



GIRLS' LEARNING TRUST

MINUTES OF MEETING – PART ONE

Meeting Type	Trust Board
Date:	5 October 2021 at 7.00pm
Venue:	Nonsuch High School Library
Members:	Hamza Aumeer (HA), Alex Clark (AC), *Robert Etchell (RE), Sandy Gillett (SG, Chair), *Marie Grant (MG), Malcolm Munro (MM), Nigel Pepper (NP), Jennifer Smith (JS) and Philip Taylor (PT, Vice-Chair)
Others present:	Helen Latham (HL, Director of Finance and Operations) and Andrew Horrod (AH, Clerk)

* denotes member absent from meeting

Item	Item Description and Minute	Action
1	Apologies for absence and declaration of business interests	
	Apologies for absence were received from RE and MG. There were no declarations of interest.	
2	Election of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Trust Board and all committees for 2021/22	
2.1	SG and PT were willing to stand again for the posts of Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board. AH confirmed that no other nominations had been received.	
2.2	The GLT Governance Structure document had been circulated so that the Board could consider the membership of its committees including the LGBs. SG referred to the GLT strategy session held on 2 October, explaining that at the session she had obtained the agreement of trustees to the appointment of LGB Chairs and Vice-Chairs. This was a consequence of the change of date of this Board meeting, meaning that Carshalton and Nonsuch LGBs had already held their first meetings of 2021/22. Membership of the three LGBs was as set out in the Structure document, all current Chairs and Vice-Chairs were willing to continue. In the case of Wallington LGB, HA said he was actively seeking a Vice-Chair. It was agreed that he, JS and Headteacher Richard Booth discuss the matter further.	HA/JS/ RB
2.3	Membership of the other committees was as set out in the Structure document. Two points were highlighted: MG was willing to be the Vice-Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee and SG could be appointed as Chair of the Remuneration Committee.	

2.4	<p>Resolved: (i) To appoint SG and PT as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board for 2021/22. (ii) To appoint the following LGB Chairs and Vice-Chairs for 2021/22: Carshalton – MM and Chris Cox Nonsuch - MG and Andrea Cooke Wallington – HA with the appointment of Vice-Chair to be determined. (iii) To appoint the following Trust Committee Chairs for 2021/22: Admissions – NP Audit and Risk - RE Finance - NP Governance – SG HR – PT Remuneration - SG (iv) To agree the membership of Trust Committees for 2021/22 as set out in the Governance Structure document, noting that Vice-Chairs are being appointed at the respective first meetings of the year.</p>	
3	Review of Governance Handbook and Board Terms of Reference	
3.1	<p>The GLT Governance Handbook had been updated to reflect the various changes agreed at recent committee meetings. JS asked trustees whether any other changes were needed. An annual review and update of the Handbook had been agreed previously, her July meeting with LGB Chairs would form part of the review. Proposed changes would then be agreed by the Trust Board. The Board's terms of reference were included in the Handbook, on pages 21-23.</p>	
3.2	<p>There were two comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To include the GLT's mission statement at the front of the Handbook. • Within the Board's terms of reference, page 22, the fourth bullet point needs to include the Remuneration and Audit & Risk Committees. 	
3.3	<p>JS thanked the Board for these comments, they would be incorporated in due course.</p>	JS/NO
4	Ratification of any recent appointments	
	<p>This item had effectively been covered by the annual review of committee appointments, minute 2 above.</p>	
5	Minutes of the previous meeting	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2021 were approved as a correct record for signing by the Chair subject to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - against minute 6.2, first bullet point, to add an action point for JS in seeking student representatives for the Race Equality Steering Group; - against minute 14.6 and highlighting of the need for a Board self-assessment exercise, to add an action point for SG. 	
6	Matters arising from the minutes	
	<p>A matters arising sheet had been circulated. The Board noted that most of the items had been closed and the issues within the open items would be considered at the December Board meeting.</p>	

7	CEO's report	
7.1	<p>JS introduced her report on current issues including A Level exam results from the Summer, university destinations and numbers on roll. PT asked about the drop in Year 11 retention rates at CHSG and NHSG (contrasting with an increase at WHSG, to 90%). JS thought that there was no particular reason for the drop, typically CHSG retained 36-41% of its Year 11, this year's figure was 37%. NHSG had not lost a lot of Year 11 students. The census date for numbers on roll was next week and she would be in a position to report final figures in December. Keeping all available places filled was very important; the Trust had only one member of staff working on admissions at the moment and she may need support. The Board rounded off its discussion of numbers by noting that schools were admitting children of families who had moved from Hong Kong and that the GLT's bulge classes were now at Year 8, with further bulge classes at CHSG likely to follow.</p>	
7.2	<p>A section of JS's report concerned exams in 2022. The DfE and Ofqual had just published plans for GCSEs, AS levels, A levels and vocational and technical qualifications. Key points were listed in the report. Exam results would return to their normal format with AS and A levels being released on 18 August 2022 and GCSEs on 25 August. The Government was undertaking a two week consultation on what contingency arrangements should be put in place if exams could not go ahead as planned. JS said the Executive Team could now work on exam KPI targets for 2021/22 and she would present them to Trust Board in December.</p>	JS
7.3	<p>In the executive summary to her report, JS had included an update on testing for Covid-19. Lateral flow testing had been carried out at the start of term. It had now been announced that GLT schools would be host centres for the roll out of the first vaccination against Covid of 12-15-year-olds. The process would be carried out by practitioners from the Hounslow and Richmond Community Healthcare NHS Trust, who had been appointed to deliver the vaccines to young people in Sutton, and start next week. No vaccination would be given without explicit parental consent. NP raised the issue of disagreements between students and parents about having the vaccine. JS said the position was clear: unless parents give permission, the child is not vaccinated. This seemed to go against guidance based on case law relating to the rights of under-16s (the Gillick principle). JS said she understood the concern of trustees who felt that vaccinations only with parental consent went against case law, but the position so far as schools were concerned had been established. The Trust did not have legal responsibility for the vaccination programme in its schools. The Board noted the position with displeasure as it seemed to go against case law.</p>	
7.4	<p>The Board noted the section of JS's report on safeguarding. This included details of substantial changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) this year, effective from 1 September 2021. AC asked which member of staff oversees safeguarding across the GLT's schools, his point being one of consistency. He suggested that they could brief the Board regarding the newer developments with KCSIE as Ofsted might raise the issue and ask to speak to trustees during an inspection. In response JS said that the responsibility for safeguarding in each school lies with the LGBs, however the point was accepted and she would ask safeguarding lead Helen Holmes to attend Trust Board in the near future.</p>	JS

