

## MINUTES BCT BOARD MEETING

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Date approved: 27 September 2017

Meeting date: 10 July 2017

Location: Bridgwater College Academy

Time: 18.00

Chair: Andy Berry (AB)

Present: Carole Chevalley (CC)  
Jenny Ashworth (JA)  
Sid Gibson (SG)  
Elaine Dew (ED)  
Peter Elliott (PE)

In attendance: Zoe Stucki (ZS)      Headteacher West Somerset College  
Mark Thomas (MT)      Headteacher Brymore Academy  
Gill Warren (GW)      Chief Finance Officer  
Gail Griffith (GG)      Company Secretary

Item	Description	Action
1	Procedural matters	
1.1	Apologies were received from Denys Rayner (Vice Chair), Mark Swallow, Heather Strawbridge, David Adfield and Moya Hill.	
1.2	Andy Berry declared that he was Vice Chair of Governors at Chilton Trinity school. No other declarations of interest were reported.	
1.3	<b>The Minutes of the meeting on 15 March 2017 were approved.</b> Matters arising: 1.3/3.3 It was requested that FTEs and locations of Central Services staff be added to the line management graphic. 1.3/7.4.1 The Tender for internal audit services will close on 15 July and be assessed on 25 July. 1.3/9.2. Although there would still be a lag in information provided to the Audit Committee, there would be attempts to reduce this to less than two months. 2.3 The Communications Strategy for BCT remained outstanding. 8. CC said that she would follow up with the Safeguarding Lead reporting to the Board on referrals to the local authority safeguarding panel. 9. Additional risks identified at the Board meeting would be added to the risk register as the last item on the Agenda.	PE GW GW PE CC Chair/GW
1.3	<b>The Minutes of the meeting on 22 May 2017 were approved.</b>	
1.4	<u>Information on “who’s who” in the Trust and line management structure</u> JA asked that the FTEs and locations be assigned to the Central Services team. The total FTE for Central Services is 16.4.	PE
1.7	<u>Proposals for a Finance Committee:</u> This item will be dealt with later on the Agenda.	
2	<b>Finance: approval of the CT 2017/2018 budget</b>	
	GW said that all the academy LGB’s had received details of the proposed budget for the next academic year, and all save Brymore had recommended the adoption of the budgets. The Chair of Brymore had subsequently received more information on the overall situation within in the Trust, including the costs of Central Services. The Brymore LGB had been concerned with	

	the forecast of a deficit budget for the next three years. The Chair agreed that it was for the Trust to approve the overall budget before submission to the government agency before the end of July.	
	GW said her narrative and figures papers gave the details for the next three years, although at this stage she only required the Board to approve the budget for 2017/2018. However government is likely to require a three-year projection in the future. Many academy trusts across the country are facing a deficit over the next three years.	
	The budget for 2017/2018 shows an overall loss of £381k, which will be covered by “reserves/carry forward”. However there is projected deficit of £109k in the following year <i>after</i> using up “reserves/carry forward”. There were several unknowns at this stage for this year, e.g. the completion of some fixed term contracts. One of the main problems was at West Somerset College, where pupil numbers continued to drop naturally, and recruitment to the sixth form was an issue (from 881 in 2016/2017 to 725 in 2019/2020). WSC had however been granted the Opportunities Fund for vocational training of £600k over three years. The Chair commented that the key issues appeared to be to grow numbers and increase efficiency. The Headteacher at WSC confirmed that she was working with Bridgwater and Taunton College in these areas, so there was solid provision of such course in Minehead. The Chair of WSC LGB said that the sustainability of such courses was really important to the reputation of the college. The CEO said that the Opportunities fund monies was supposed to effect “irreversibly positive change”, with a high impact start, delivery of complete courses and community confidence. In effect this would mean the delivery of three or four courses well.	
	GW commented that the overall increase in pupil numbers across the Trust the expenditure had increased from £15m to £18m in five years. Although there would be carry forward of £2.4m from the next academic year, this would be used up in 2018/2019, leaving a deficit of £109k. There will therefore have to be further savings.	
	DH asked exactly what the list of “reserves” meant; the £1.513k was “ring-fenced or committed” at this time, but the Trust may have to review this list in the future, e.g. through the Finance and Resources Committee. One piece of work which GW recommended was to create a “zero-based” budget by Spring next year. The Chair asked if the Trust grew by say two more schools whether this would make the Trust more financially robust. The CEO commented that this Trust has a greater level of “reserves” than most MATs in Somerset. JA asked what “committed” meant and whether decisions had been finally made on this list of items. The CEO confirmed that all the items were choices to be made, depending on a number of (prudent) assumptions. CC commented that the list could be prioritised. This work could be done at the F&R Committee. DH was concerned at the apparently deteriorating situation and what steps could be taken to remedy the problem. The CEO agreed that all areas of activity would have to be looked at, including productivity. There were unlikely to be any easy low-hanging fruit (savings of £2m had been made this year).	DH
	GW was asked to produce a balance sheet by September.	GW
	ZS asked if the £50k listed for restructuring in WSC meant there would be more redundancies; this was just a prudent allocation. WSC’s finances were protected from the Trust’s finances by a Memorandum of Understanding with government.	
	MT asked if Trust premises would be run from Central Services; this was to be decided. There were questions of the purchase of utilities for the whole Trust.	
	The Chair commented that the figures showed that the expenditure of “reserves” would have to be monitored carefully. There were ways to alleviate the situation, e.g. adding schools, central purchase of utilities. The CEO said	

