Anglian Learning Trust Board Meeting Minutes

14 July 2026

Trustees Present
Ken Murphy (KM Chair), Andy Brock (AB), Matthew Blake (MB), Phil Caroe (PC), Annabel Curwen (AC), John Morgan (JMo), Andy Robinson (AR), Sylke Scheiner (SS), Adeline Winshaw (AW)

Others Present
Jon Culpin (JC CEO), Duncan Cooper (DC Director of Education), Rachael Johnston (RJo Director of Education), Stacie Cox (SC Financial Controller), James Mumford (JMu CFO), Rachel James (RJa Head of Governance Support, Compliance and Risk) Kerrie Jones (Head of Strategic Governance Projects)

	ITEM	ACTION
1.	**Acceptance of Apologies for Absence**	
	There were no apologies for absence	
2.	**Declarations of Interest with regard to agenda items**	
	There were no declarations of interest.	
3	**Agree minutes of last meeting 19 May 2026 and Matters arising not on this agenda**	
	Associated papers: Agenda item 3. Draft AL Board Meeting Minutes 19 May 2026.pdf The minutes from 19 May 2026 were agreed as a true record. **3.1** Matters arising from the minutes: **3.1.1** The committee structure will be discussed at the strategy day. **3.1.2** The WhatsApp group had been created. All other matters had been covered within reports and at other committee meetings.	
4.	**Approval of 2026/27 budgets and 3-year forecast and BFR submission**	
	Associate papers: Agenda item 4. Budget Setting Report 2026-27 V1.pdf Agenda item 4. V3 Budget review Board.pdf A surplus budget is proposed for 2026/27. There are still uncertainties including around support staff pay award and pension contributions. There will be a particular focus on some schools in the Autumn. Challenges include: • Reduction of pupil numbers • Assumptions needed for SET schools as historic data is not held • EHCP funding continues to be delayed Reserves remain below the AL Reserves Policy and DfE best practice.	

	IMF funding is significant with £500k to invest to strengthen inclusive practices and support pupils with SEND. Significant saving is required for 2027/28 and 2028/29. **Q** A trustee asked whether short term decisions could make the trust schools less attractive in the future. **A** All decisions will be strategic and require a model which works long term. **Q** A trustee asked about the submission of the significant deficit budgets for 2027/28 and 2028/29 and whether a delay in submission of the BFR when more is known around pay and pensions will be beneficial. **A** Submission of the BFR as the budget stands will show the DfE the direction of travel. **Q** A trustee asked about a workable plan for 2027/28 **A** The trust has received capital funding of £202k for the boiler at SOH and a condition of this funding is for an SRMA from the DfE to visit in the Autumn term. This will provide an external review and provide assurance on the finance plan. **Q** A trustee asked if a possible reduction in staff equates to the reduction in the number of pupils which is forecast and whether the school will still be able to provide the quality of education and impact that they currently do. **A** This will not be an issue in larger secondary schools as they have the ability to flex and match teachers. This will not be as straightforward in smaller secondary schools but the trust will strive to continue to improve the quality of education whilst making the school more efficient. **Q** A trustee asked about the teacher pay award. **A** A 2% assumption had been included in the budget but it appears that the government will fund 1.7%, therefore there is an improvement but only around £50k **Q** A trustee asked if the decline in pupil numbers at Bottisham is due to geography. **A** There has been a decline in the birth rate nationally. Bottisham reduction has been extreme. One reason is that although Bottisham has had some housing growth there is a decline in the number of families as the homes are not accessible. **Q** A trustee asked if the RI judgement has had an effect on pupil numbers at Bottisham. **A** The school has always had a large number of out of catchment pupils and this has been affected. **Q** A trustee asked whether the next Ofsted would be more positive. **A** Outcomes last year were good and some of the highest in Cambridgeshire and predicted to be strong and above national average again this year. The reduction in numbers will be a trend. The PAN is currently 300 but 250 is realistic. Some areas are seeing a substantial growth for example Cambourne however other areas are seeing a significant decline in pupil numbers. JC will be working with the Local Authority with regards to places planning and working efficiently. **Q** A trustee asked whether the trust would be asking Ofsted to inspect at Bottisham Village College. **A** The school is ready for an inspection and predicting strong results. It is anticipated that the trust will call Ofsted with an aim for an inspection in the Autumn term.	

	Q A trustee asked about the pupil numbers at Wimbish **A** There are currently 33 pupils at Wimbish **The Trust Board approved the budget for 2026/27 and the submission of the BFR.**	
5.	**Management Account P9**	
	Associated papers: Agenda item 5 Period 9 Management Accounts.pdf The Trust Board noted the P9 accounts which had been discussed at FEOC. The expected outturn is a surplus against a budgeted deficit and an improvement on the P8 accounts. Three schools continued to have a deficit budget which was being actively monitored. Supply fees remain high, but the new supply staff framework will ensure more stringent control around this. Cash reserves are positive with no risk of the need for an overdraft. It is predicted that reserves will be at 4% at the end of the academic year. The non-staff cost showed a significant overspend and will be a specific focus in 2026/27. It was noted that there is a risk around the SET schools as their background information is not known. JC updated the Trust Board on the SEND funding backlog with elements of this now starting to come through. **Q** A trustee asked if the continued supply cover at BAS has a detriment on the impact on the quality of education. **A** A large amount of this supply was due to a long-term vacancy and long-term absences. The supply cover was consistent. **Q** A trustee asked about the vulnerability of the schools if the finance staff are not experienced/qualified. **A** The finance structure is being reviewed and processes in place to mitigate risk. **Q** A trustee asked about the greater involvement the Headteachers have in finances and whether this had an impact on the budgets. **A** There has been a substantial change with a greater understanding of budgets now the headteachers sign off the budget. **Q** A trustee asked whether the SEND money which is now coming through, will go to reserves as the money has already been spent. **A** This will depend on the funding received. It was noted that SEND funding paid to CCC by the government has restrictions which requires it to be used for the high needs block etc. and cannot be given straight to schools. The Trust Board thanked the finance team for the work with the budgets.	
6.	**School Improvement Strategy**	
	Associated papers: Agenda item 6. Briefing Note SIS development.pdf Agenda item 6. School Improvement Strategy 2026.pdf The School Improvement Team has been reviewed and will be now work in a different capacity ensuring consistency and quality assurance across all schools. The Core Standard Assessment Tool has been created which school	

