**Meeting of LSEAT Board held on**

**Tuesday 9 July 2024 from 5.30-7.30pm**

**in person at Orpington Campus Room C1/C2**

**Part 1 Above the Line 5-30-7.10pm**

**Part 2 Below the Line 7.10-7.30pm**

**Trustees**

Rama Venchard MBE (RV) Chair

Dr Sam Parrett CBE (SP) Trustee & Group CEO

Denise James Mason (DJM) Vice Chair

David Bailey (DB) Trustee

Charles Yates (CY) Trustee

Dr Christopher Philpott (CP) Trustee

Prof Lynne Revell (LR) Trustee

Marek Michalski (MM) Trustee

Sarah Servantes (SS) Trustee

Beverley Eaglesfield (BE) Trustee

Milena Cooper (MC) Trustee

Shirley Puxty (SPx) Trustee

Daniel Kwalombota (DK) Co-opted Trustee (LSEC)

**Governance Professional & Clerk to the Board**

Jennifer Pharo (JP) Group Chief Governance Officer

**Executive Officers in attendance**

John Hunt (JHu) Group Deputy CEO & Group CFO

Neil Miller (NM) Deputy CEO Academies

**Officers in attendance**

**Part 1: Special Item:**

Rob Freeman (RF) Head Teacher Bromly Trust Academy

Claire Muccio (CM) Head of Outreach

**Board Papers Published on Board Intelligence on 2 July 2024**

* **Board Part 1 includes above the line items**
* **Board Part 2 includes below the line items**

**THE NOLAN COMMITTEE**

**THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE**

# SELFLESSNESS

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

# INTEGRITY

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

# OBJECTIVITY

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

# ACCOUNTABILITY

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

# OPENNESS

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

# HONESTY

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

# LEADERSHIP

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

**MINUTES PARTS 1 & 2**

**Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest**

Chair welcomed Trustees.

Chair declared an interest in the Grafham Grange detailed within the Growth Report.

Chair confirmed that he is a Governor on the Orchard Hill College & Academy Trust.

Apologies received from David Bailey, who had also resigned as a Trustee.

Confirmation that the Trust Sponsor LSEC had ratified the appointment of Beverley Eaglesfield as Vice Chair of the Trust from 1 September 2024.

Board expressed thanks to Denise James Mason for her service as Vice Chair.

**Minutes of previous meeting held on 7 May 2024**

The Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

**Board Action Log & Strategic Growth Risk Register Template**

The Board received and noted the Action Log.

It was reported that new SCR system and process was being trialled at Bramley Oak, with testing underway.

It was reported that the Estates Strategy would be presented to the October Board.

**PART 1: ABOVE THE LINE AGENDA ITEMS:**

**SPECIAL ITEM: Presentation on LSEAT AP & Outreach Services (Rob Fenton and Clair Muccio**

**The Board received a presentation on the AP& Outreach Services.**

The Board discussed the differences in services between local authorities in Bexley and Bromley and the process undertaken for referrals and reintegration.

It was reported that the Outreach Team completed significant preventative work within a large number of Bexley and Bromley Schools working with pupils on the cusp or at risk of exclusion.

It was reported that the outreach team provided training and development and technics that teachers and practitioners could apply to prevent the exclusion. Which moved away from the Fix the Child model which had previously been adopted by Schools.

It was reported that intense and detailed work was undertaken with each pupil to gain a significant understanding of the child’s needs and behaviour.

**Questions and Comments**

In response to questions on the balance between supporting the child in mainstream and supporting the staff, it was reported that each individual case was carefully assessed, and the system galvanised to offer the best and most appropriate support. Our work is not complete until some difference is seen.

In response to questions on how the outreach team measure success, it was reported that measures of value added, transition and reintegration were used.

In response to questions on fix the child models, was reported that the Trust was very much an outlier in its approach to responding to student behaviour.

The Board extended thanks to the Head of Outreach and HT BTA for the comprehensive report.

The Board **NOTED** the update.

