

**Activate Learning Education Trust
MULTI ACADEMY TRUST BOARD MEETING**



MINUTES of a meeting of the Activate Learning Education Trust held on Tuesday 19th December at the registered office of Activate Learning Education Trust, Oxpens Road, Oxford OX1 1SA.

Trustees present: Sally Dicketts (Chairperson) (2/2), Lee Nicholls (CEO ALET) (2/2), Joanne Harper (2/2), Dave Kilshaw (2/2).

In attendance: Paul Inman (1/1)
 Nick Evans (1/1)
 Steve Ball, Activate Learning Chief Finance Officer (Item 11)
 Heledd Walker, Clerk to Activate Learning Education Trust.

Apologies: Placi Espejo (1/2) ✓
 Phil Shadbolt (0/2) ✓
 Owain Johns (1/2)
 Beverley Ford (0/2)
 Helen Pike (1/2) ✓

MINUTES

Start – 18:14

Trust Board Meeting	
1.	Apologies for absence The board received apologies from Phil Shadbolt (0/2), Placi Espejo (1/2), Owain Johns (1/2); Beverley Ford (0/2); Helen Pike (1/2)
2.	Declaration of interests, gifts and hospitality Sally Dicketts and Lee Nicholls work for Activate Learning which is the provider of group services to the trust's schools.
3.	Minutes The minutes of the meeting of 8 th November 2017 were approved as an accurate record of the meeting and signed by the chair. All members were agreed.
4.	Matters arising The board received the Matters arising and summary of actions, the following updates were agreed; 1 – Action Complete 2 – Action Complete 3 – Action Complete 4 – Action Ongoing 5 – Action Complete 6 – Action Complete

5.	<p>Any other business that has arisen since the circulation of the agenda</p> <p>None</p>
6.	<p>Governance update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To receive Trustee nominations for approval <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paul Inman - Nick Evans - Helen Pike - Beverley Ford <p>The board approved the nominations of trustee Paul Inman and Nick Evans. The CEO informed the board that we now have 4 independent trustees with Helen Pike and Martin Dix soon to join the board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESFA Letter <p>The board received the ESFA letter for information. Addressed to accounting officers in academy trusts, the letter referred to the personal responsibilities of the accounting officer. The standards of governance required, ensuring the board considers the six key features of effective governance – strategic leadership, accountability, people, structures, compliance an evaluation. The letter also highlighted the importance of the timeliness of submission of financial returns to retain the freedoms granted by the ESFA.</p> • A Guide to Acronyms <p>The board received the first edition of a “Guide to acronyms”.</p> • Appointment of the Clerk <p>The board formally appointed HW as Clerk to Activate Learning Education Trust.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>It was resolved to approve PI and NE as trustees to the Activate Learning Education Trust board.</p> <p>It was resolved to receive the ESFA letter for information.</p> <p>It was resolved to receive the first edition of a “Guide to acronyms”.</p> <p>It was resolved to appoint HW as Clerk to Activate Learning Education Trust.</p>
7.	<p>ALET Improvement Plan</p> <p>The board received the ALET Priorities and Action Plan for 2017/18 which was summarised by JH, Executive Principal UTC Reading, UTC Swindon and UTC Heathrow. The board heard the priorities for 2017/18 being;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardisation across the MAT of key activities to support school improvement and economies of scale. • Identification and implementation of opportunities for collaboration, to improve teaching, learning and leadership. • Impactful interventions, driven through sharing of good practice, to improve the outcomes for all schools with a focus on disadvantaged and high ability students. <p>The trustees queried how these priorities were selected. JH explained that priority one and three are around the identified needs. All good multi academy trusts have standardisation across key activities.</p> <p>It was requested that the areas should be RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rated for the next</p>

	<p>meeting.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>It was resolved that the board approved the ALET Improvement Plan.</p>
8.	<p>Data dashboard</p> <p>The board received the Data dashboard report summarised by the Executive Principal, JH that each academy reports to their local Governing Bodies on an agreed set of data which is RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rated to enable governors to pin point the most crucial area for challenge. An overview data sheet is also provided to indicate areas for potential discussion.</p> <p>Discussions ensued around the target setting and consistency of approach to RAG rating across all the academies within the MAT. The LGB boards need to provide more challenge on areas below target. It was agreed that the Chair, CEO, Executive Principal and Clerk would determine which targets would be set by the ALET board and which would be set by individual academies.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>The board resolved to receive the Data dashboard report for information.</p> <p>The board resolved that the Chair, CEO, Executive Principal and Clerk would determine which targets would be set by the ALET board and which would be set by the individual academies.</p>
9.	<p>General Data Protection Regulation update</p> <p>The board received an update report regarding the reforms to the General Data Protection Regulation which will come into force and apply by 25th May 2018.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>It was resolved that the board received the GDPR update for information.</p>
10.	<p>LGB Pay Committee</p> <p>The board were advised that all Local Governing bodies had held a Pay Committee since the last ALET board meeting to review the recommendations proposed by the Head Teachers.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>The board resolved to receive the Local Governing Board Pay committee updates.</p>
11.	<p>CEO Report</p> <p>SB present for this item.</p> <p>The board received a handout from the CEO along with a verbal update. The CEO reminded the board of the Trust's strategic plan to 2021 to grow in scale, capacity and resilience, doing this with two regional school hubs, one of UTC's/Studio School's and one of secondary schools. The CEO familiarised the new members of the board that there are currently three UTC's, one studio school and one secondary school. Finding a sister school for The Bicester School has been a priority of the CEO. The new trustees were informed of</p>

the background of Theale Green School whereby Regional School Commissioner first approached the Trust in 2016 asking if they would take on Theale Green School, however the process of gaining the “sponsor match” approval has been a lengthy one with many delays. The next opportunity to gain Ministerial approval for the “Sponsor match” is 8th January 2018. The board discussed the risks of retreating from the project and the negative impact this would have on the support for The Bicester School.

