

# Anglian Learning Trust Board Meeting Minutes



11 July 2023

## Trustees Present

Claire Lawton (CL Chair), Jon Culpin (JC CEO), David Lamkin (DL), Richard Cowling (RC), Sue O'Farrell (SO), Ken Murphy (KM), Helen Pain (HP), Alasdair Pitt (AP), Pauline Ball (PB) and John Morgan (JM)

## Others Present

Malcolm Trobe (MT CST Consultant), Prue Rayner (PR Director of Primary Education), Duncan Cooper (DC Director of Secondary Education), Charity Main (CM COO), Kerrie Jones (KJ Head of Governance, Compliance and Risk)

	ITEM	ACTION
1.	<b>Acceptance of Apologies for Absence</b> Apologies were accepted from Carin Taylor (CT) It was noted that a resolution to appoint Erica (Rikki) Morgan-Tamosunas was passed by the Members on 13 June 2023. Unfortunately, she has since informed us of her intention to step down. PR is leaving the Trust at the end of this term. On behalf of the Board, CL thanked her for the huge contribution she has made to Anglian Learning and the life chances of our pupils. It was noted that this is the Chair's last Board meeting.	
2.	<b>Declarations of Interest with regard to agenda items</b> There were no declarations of interest.	
3	<b>Agree minutes of last meeting and Matters arising not on this agenda</b> <b>Associated papers:</b> <i>Trust Board Minutes 22/5/2023</i> <i>Trust Board Confidential Minutes 22/5/2023</i> The minutes and confidential minutes from 22 May 2023 were agreed as a true record. Matters Arising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Trust Quality Assurance Framework will be considered at the next meeting</li> <li>Wimbish transfer is on track.</li> <li>An update on the position with Deneia is expected in the autumn term</li> <li>Talks continue with other potential schools and Trusts who are considering joining Anglian Learning</li> </ul>	Board agenda item - Trust Quality Assurance Framework
4.	<b>CST Review of Governance feedback (MT)</b> <b>Associated papers:</b> <a href="#">CST Governance Review Report</a> MT presented his report following the review of Governance he had undertaken on behalf of CST. He thanked everyone for engaging	

	<p>with the process and noted that Governance at Anglian Learning works well, understanding its strategic role and the Executive Team is strong.</p> <p>He proposed some areas to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the R&amp;G committee necessary?</li> <li>• LGBs like being part of AL but don't fully understand their role</li> <li>• Look at stakeholder engagement. (MT noted the revised ATH has changed its purpose to include this)</li> <li>• Diversity and succession planning</li> </ul> <p>CL thanked MT for his work on this.</p> <p>Trustees discussed at length and had some questions:</p> <p><b>Q</b> <i>Are the issues you see with LGBs similar in other trusts?</i>  <b>A</b> Although it varies from trust to trust many do struggle. It is a big adjustment for those who have been at a maintained school.</p> <p>JC confirmed that the AGF is meeting this week and we will discuss this with them.</p> <p><b>Q</b> <i>Is there a role for LGBs when it comes to GAG pooling?</i>  <b>A</b> We need to explain to LGBs what resource pooling means but all finance responsibilities have been removed. We do recognise some of the conflicts around finance, such as the need to know something of the budget in relation to school improvement.</p> <p><b>Q</b> <i>Is the chief issue adapting to change?</i>  <b>A</b> Yes, particularly long-serving governors. Communication can be an issue where messages via Chairs may be lost. New governors undertake training and have a better understanding.</p> <p>It is important to consider the impact of LGBs and their effectiveness.</p>	<p>Executive will present recommendations in response to the report to the Board in the autumn</p>
<b>5.</b>	<b>Academy Trust Governance Code (MT)</b>	
	<p><b>Associated papers:</b> <a href="#">Academy Governance Code presentation</a></p> <p>MT explained the new voluntary code which sets out the principles, desired outcomes and recommended practice for effective governance. Full details can be found here <a href="https://atgc.org.uk/">https://atgc.org.uk/</a></p> <p>This is a sector defined code developed by a group of organisations. The code sets out principles similar to the charity governance code and does not repeat statutory guidance. A Foundation Principle links to the 7 principles of public life.</p> <p>The code seeks to find a consensus on language and terminology used. The term 'Director' rather than 'Trustee' is proposed to reflect the use of 'Trustee' in a different context in the faith school sector. It was noted that the term equality has been chosen rather than equity to align with terminology in current regulation.</p> <p>Trustees did question whether the organisations involved represented a balanced view. It was explained that Christian Trusts are predominant but there was involvement with other faith groups by way of Governance Professional involvement.</p>	