	that another area of work was to increase income, e.g. on the use of assets in school holidays. Average class sizes may have to be examined.	
	<b>The Budget for 2017/2018, as detailed in the papers showing a deficit of £381k covered by reserves was recommended by the Chair, seconded by Carole Chevalley, and approved by the Board.</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Strategy and Governance</b>	
	<p>The Board agreed (as proposed by David Hannay and seconded by Sid Gibson) that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Finance and Resources Committee of the Board should be set up</li> <li>• The Terms of Reference of that Committee and the Audit Committee would be aligned</li> <li>• Both committees would meet early in September to set a work programme</li> <li>• The Terms of Reference of the Local Governing Bodies would remain unchanged for the moment</li> <li>• There would be a “mixed economy” of meetings for the academies, with Brymore and BCA continuing with sub-committees, and Hamp and WSC continuing with LGBs only; the chairs would help set the agendas</li> <li>• The following appointments were approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Carole Chevalley and Jenny Ashworth as Trustees and Chairs of their respective LGBs at BCA and Brymore for a new term of four years</li> <li>○ Adrian Moore and Charlotte Boxall (staff governor) as governors at Hamp academy for four years from 1 September</li> <li>○ Debbie Shelley and Geoff Dibble as Governors at WSC for four years from 1 September.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>4</b>	<b>Reports from the CEO</b>	
4.1	<u>CEO Report</u> This was noted.	
4.2	<u>KS2 results</u> This report was preliminary and showed a drop from 53% to 46% in Hamp but an increase from 34% to 49% at BCA in the combined results. These were in line with expectations.	
4.3	<u>BCA Expansion proposal</u> CC said that the BCA LGB had held a special meeting to go through the detail of this proposal. They were keen to maintain the successful ethos of the academy, and were assured there would be a gradual expansion which would not change this. The LGB concluded that the proposal would bring huge benefits to the staff and children, and to the community. <b>Carole Chevalley proposed, Andy Berry seconded and the Board approved the proposal.</b>	PE
<b>5</b>	<b>Audit Committee draft Minutes</b>	
	GW reported that there had been detailed discussion on the Risk Registers, a work plan for next year, the terms of reference and the new internal auditors.	
<b>6</b>	<b>Finance and Resources Committee draft Minutes</b>	
	DH reported that the Terms of Reference for the new committee would be “to monitor the financial sustainability of the Trust”.	
<b>7</b>	<b>CFO policies for approval until September 2017</b>	
	<b>The Board approved the extension of the CFO policies until the next Board meeting in September.</b>	GW
<b>8</b>	<b>Child Protection/Safeguarding</b>	
	Carole Chevalley reported on her work with the Safeguarding Lead.	

10	<b>BCT Risk Register</b>	
	GW reported that the Audit Committee had reviewed the Risk Register in detail. There were no additional risks to add from this meeting.	
11	<b>Date of next meeting: 27 September 2017 at 6pm</b>	
12	<b>AOB:</b>	
	GG asked for approval of a slightly amended Whistle-blowing policy owing to changes in Government guidance; this was agreed.	
	<i>The meeting closed at 19.25 hours.</i>	

Approved by Andy Berry, Chair of Board:..... Date:.....