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| **A1** | **Group CEO Update and Appendices** |
|  | The Group CEO presented the report which was taken as read.  In response to questions on Project Galaxy it was reported that the plans for new academic year were in place.  In response to questions on growth it the Board received an update on the growth plans including early discussions on a Special School in Crowborough and the development of the Associate Membership Agreement with two special Surrey Schools.  It was reported that the Executive were urgently waiting for update on the teachers’ pay review together with outcomes of capital funding bids which had been delayed due to purdah. |
| **A2** | **CONFIDENTIAL ITEM** |
| **A3** | **DCEO Operational Update** |
|  | The Board received the update from the DECO which was taken as read.  It was reported that a new Head Teacher had been appointed for Horizons. This was an internal appointment and progression for the Deputy Head of the Outreach Services.  It was reported that the exit interviews of the former Head Teacher had been conducted.  It was reported that Leadership capacity across some schools remained an issue.  It was reported that the Education Advisers remain a key factor of the School Improvement Strategy.  It was reported that quality of provision remained strong across the schools despite some capacity issues.  The Board received an update on the impact on some of the growth initiatives and reviewing capacity givers and takers on the current opportunities list.  It was reported that leadership wellbeing was a key issue that continued to be monitored. |
|  | **Questions and Comments** |
|  | In response to questions it was reported that an update on staffing retention and recruitment would be provided at next Board Meeting.  In response to questions on EDI it was reported that this would be provided at the next Board Meeting. |
| **A3.1** | **Bexley Music Update** |
|  | The Board received a brief update on the development of the new South East London Music Education Partnership.  It was reported that ACE had confirmed the bid submitted by the Partnership had been successful.  It was reported that the legal documents that would comprise the partnership agreement, and constitutional documents for the new CLG were being developed for September.  It was reported that Dr Christopher Philpott has been appointed as the Director for the new CLG in an ex-office capacity.  It was reported that the bank account would be opened in time for the first tranche of the grant to be received in September 2024. |

