



MINUTES OF THE FEDERATION TRUST MEETING

Thursday 14 October 2021, 3pm
The Gallery

Present

Ian Dodd, Emma Gautrey, Rob Guthrie, Sam Hearth, Andrew Holt, (Chair), Guy Magrath, Alex Mould, Martyn Rhowbotham, Stuart Williams (Executive Principal).

In Attendance

John Harrison, Kelly Jackson, Natalie Ray, Sheryl Wilson (Clerk).

1. Election of Chair and Vice Chair

Following an email sent to Trustees in which expressions of interest were invited for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair, Andrew Holt was nominated as Chair and Samantha Hearth was nominated as Vice Chair. These appointments were unanimously approved by those present.

2. Welcome introductions and apologies for absence

Andrew Holt welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Sally Kirkby and were accepted by the committee.

3. Declarations of Personal Interest and Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of personal or pecuniary interest.

4. Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 1 July 2021

The minutes were signed to be a true and accurate record.

5. Matters arising from previous minutes

There were no matters arising from the previous minutes.

6. Clerk's Business

Judith Gilboy has resigned from the Trust committee with effect from 14 October, but will however continue in her role as a governor for the Catmose College Local Governing Body for the remainder of this academic year. As Judith was appointed to the Trust by Catmose College Local Governing Body, Trustees agreed with the proposal to ask the College Local Governing body to ask Clive Norgaard Morton if he wished to take on this role and stand on the Resources committee. It was felt that Clive's skills and experience would benefit the Trust.

There had been some amends to the Terms of Reference for the Audit Scrutiny Panel. In response to the Academy Trust Handbook 2021 the name of the committee has changed to: Audit and Scrutiny Risk Assessment Committee. In addition, 3.1.4 was added which states; the committee may invite other employees or experts to contribute,

evaluate and participate on an ad hoc basis. Trustees approved the amended Terms of Reference.

7. Catmose College Expansion

Trustees reviewed and discussed the Fast Track application which had been completed for the proposed additional 30 student places. The application included all the necessary links ready for submission to the ESFA. The consultation for the proposed expansion has been running since 2 July, with local schools, local authorities, parents, students, staff and the community being given an opportunity to respond to the plans via a direct link to the survey. There had been nearly 400 responses with the vast majority in favour. For those not in favour, detailed below are some of the reasons:

- The impact on surrounding schools and share of funding to other schools.
The local authority completed a feasibility study on secondary schools in the county and it was found that the College was the only one which was able to support the project in terms of space and capacity.
- Concern of students being poached from other areas.
Catmose will not change its Admissions Policy and therefore will prioritise local children.
- Concern over dilution of pupil care and reluctance to lose the family feel of becoming too big.
The Client Services provision and subjects will be expanded which will benefit students. However, a watchful eye will be kept on the continuing standards of the ethos and culture at the College.
- Increase in traffic on the site and parking congestion.
Brightways staff are no longer using the car parking facility. The car parking allocated bays will be reviewed. Once approval is received, there will be a transport plan and car parking strategy, which will include a review of the bike sheds.
- Classes will become too big.
The number of students in a class will not change.
- Concern over places for Harington School and students from other schools not being given a place.

Trustees had previously approved the legal agreement between the local authority and the Trust. The first stage of the grant is ready which will include the building occupied by Brightways being converted into MFL classrooms. Client Services will then move to the current DSP area and the IT team will move to the Client Services area. The second stage of the project will be a new building at the back of the College.

Question: What is the contingency plan if costs escalate?

Stuart Williams advised that the same contractor had been appointed through a government approved framework that worked on the Harington School building and they have been advised what the budget is. The current climate and difficulty in obtaining supplies is a potential risk. The Trust does however have reserves if necessary to support the development.

Question: Will it be a fixed price?

The £5million grant should be enough for the project and the Trust will continue to provide updates at Resources and monitor expenditure against budget.

Question: What is the route for the grant?

Stuart Williams advised that the local authority had accrued funding over several years which the DfE had given annually for basic needs. The funding has been confirmed, however, the local authority has made it clear that there will not be any additional payments if the funding does not cover the cost of the works.

Question: Is there a risk associated with the uncertainty of the future of the sports hall?

There have been conversations between the local authority, Stevenage Leisure and the College and the ongoing issue of the swimming pool and flooring of the sports hall. A landlord's inspection is due to be carried out and the local authority are holding a scrutiny panel on the facility in the next week. Trustees advised it would be appropriate to seek legal advice in respect of the lease.

Trustees approved the Fast Track application for submission to the ESFA.

8. Length of College/School Day

Each of the heads of school and the principal has written a paper on the length of the school day. The number of school days and times of the day were compared to that of other local schools. Stuart Williams, John Harrison and Kelly Jackson explained the rationale of the timings of the school day to Trustees. The papers included options to change from the existing model. Trustees agreed that the current model works and there is no need for change, in particular, they thought that the Electives programme was a critical one for students and if the school day changed for the College, it is likely that this would not be an option. The curriculum would also need to be rewritten.

9. Policies

The following policies were ratified by Trustees:

- Federation Stakeholder Complaints Policy – Trustees were also aware of the letter from the ESFA requesting changes to the policy.
- Federation Student Exclusion Policy
- Federation Student Privacy Notice for Covid-19 testing
- Federation Student Safeguarding Policy

10.A.O.B

The recent NGA MAT Governance Report was circulated to Trustees.

There will be an additional bank holiday in 2022 for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. As this date falls in the half term break, the Trust will need to consider another holiday date in lieu of this. Natalie Ray will look at options.

11.Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 9 December 2021, 3pm