findings and actions in the summer term. Trustees would receive feedback from their linked schools.  He confirmed the intention to run the survey every year with some alterations to allow responders to choose a ‘don’t know’ option as not having that had affected results (people choosing disagree as they did not know). The CEO did inform Trustees that there was some work to do to explain the Trust’s vision and values and how they supported and interacted with schools.  Other surveys noted to be undertaken were the ‘Growing up in North Yorkshire’ survey and exit surveys for years 6, 11 and 13.</p>	CEO
7.	<p><b>COO Update</b> – previously distributed</p> <p><b>7.1 Update following FAR committee incl Finance, HR and contracts</b>  Updates had been provided during other agenda items.</p> <p><b>7.2 Central Services Statement and fee 2022/23</b>  The COO highlighted that budget pressures were higher this year with energy price rises and support staff pay increases. She noted the projected central budget in-year deficit was over £200,000 and action was required to address this. She also confirmed all schools had over 3% in reserves. The question was posed as to whether the central fee should be increased, and if so, should they allow schools to take this from the GAG (and likely forecast an in-year deficit) or take it from their reserves.  It was confirmed that the FAR had recommended a 0.5% increase to central charges to be applied and taking this from school reserves was the most sensible approach. The COO did confirm that some schools were holding reserves against the risk of falling numbers.  The CEO confirmed they planned to advise schools they could have the option of taking the increased charges from their reserves or their GAGs to allow them the flexibility to choose the best option for their school.  <b>Trustees agreed the 0.5 increase to central charges should be applied and felt the increase could be legitimately justified and it was ethically correct as they were one organisation.</b></p> <p><u>Digital Technology leader</u>  The COO stated this was a strategic role which concentrated on IT security and infrastructure but raised the question to the Trustees whether now was the right time to recruit for this role or wait until September as it was a financial risk of £80,000.  <i>Trustees agreed this was an important role to drive forward technology in the schools but raised the risk the projected salary was a risk in a very competitive market.</i></p> <p><i>Trustees asked whether technology leaders in schools would report to this technology leader.</i>  The CEO stated this would happen potentially in the future and would be defined as part of the architecture role. The priority would be to put an IT policy in place across the MAT.</p> <p><i>Trustees challenged what difference this role would make and would Headteachers challenge the introduction of the role.</i>  It was confirmed the introduction of the role had been positively received by Headteachers especially the Cyber security and infrastructure elements as they understood they did not have the capacity in their schools to deal with this. Staff wanted some MAT direction and strategy which this role would provide.  <b>Trustees agreed the Digital Technology leader role should be progressed forthwith.</b></p>	