	<p>The consultation runs to the 31 July and Trustees and Executives are welcome to make their views known via this link  <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ATGC-Consultation">https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ATGC-Consultation</a></p>	
<b>6.</b>	<p><b>Approval of 2022/23 budgets and 3-year financial forecast (CM)</b></p> <p><b>Associated papers:</b> <a href="#">Budget Setting Report</a></p> <p>CL thanked CM for a clear and comprehensive report.</p> <p>Key points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The budget has been scrutinised by FEOC. This report has been updated since to reflect an unsuccessful Trust Capacity Fund Application and a revised figure for carry forward reserves use in this academic year.</li> <li>• To operate in accordance with the Trust's agreed reserves policy the BSR includes proposed, currently unidentified savings.</li> <li>• Uncertainties remain around the staff pay award and any possible additional funding announcements</li> <li>• The budget forecast return date has been extended to the end of August</li> </ul> <p>FEOC considered the appropriateness of including the current unidentified savings in the BFR submission. A draft response for the narrative of the budget submission was shared with the Board. CM noted the DfE's current guidance on commissioning high quality trusts, assessed against criteria which include finance and operations and the need to have well-planned reserves and a significant contingency.</p> <p>Trustees robustly discussed the financial challenges and proposed wording of the submission.</p> <p><b>Q</b> <i>Are there more detailed plans to address the proposed savings?</i>  <b>A</b> We will use ICFP modelling to start to identify savings in the autumn term. There is no more detailed plan at this stage.</p> <p><b>Q</b> <i>Do you have figures for staff turnover?</i>  <b>A</b> This can be variable from year to year and at each school.</p> <p>The Board resolved to approve the budget for 2023/24 and future financial forecasts, including the proposed use of reserves, and the use of carried forward grants and funds as detailed in the Budget Setting Report</p> <p>The Board approved submission of the ESFA Budget Forecast Return and accompanying narrative by nine votes to one, on the basis of the financial projections outlined in the Budget Setting Report and including any revisions as a result of the publication of STRB and associated funding announcements totalling less than £250k. More significant changes will need to be approved at an extraordinary Trust Board meeting on 24 August 2023.</p>	<p>Detailed timetable and plan for identifying savings to be brought to FEOC in September</p>
<b>7.</b>	<p><b>Management Accounts P9 (CM)</b></p> <p><b>Associated papers:</b> <a href="#">Period 9 Management Accounts</a>  <a href="#">Period 9 Forecast Summary</a></p> <p>A deficit of £916k is forecast against a revised budget deficit of £1,455k which is £103k worse than the Period 8 projection. Although the P8 figure forms the basis of the Budget setting Report,</p>	

	<p>exclusion of a £42k forecast deficit on school fund results in a broadly similar position.</p> <p>It was noted that FEOC approved the revised Internal Financial Regulations.</p> <p><b>Q</b> <i>Trustees observed that the Creativity Collaborative project creates a revenue deficit next year and questioned whether surpluses should have been seen in earlier years.</i></p> <p><b>A</b> CM confirmed that this was in reserves and noted the need to be more explicit.</p>	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Academy performance update (PR/DC)</b>	
	<p><b>Associated papers:</b> <a href="#">AIS High Level overview Secondary</a>  <a href="#">AIS High Level overview primary</a>  <a href="#">Bassingbourn VC Ofsted report</a>  <a href="#">Sawston VC Ofsted report</a></p> <p><b>Primary</b></p> <p>PR highlighted the strong collaborative work that is taking place. The peer review process is very positive. Good progress is being made with the quality of strategic leadership and core subject leadership. There is a focus on improving SEND provision and PR noted concerns that there is an increasing proportion of SEND, complex needs, and an impact of adverse childhood experiences. The Meadow Primary is working closely with Wimbish Primary under the direction of the Executive HT and this is proving very positive. The HT at Fen Ditton Primary has been seconded to Bottisham Primary as Acting HT.</p> <p><b>Q</b> <i>If leadership concerns arise do we have appropriate strategies in place to monitor and challenge?</i></p> <p><b>A</b> Yes, where issues arise an appropriate course of action is put in place with the support of the Director of People.</p> <p><b>Q</b> <i>Have those schools with particular struggles been able to make any progress on narrowing the gaps?</i></p> <p><b>A</b> Cohorts coming through at Fen Ditton Primary show greater potential for next year. Howard Primary continues to be challenged by those with complex needs. Whilst the gaps are being closed, this is impacted by new students with high needs joining the school.</p> <p>It was noted that there is lack of external agencies, but we have engaged a skilled family worker who works with disadvantaged families. We are looking at how this role might be extended but budgets are constrained. Trustees noted the work the Trust is doing in this area.</p> <p><b>Secondary</b></p> <p>The quality of the curriculum has been a focus this year with assessment to follow next year. The professional development focus has driven change and this has been supported by work around coaching. Recruitment and retention are key concerns. Camilla Saunders' work as Director of Inclusion has had a massive impact on SEND and it is hoped that next year the approach can be more proactive than reactive. There are challenges around SEND numbers.</p>	