The trustees considered the following conditions;

- That the department commit to an annual review with at least the Deputy Director, to ensure the school recovery and the proposed recoverable element if affordable and sustainable and not compromising the school’s need to invest over these years.
- That progress is started straight away with the Head Teacher recruitment.
- That the Director of Education resource is given full access, support and co-operation by the existing leadership and LGB chair – in order to meet the expectations being placed on us by the department for education.
- Begin to make an immediate impact on school recruitment for September 2018 by approaching second and third choice applicants.

The discussions moved to the proposal from the Department for Education regarding the finances, the proposal would provide the additional funding that Theale Green School (TGS) requires so that ALET does not have to assume the cost of the forecast deficit from 2017/18 or the costs of restructuring. The board heard how this funding will be provided on a recoverable basis, payable when TGS produces cumulative surplus, which based on the figures provided would be in the academic year 2023/24.

SB assured the board that the repayments would only take place once TGS was in cumulative surplus, if this doesn’t happen, the repayments wouldn’t be made. PI queried how this would affect the other academies within the trust. SB reassured the trustees that the academies finances are separate, with each one having its own income and cost centres. Cumulative figures are reported to the ALET board but they are kept separate. DK queried how TGS is currently being supported by ALET. The CEO informed the board that Nicola Maytum, Director of Education is currently working in the school influencing the School Improvement plan. The board heard how the school currently has a broad curriculum offer with too many subjects and too few students. The curriculum review and proposed staffing changes would predict a surplus in the academic year 2023/24. DK questioned who is currently financing the loss. The Chair briefed the board that the risk to ALET would be the lack of school improvement as the DfE would have to intervene. The longer the delay, the greater the risk of not being able to improve the school. The Chair explained that the proposed conditions would mitigate the risk.

NE queried what assumptions had been made with regards to future student numbers. The CEO advised the group of the background research that had taken place when predicting the conservative student numbers, this included checking the demographics in the area, current and future housing plans. PI questioned whether there would be retrogression. The CEO confirmed that there would be a lag in curriculum changes, for example A levels are a two year course and cannot be stopped. There is a predicted three year deficit and any increases in student numbers are subject to lagged funding.

Discussions ensued around the types of future schools that ALET would integrate with. DK asked whether the Chair was happy with the level of debt at TGS. The Chair responded saying that she was not happy with the level of debt, however given the immense work done

	<p>back and forth with the School's commissioner, she is a lot more satisfied with the new level of proposed debt. NE asked whether any transition processes had been completed before and what had been learnt from this. The CEO assured the trustee that ALET have now completed a number of successful transitions. Each time additional progression is made through the evolution of the process. The CEO confirmed that the back office provisions would be fulfilled by ALET from the first day.</p> <p>The discussions concluded that the board resolved to integrate with TGS on the proviso that the conditions, albeit with tighter wording would be executed along with the points discussed around the finances at the DfE meeting. All members were in agreement.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>The board resolved to integrate with TGS based on the following conditions being agreed by the DfE.</p> <p>Conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the DfE commit to an annual review with the Deputy Director, Academies Operations, to ensure the school recovery and proposed recoverable element is affordable and sustainable and not compromising the school's need to invest over these years; 2. That we progress straight away with the Head Teacher recruitment; 3. That our resource – NM, Director of Education, is given full access, support and co-operation by the existing leadership and LGB Chair in order that we can meet the expectations being placed on us by the Department for Education. 4. That we can begin to make an immediate impact on school recruitment for September 2018 (approaching second and third choice applicants) and with a fresh start for September 2019. 5. That the DfE's proposal that additional funding would be provided so that ALET did not have to assume the costs of the forecast deficit (from 2017/18) or the necessary costs of restructuring. This funding would be provided on a recoverable basis but recovery would be subject to a payment holiday until TGS produces cumulative surplus, based on the figures provided this is currently expected for 2023/24.
<p>12.</p>	<p>Financial Reports</p> <p>The board received an update from the Audit and resources committee which confirmed that there was a plan in place to finalise the accounts and submit them to the ESFA. Further discussions around capacity within the finance team would take place outside of the meeting. A standard item will be added to each agenda with extraordinary meetings in place twice per year if required.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>The board resolved to receive the update from the Audit and Resources committee.</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>Risk Register</p> <p>The board received the Risk Register which was summarised by the CEO. It was confirmed that no updates were required since the last meeting on 8th November 2018.</p> <p>Trustees raised queries around Risk number 4 which had decreased since the last review.</p>

	<p>The CEO confirmed that the work done around recruiting new members and trustees had reduced the risk.</p> <p>It was agreed that a risk should be added around the Finances.</p> <p>Questions were raised as to how the risk register is updated. The CEO reassured the board that the risk register is updated after each meeting based on discussions in the meeting and any further information being made available.</p> <p>The board agreed that the Clerk would organise a Strategic 'Away Day'. The board requested that further discussions should take place around the impact of non-standardisation at the away day.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>It was resolved to receive the Risk Register for information and discussion.</p> <p>It was resolved to add a risk around Finances to the risk register.</p> <p>It was resolved to organise a Strategic Away Day.</p>
<p>14.</p>	<p>Next meeting:</p> <p>Wednesday 21st March 2018</p> <p>Wednesday 4th July 2018</p>

The meeting Closed at 19:35

Signed:.....

Date:.....