	<p><b>7.3 Catering In-house discussion</b></p> <p>It was noted that the proposal to bring catering in-house had been discussed in detail at the FAR committee.</p> <p>The COO informed Trustees that North Yorkshire had asked the MAT to leave their provision by 22<sup>nd</sup> July and summarised the current provision for those Trustees who had not been at the FAR committee, confirming the current meal price was £2.34 but this would increase to £2.58 with North Yorkshire.</p> <p>If the provision was moved in-house the new fixed meal price would be £2.50 but it was hoped with a better quality of food, meal uptake in KS2 could be increased which would allow them to break even or even generate a surplus. The price of £2.50 was much lower than other North Yorkshire schools which charged anything up to £3.00. The COO confirmed the Estates Director would oversee the provision and a catering manager would be hired who would manage the kitchen staff in the schools who would also move over to the MAT. She noted all of the primary schools were keen to exit the North Yorkshire provision given the issues with food quality and staffing and were wholly supportive of an in-house provision.</p> <p><i>A Trustee raised a concern as to how affordable the price increase was for parents.</i></p> <p>The COO confirmed if parents could not afford meals they could apply for Free School Meals (FSM) but the price of meals would have to increase regardless of the provision.</p> <p><i>A Trustee asked how costs would be controlled for an in-house provision.</i></p> <p>The COO responded it was a risk the MAT would take not out-sourcing catering and the immediate risk was the reduced take up of meals but this would be balanced out against the higher quality of food which would hopefully increase take-up.</p> <p><i>A Trustee queried whether the Estates Director had the capacity to undertake this role.</i></p> <p>It was confirmed with the proposed structure in place he would have and he had experience of managing in-house catering in his previous Trust.</p> <p><i>A Trustee asked whether a phased increase of prices could be modelled.</i></p> <p>The COO confirmed that multiple scenarios could be modelled of the risks to the MAT and to parents and reiterated that a key ethos of the Trust was not to push parents into having to make choices about whether they could afford to feed their families.</p> <p><b>Trustees approved the proposal to move catering in-house.</b></p> <p><i>A Trustee raised a concern about the MAT's increased reliance on the Estates Director.</i></p> <p>The CEO acknowledged there was a need to investigate succession planning and contingencies and there could become a need to undertake a strategic review of his role if it broadened to encompass facilities.</p>	
8.	<p><b><u>Trust Committee Sub-reports</u></b> - verbal update</p> <p><b>8.1 FAR</b> <b>8.2 CASC</b></p> <p>Trustees agreed items discussed in these committees had been covered elsewhere on the agenda.</p>	
9.	<p><b><u>Trustee Visit/Monitoring reports</u></b></p> <p>Trustees were reminded to undertake monitoring visits and to write up reports.</p>	
10.	<p><b><u>Policy review and approval</u></b> – previously distributed</p> <p><b>For approval</b> <b>10.1 Whistleblowing</b> <b>10.2 Proposal paper from CEO</b></p>	

	<p><b>STAR policy review note</b></p> <p><b>10.3 Probation policy</b></p> <p><b>10.4 Information policy</b></p> <p><b>10.5 Collective Disputes</b></p> <p><b>10.6 Redundancy, reorganisation and redeployment</b></p> <p><b>10.7 Capability and procedure</b></p> <p><b>10.8 Developing Performance policy and procedure</b></p> <p><b>10.9 Resolving issues at work policy</b></p> <p>Trustees approved all of the policies presented with no queries and no changes requested.</p>	
11.	<p><b><u>Items to be delegated or communicated to LGBs</u></b></p> <p>None were noted.</p>	
12.	<p><b><u>Date and time of the next meeting:</u></b></p> <p>19<sup>th</sup> July 2022, at 5.30pm</p>	
13.	<p><b><u>Any other urgent business</u></b></p> <p><b>13.1 Consideration of Trustee Awayday</b></p> <p>Trustees agreed they wished to hold an awayday and the Chair was actioned to investigate potential dates in June or July.</p> <p><b>[The COO left the meeting at 20.33pm, prior to discussion of the item of confidential any other business.]</b> See confidential minutes.</p>	<b>Chair</b>

The meeting ended at 20.35pm following discussion of the confidential item of any other business.

**These minutes were approved at the STAR MAT Board of Trustees meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2022.**

Signed:

Date:

Clare Thornton-Eckford (Chair of the Board of Trustees)

**ACTION PLAN FROM THE STAR MAT BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING  
HELD ON 5<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2022**

Action	Item	Person(s) Responsible	Timescale
1. Inform the governor candidate they had been successful and inform the chair of governors at Riverside.	4.7	A Smith	By 8 <sup>th</sup> Apr
2. Provide a progress update on Safeguarding actions at the High schools to Trustees after Easter.	6.5	CEO (IY)	By 30 <sup>th</sup> Apr
3. Ask all Headteachers to check their SCR to ensure they were correct.	6.5	CEO (IY)	By 30 <sup>th</sup> Apr
4. Investigate potential dates in June or July for the Trustees awayday.	13	Chair (CT-E)	By 30 <sup>th</sup> Apr

**Items for the next Board of Trustees meeting**

- Review link Trustee roles in preparation for the summer term (July)
- DBS policy revisions
- Final safeguarding audit reports for the High Schools