7.5	JS had included as an appendix to her report an analysis of internal assessment data for Summer 2021, for each school. There was a substantial amount of data which the LGBs look at and so she had summarised for trustees the priority areas for this year. There were no questions on the information provided.	
7.6	The Board noted the remainder of JS's report on issues such as senior staff changes.	
8	Feedback from Annual School Reviews	
	JS had circulated the minutes of the three school review meetings held last month. A summary of the Board's confidential discussion is provided in Part Two of these minutes.	
9	Update on trustee recruitment	
	SG said that she, MG and JS had met to discuss trustee recruitment and succession planning. They had drawn up an advertisement and a recruitment pack using guidance from the National Governance Association. A number of university departments had been approached as a starting point for finding potential trustees. The cost of using a recruitment agency was being investigated. The Board briefly discussed the issue including the maximum amount of time that individuals should serve as trustees. It was agreed that the matter be considered further at Trust Governance Committee.	SG/JS
10	Risk Register	
	The latest version of the Risk Register had been circulated. The Board thought that the contents of both its entry in the Register and the section on Covid risks were fine. NP and PT suggested that it was worth adding something on the fuel crisis, i.e. the inability to buy supplies and of staff getting into work. It was agreed that a suitable entry be added to the Register with a high probability score but a lower impact score as staff could work from home.	JS/AH/ NO
11	Major building projects	
11.1	HL had circulated a paper outlining the major projects either in progress or at planning stage. She took the Board through the following projects and associated funding issues with a slide presentation: CHSG – refurbishment of F Block and other accommodation to provide space for additional students (bulge classes) and improve e.g. Science facilities. NHSG – Fire Compliance Phase 2 and a scheme to improve safety at the front of school. WHSG – Dining and Sixth Form project.	
11.2	Firstly HL outlined the options for improvements at CHSG. The Trust had been successful with a bid to the local authority for £1.8million, which would fund the refurbishment of F block and provide space for additional students. The school had a contribution of £400k set aside but based on projected reserves, it could contribute up to £1m. Therefore up to £2.8m would be available to CHSG. However she had held a meeting with JS and Headteacher Moe Devenney in August	

	<p>which had identified other opportunities. Design and Technology could be consolidated in whatever accommodation replaces F Block and Science consolidated elsewhere on the site. Space for pastoral offices was needed. HL outlined the two alternative options that had been developed, estimated costs £3.5m and £4.3m.</p>	
11.3	<p>The Board noted that NHSG was aiming to spend c.£1million on its two projects and bid for Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) grants.</p>	
11.4	<p>HL said that WHSG was under great pressure with its dining facilities. Trustees were aware of a plan for an infill building near the front of the school but a few weeks ago the capital projects steering group had agreed to suspend the plan because of cost, due to rising inflation. Instead plans to enhance the current library building and make it two storey had been developed. WHSG already had planning permission for a second storey and foundations had been laid for it. The library would be moved nearer to school reception. The estimated cost of the WHSG project was £3.4m. The school could contribute up to £2.5m (based on current reserves) and so a CIF bid in December 2021 was planned. To deliver the project over the Summer of 2022, the Trust would have to place a contract for the work in February 2022. The outcome of the CIF bid would not be known until around Easter 2022, however.</p>	
11.5	<p>HL set out the next steps for delivering the GLT projects with regard to overall Trust Reserves, transfer of funds between schools if required and risks. She was not asking trustees to make any decisions now. A steering committee would be formed to examine the alternative options at CHSG. Hamish Lungany was working on Trust finances and he would submit the 2020/21 accounts including a revised Medium Term Plan to Finance Committee and Trust Board in December. Finance Committee will then decide on the Trust's percentage contribution to CIF bids. Tenders for all projects will be sought and a decision will be needed early next year on whether to place contracts for delivery in Summer 2022. This may need an extraordinary Trust Board meeting before February half-term. Currently the Board had a meeting scheduled for 29 March.</p>	
11.6	<p>HL answered a few questions regarding finances. It was evident that rising inflation would be a significant issue in the delivery of projects. SG summarised the current position and thanked HL for the update. The date for an extra Board meeting in early 2022 could be agreed at the December meeting.</p>	HL
12	Any other business and date of next meeting	
	<p>There was no other business. The next Board meeting was scheduled for Thursday 9 December, 7pm at NHSG.</p>	

The meeting ended at 9.15pm

Signed:

Dated:

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