

MINUTES BCT BOARD MEETING

Version: Website—approved Issue date: in draft 14 November 2017 Date approved: 2017
Meeting date: 27 September 2017 Location: West Somerset College Time: 18.00

Chair: Andy Berry (AB)

Present: Carole Chevalley (CC)
 Sid Gibson (SG)
 Heather Strawbridge (HS)
 Mark Swallow (MS)
 David Hannay (DH)
 Simon Grundy (SG)
 Peter Elliott (PE)

In attendance: Gill Warren (GW) Chief Finance Officer
 Linnet Newman (LN) Chief Operating Officer
 Gail Griffith (GG) Company Secretary

Item	Description	Action
1	Procedural matters	
1.1	Election of Chair of Board Heather Strawbridge proposed, and Carole Chevalley seconded a motion to elect Andy Berry as Chair of the Board; all agreed.	
1.2	Apologies Denys Rayner was on holiday. The Chair commented that Headteachers were not at this Board meeting. After discussions between the CEO and the Chair it had been concluded that it was more effective and efficient for Headteachers not to attend the Board. This would also allow the Board to hold the CEO to account for the progress of the academies. It was agreed that Headteachers could attend meetings for particular items, and that the Chairs of the LGBs were in any event at the Board. The Minutes of Board meetings are available to Headteachers in any event (and are made public). It was proposed that Headteachers are invited to one meeting a year, e.g. the September meeting.	Co. Sec
1.3	List of members of the Board and sub-committees, who's who and reporting structures These documents were for information	
1.4	Code of Practice for Trustees	
1.5	Register of Business Interests Both these documents were handed out by the Company Secretary to the Trustees for completion and return.	
1.6	Terms of reference for the Board <i>An information paper</i>	
1.7	Travel and expenses policy <i>An information paper</i>	
1.8	Dates of meetings <i>An information paper</i> There was a discussion on whether more meetings could be held during the day. This was difficult for some Trustees. It was agreed this would be examined on a case by case basis.	CEO
1.9	Appointments	

	Heather Strawbridge proposed and Carole Chevalley seconded, all agreed to the appointment of Suzanne Hannay and Marion Churchill as Governors of Hamp Academy and Mike Hodson as Governor at BCA, all from 1 September 2017.	
	Andy Berry proposed, and Mark Swallow seconded, and all agreed to the appointment of Heather Strawbridge as Chair of Hamp Academy LGB and Simon Grundy as Chair of Brymore Academy LGB.	
	<p>There was a discussion on the appointment of Parent Governor Trustees. Currently there was only one such appointment (Mark Swallow), and there was a proposal for a Governor at Hamp to assume this role. There was a requirement for two such appointments; however it was felt that neither Hamp nor BCA were in a position at this time to nominate a Governor for such a role. It was agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To invite the Hamp Governor to a meeting with the Chair and CEO To keep the number of Parent Governor Trustees at two for the time-being. 	CEO/Chair
	There was a discussion on the skills audit as far as the Board was concerned. It was felt that with only two Independent Trustees on the Board now, the Board should look to recruit perhaps another 2-4 Trustees. Once the skills audit had been completed the Chair and CEO would consider further recruitment of Trustees.	CEO/Chair
	CC said that the dual roles of Trustee and Chair of Governors would benefit from further discussion. The two roles are different, and with different responsibilities. It is not for the Trustees to represent the views of the any particular academy at the Board level.	
1.10	<p>Minutes of the meeting on 10 July 2017 The Minutes were approved and signed. Matters arising: 1.3/1.3 FTEs and locations of central staff—completed. 1.3/7.4.1 Mazars had been appointed as internal audit consultants. 1.3/9.2 Information to Audit Committee would be more timely. 1.3/ 2.3 Communications strategy—completed 1.3/8 Referrals to local authority: CC had spoken to the safeguarding lead and this would be added to her report to the Board 1.3/9 Additional risks identified at Board meetings to be added to Risk Register—ongoing 2 F&R committee to examine “committed” reserves. 2 Balance sheet: outstanding 7 BCT policies: on the agenda today.</p>	<p>CFO</p> <p>CFO/Co.Sec.</p> <p>DH CFO</p>
	The CEO commented that the work had already started on budgets for next year. There would be implications from the lifting of the pay cap, increases in pensions, and the new funding formula (likely to increase BCT income by about 0.5%).	
	As far as the expansion of BCA is concerned the CEO gave an update on progress, for opening in September 2019. The Chair advised the COO to consult the Bridgwater College on contracts with BAM.	
2	Report on progress on Strategic Plan	
	The CEO reported on progress using the graphic in the papers. There has been considerable debate on the direction and progress of the Trust. Work has continued on enhancing organisational resilience.	
	The area where least progress had been made was in staff professional development. A talent map and succession planning had been started. Because the application to become a Teaching School had been turned down there were no longer funds to recruit a head of staff development. However discussions had taken place to encourage senior teams to work across all academies. This would not take away responsibilities for staff development from Headteachers.	