	leaders will use to evaluate the school. This will inform which tier the school is. An app is being built for the school leaders to use. There will be 2 clear points for submissions, and the information will feed into the Education Standards Committee and provide a review of capacity and momentum. Tier 4 schools will be monitored half termly. It was noted that there are 10 schools in the Ofsted window for 2026/27 and 10 in 2027/28. **Q** A trustee asked if there will be a link to performance management if the school does not improve. **A** The Directors of Education will already know if there are concerns about Headteacher capability. **Q** A trustee asked about the feedback from headteachers **A** Feedback has been positive and the links to the Ofsted framework is helpful. The change to the school improvement team will feel different to the school leaders but frequency of involvement will increase. **Q** A trustee asked about the next steps and assurance for the Trust Board **A** School leaders will be able to ask for help from colleagues and this will be brokered by the Directors of Education. There are a number of mechanisms to help provide school to school support. The TLG will have a session to focus on CSAT	
7.	**Redesigning Local Governance**	
	Associated papers: Agenda item 7a_SCC model June 2026_3 tracked changes removed.docx Agenda item 7b_Changes to Local Governance AGF July 2026.pdf The Trust Board had agreed the principals of the new model at the May meeting. This had subsequently been presented to the Headteachers and CofG and feedback received and acted upon. A revised version had been presented at the AGF and was positively received. Changes included reporting, role of the trustees, role of the chair, role of a staff member and feedback to stakeholders. It was agreed that this should be a standing item on the Trust Board agenda. It will also be discussed at the strategy day in September. The potential names of the new governance structure were discussed, and members of the School Community Council was preferred.	
8.	**Risk Management Annual Risk Report**	
	Associated papers: Agenda item 8. Risk management report 2026.pdf Changes to the risk appetite for quality of education and size and scale were discussed at ARAC and brought to the Trust Board. It was proposed that quality of education move from cautious to open and size and scale move to cautious. It was also proposed that the risks and risk register are reviewed reducing the operation and compliance risks to avoid duplication, with risks now captured in the CSAT and fed through the relevant committee. A Working Party will be formed with AB as Chair.	RJa
9.	**Committee Reports**	
	Associated papers: Agenda item 9 P&C summary .pdf Agenda Item 9 FEOC summary 30.6.26.pdf Agenda item 9. ARAC summary 2.7.26.pdf	

	Agenda item 9. Education Standards summary 15.6.26.pdf • ARAC • Education Standards • People and Culture • FEOC The committee reports were noted.	
10.	**Governance – Committee structure, membership and chairs**	
	Associated papers: Agenda item 10. Anglian Learning Committee membership 25-26.pdf There is a need to increase the number of Trustees and adverts have bene placed on the website, social media and through Reach Volunteering. The use of external members for committees was agreed. The committee work completed by People and Culture will be moving to the Trust Board from 1 September 2026. The committee structure will be reviewed at the strategy day in September. The following Chairs and Vice Chairs of the committee were agreed.	

Committee	Chair	Vice Chair
FEOC	JM	AR
Audit and Risk Assurance	AB	PC
Education Standards	AR	AW
Governance and Nominations	KM	

	SS will join ARAC AC will join ES	
11.	**Whistleblowing, critical incidents and complaints**	
	Associated papers: Agenda item 11. Anglian Learning Whistleblowing concerns and Complaints report 2025-26.pdf It was noted that the number of complaints had increased slightly on 2024/25 which was in line with the increase in the size of the Trust. The trustees were informed of an additional critical incident which took place after the report was circulated. The reporting of critical incidents would be reviewed to ensure consistent reporting.	
13.	**AOB**	
	Q A trustee asked about air conditioning in schools now that hot weather seems to be becoming normal and what impact the hot weather has had on the trust this year. **A** Some of the primary schools closed early 2 weeks ago due to the hot weather. BAS was closed for the delay due to being in the red zone. The hot weather was also having an impact on the estates. The new schools	

	are not built to equip for the heat. The estates 5-year strategy will consider air conditioning and venting. The Chair thanked trustees and the leadership team for their hard work and dedication of the 2025/26 academic year.	
14.	**Date time and venue of next meeting**	
	Associated papers: Agenda item 13 Trust meeting dates 2026.27.pdf The next Trust Board meeting is on 29 September 2026 The governance strategy day will be on 23 September 2026 The meeting ended at 11.15am	RJa

Items for Future Meetings	
Meeting	**Item**

Action Log				
ITEM	**ACTION**	**DEADLINE**	**RESPONSIBILITY**	**COMLETED**
8	Risk working group to be formed	Sept	RJa	Completed
14	Invites to meetings to be sent	August 2026	RJa	Completed