	<p>JFAN received a rating of 'good' in their recent Ofsted inspection, reflecting support by the central team. There are behaviour issues that they need to address. Behaviour is a national issue, and a pilot of a Behaviour Hub is being trialled at Bassingbourn VC.</p> <p>Linton VC has seen improvements in quality of education and is being supporting with HR issues.</p> <p>DC reported that the recent successful TLG conference helped to foster a sense of purpose and keenness to collaborate.</p>	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Scheme of Delegation review (JC/KJ)</b>	
	<p><b>Associated papers:</b> <a href="#">Scheme of Delegation</a></p> <p>JC explained the rationale for revising the Scheme of Delegation. The updated version reflects the changes in central operations, reduces demands on Headteachers, provides a sustainable model of governance and greater clarity.</p> <p>KJ noted that the new document provides more of a working document than the previous reference version but should still be used in conjunction with the relevant policies and procedures which will be updated next term.</p> <p>The following areas were highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chairs Action has been added</li> <li>• LGBs have a key role in the local identity of their school and stakeholder engagement</li> <li>• A second key role for LGBs is in school improvement including monitoring SEND and disadvantaged provision and Safeguarding</li> <li>• LGBs have a very limited role in Finance, HR and H&amp;S/Estates.</li> </ul> <p>It was clarified that whilst the SCR is held centrally it is the Headteacher's responsibility to update it. There is a guidance document which sets this out.</p> <p>Trustees noted two small amendments at 3.25/26 and Chairs Action.</p> <p>The Trust Board approved the revised Scheme of Delegation.</p>	CM/KJ to amend
<b>10.</b>	<b>Committee reports</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>People &amp; Culture</b></li> <li>• <b>Curriculum &amp; Standards</b></li> <li>• <b>FEOC</b></li> <li>• <b>ARA</b></li> </ul> <p>The reports had been shared.</p>	
<b>11.</b>	<b>Whistleblowing, Complaints and Critical Incidents</b>	
	<p><b>Associated papers:</b> <a href="#">Whistleblowing concerns, complaints and critical incidents report</a></p> <p><b>Q</b> Trustees asked whether any lessons had been learnt from the response to the bomb threat at Fen Ditton Primary?</p> <p><b>A</b> It was confirmed that this has been reflected in updates to the Business Continuity Policy.</p> <p><b>Q</b> Have you shared this with other schools?</p>	

	<p><b>A</b> Crisis management will be a TLG agenda item next year. Athene Communications are supplying templates.</p> <p><b>Q</b> <i>Will you carry out test scenarios?</i></p> <p><b>A</b> We have done this already with CLT. The Business Continuity audit takes place in the autumn may highlight this.</p>	
<b>12.</b>	<b>Election of Chair and Vice Chair of Trustees for 2023-24</b>	
	<p>One nomination for Chair of Trustees had been received from Helen Pain, proposed by JM and seconded by KM. HP briefly addressed the Board to describe her experience to lead the Board.</p> <p>One nomination for Vice Chair of Trustees had been received from Pauline Ball, proposed by JM and seconded by KM. PB explained her background in education which will direct her focus.</p> <p>Candidates left the room to allow discussion by Board members before voting took place.</p> <p>Helen Pain was elected unanimously as Chair of Trustees Pauline Ball was elected unanimously as Vice of Trustees.</p>	
<b>13.</b>	<b>AOB</b>	
	<p><b>Associated papers:</b> <a href="#"><u>ESFA Letter to Accounting Officer</u></a></p> <p>The ESFA letter had been shared as directed by the DfE.</p> <p>The Chair thanked SO for all her work as Vice Chair and also thanked RC for all his support and advice and wished them both well as they step down from the Board on 31 August 2023.</p> <p>CL also thanked the Executive Team for all their work.</p>	
<b>12.</b>	<b>Date time and venue of next meeting</b>	
	<p>Meeting dates and Governance Planner for 2023-24 were shared.</p> <p>The Board dates on 6 March and 9 July need to be rescheduled.</p> <p>The first Trust Board meeting of the autumn term is Monday 25 September, 9am at Marleigh Primary.</p> <p>Meeting ended at 11.15am</p>	

Items for Future Meetings	
Meeting	Item
Trust Board	Trust Quality Assurance Framework
FEOC	Detailed timetable and plan for identifying savings

Action Log			
ITEM	ACTION	DEADLINE	RESPONSIBILITY
9	Amendments to SoD	14/07/23	CM/KJ