	New approaches to developing staff were being proposed; e.g. an exchange/secondment between deputies from WSC and BCA next year.	
	The HR function within the Trust is still struggling to establish itself. There are over 500 staff in the Trust, and compliance had been the first task of the new central function. It was intended to examine terms and conditions of employment as a next step.	
	There had been substantial progress on Safeguarding in the Trust, and the CEO was confident that the new central team was providing good assurance for the whole Trust.	
	A new central finance system was now in place and working. The CEO will meet with each Headteacher monthly to review the academy accounts. There were trading companies at BCA and Brymore, and a Business Development Officer had been appointed. There was further work to be done at the Elicombe site at WSC, which could be used as an outreach centre.	
	Governance work on the Scheme of Delegation, Terms of Reference, review of the Board's skills had been done. There was a proposal to appraise the contribution of Trustees to the work of the Board.	
	As far as the growth of the Trust is concerned, there had been offers to take on two schools in special measures in the summer, but these had been turned down on the grounds of the lack capacity of the Trust and the speed required. Why had the Puriton school gone to another Trust? The offer had not been made to BCT. Are there clear targets for the acquisition of schools, and what geographical area is being considered? There is no clear pathway for schools/academies to join the Trust; it depends partly on the schools and partly on the Regional Educational office. Small schools regard the Trust as a large and overwhelming institution. Possibilities with Robert Blake Science School and Hamp Infants are being explored; the Trust believes the benefits of an all-through school are incontrovertible. In the view of one Trustee, the Trust should take on rather more schools to justify the central services costs.	
3	Headline results from summer 2017 exams	
	There had been a national data release for GCSEs in the last few days, and a subsequent paper had been distributed. Final validated data would be available in November. All the academies have positive Progress 8 scores. WSC are second in Somerset for GCSE results, a remarkable achievement considering the staff changes and turbulence within the school since it was in special measures. Brymore and BCA showed strong performance. At Brymore low ability boys do very well, but the brighter boys are not achieving sufficiently. Maths in BCA is very strong but English and Maths at Brymore require further work. Three of our schools are in the top six in Somerset.	
	The Chair congratulated all the academies for their impressive results, and sent his congratulations to all the Headteachers.	
	At KS2, BCA had shown improvement, but Hamp was a concern. In-year tracking had not been accurate last year, and the BCA system had now been adopted. There was some turbulence with a change in Headteacher, and changes in the LGB. The Chair of Hamp was concerned that the context of the low ability intake of the children should be considered.	
4	Academy Development Plans	
	The CEO referred to his paper which set out the targets for the Headteachers for this academic year.	
5	Financial update	
	The CFO said that the outturn for 2016/2017 had not yet been completed. The new finance system was in place, and the critical areas of paying suppliers and staff were being dealt with. The finance function had been restructured, and the central team were now based at BCA. There was now one payroll and one bank account.	

	Could an estimate be given for the outturn at this stage? It was likely to be an operational underspend against budget. Trustees felt it was essential to have some substantial figures in a paper at every Board meeting to understand the financial situation. This year there had been substantial challenges in setting up the new finance system and the restructuring of the finance team. Nevertheless the Trustees would like to see a financial report at every Board meeting.	CFO/COO
	Work had already started on the budget for next year, and an initial cut would go to the F&R committee in November for discussion.	
	CC reminded the Board that the September meeting is procedural and there has never been any intention of presenting any numbers at this stage. It is too early for the year end and we have not got to the end of month 1 yet to look at how we are doing against budget.	
6	Reports from sub-committees	
	DH reported that the meeting of the F&R Committee had been concerned with the work programme and the reporting arrangements. The Committee recommended the removal of the WSC SoD (see below) and an early review of next year's budget. MS reported on the Audit Committee, which recommended that the CEO should not be a member of the Committee but an attendee (agreed), that the Committee would regularly review the top risks to the Trust, and that the Audit Work Plan and Risk Register should be aligned ("the golden thread"). However with only three members, the Committee would like to recruit at least one other member.	CEO/DR
7	BCT policies for approval	
	The following policies were approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charging and Remissions • Finance Policy Regulations and Procedural Manual • Gifts and Hospitality • Procurement cards. It was agreed that the WSC Scheme of Delegation was now redundant, and the general BCT SoD covered the whole Trust.	
8	Next meeting	
	6 December 2017 at 6pm Brymore Academy	
	AOB:	
	DH asked that the distribution of Board papers comply with the deadline of seven days in advance, with exceptions to be authorised by the CEO or Chair (as had been the case concerning the Financial Policy Regulations and Manual this time).	
	<i>The meeting closed at 19.50 hours.</i>	

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