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|  | **Questions and Comments** |
|  | The Board **NOTED** the update. |
| **A4** | **GCFO Update** |
| **A4.1** | **Group Risk Register and Appendices** |
|  | The Board received an update on the risk register.  It was reported that there 20 risks on the Trust risk register, 3 are High, 13 are Medium, and 4 are considered to be Low.  Risks reported including T2, which covered insufficient capacity and infrastructure to support growth, representing a high risk which had been updated to reflect the Trust five-year growth strategy.  Risk T8 relating to breaches of health and safety legislation, or a major H&S incident was reported as a high risk, reflecting the issues previously reported at Warren Road and Heron Academies.  Risk T19 relating to IT Monitoring & Filtering systems was also reported as incomplete and remains a high risk. |
|  | **Questions and Comments** |
|  | In response to questions on the issues at Heron, it was reported that Group CEO had been involved in escalating the issues of the unresolved fire repairs and remedies to be completed by Lambeth LA. It was reported that the legal action may need to be considered against the LA.  In response to questions on health and safety it was reported that management training would be rolled out to members of the SLT.  The Board **NOTED** the report. |
| **A4.2** | **Trust 2024/25 Budget** |
|  | The Board received the 2024/25 Budget for approval.  It was reported that separate budgets had been prepared for each of the Academies within the Trust and the total budgeted operating position for 2024/25 was a surplus of £84k from incoming resources for the year, after allowing for £402k of DfE operating deficit support for the Ignis Schools, this position excluded reserves brought forward, which were projected to total £2,749k by the end of 2024/25.  It was reported that each school had been set a target surplus of 1.5% but that due to the impact of the current economic conditions, generally high cost of living pay awards and non-pay inflation levels in recent years, this target had only been achieved by Heron Academy and Bramley Oak Academy, with other schools budgeted to breakeven.  It was reported that the Barrington Primary School and Bedonwell Infant and Nursery School, both currently part of Ignis Academy Trust, were projected to incur deficits of £117k and £285k, respectively. Once accounting for the DfE deficit support package of £402k, this will return the Ignis Schools to breakeven.  The Board were advised to approve the central resource fee (top slice) arrangements, which were recommended at 6% of the ESFA General Annual Grant (GAG), and a proxy of GAG funding for our Special and Alternative Provision (AP) Schools. This is unchanged method from current year.  The Board were advised that it was recommended that the central resource fee increase is phased for Warren Road Primary School to 4% in 2024/25 and to 5% in 2025/26.  The Board were advised that to ensure the Trust holds sufficient reserves, the Trust reserves policy recommends a minimum reserve level of 7% of the total income for each Academy. |
|  | **Questions and Comments** |
|  | Following some questions and discussion the Board **APPROVED** the top slice as presented and reported.  In response to questions on central trust service staff it was reported that in line with the Trust growth plans, the central teams would continue to grow. It was reported that current central costs were below average for a Trust our size.  In response to questions it was reported that central top slice costs across the sector range from 3-10%.  In response to questions it was reported that better understanding and modelling of the central cost services would be required as the Trust grows.  **ACTION**: Board to receive 3-year modelling of central services costs and staff to align to the growth plan. To include where reserves would be used to support growth.  The Board **NOTED** the update. |
| **A4.3** | **Three-Year Financial Plan** |
|  | The Board received the three-year financial plan for APPROVAL.  Key points to note as reported are that an operating deficit of £83k was forecast in the current year, and this will be materially unchanged for 2024/25 after the DfE deficit funding support for Ignis. The outturn is expected to improve to a surplus of £237k in year three (2025/26) as a result of a restructure at the Ignis Schools, together with required efficiency savings and growth across the Trust.  The Board were advised that no new major capital projects are anticipated to be funded from Trust reserves; however, total capital expenditure funded from reserves is forecast to be circa £1.5m in year one of the plan, reducing to £0.49m in year two and £0.2m in year three.  It was reported that overall cash balances are expected to increase slightly over the three-year period of the plan due to the improvement in the operating position and increase in School Condition Allocation funds, which was paid in advance of expenditure.  The Board were advised that pay and non-pay efficiency savings of circa £261k across the Trust and its member Academies would be required by 2025/26 in order to deliver the planned outturn for the year, assuming that core funding does not increase from its current level. |
|  | **Questions and Comments.** |
|  | The Board **NOTED** the report and update and **APPROVED** the three-year financial plan as presented. |

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| **A5** | **GCGO Update** |
|  | **Board Improvement Framework and 2024 Scheme of Delegation & Standing Orders** |
|  | The Board were presented with the Board Improvement Framework document which, as requested by the Board, has been completed by the Group CGO to provide draft indicative judgements across the fourteen indicators together with a narrative to demonstrate the evidence available to justify the assessment and judgement.  The Board **CONSIDERED** and **DISCUSSED** the judgements and gradings. A final version of the Board Self-Assessment and Action Plan would be prepared for December Board.  The Board were asked to **APPROVE** the Group Scheme of Delegation and Standing Orders which had been updated to as part of annual governance practice.  It was reported that the Scheme of Delegation had been slightly adjusted to reflect changes presenting in the 24/25 Trust Financial Regulations and alignment to the Academies Handbook.  It was reported that the Group Standing Orders had been updated to reflect minor adjustments to Committee Terms of Reference and Operating Plans. Both documents to be published on the Trust website.  The Board were advised that the Group Standing Orders should be read by all new and existing Trustees as these contain the Group Governance Statement and Code of Conduct which apply to the College, Trust and Laser Trustees and Governors. |

**PART 2: BELOW THE LINE**

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| **B2** | **Group CFO Update** |
| B2.1 | 2023/24 Financial & Property Update P8 Management Accounts. |
|  | The Board received the updated P8 Management Accounts and **APPROVED** a further £90k or reserves to be committed to the Bramley Oak Capital Project. |
| **B3** | **Information or** **Recommendations from Committees** |
| B3.1 | Group Treasury Management Policy – **APPROVED** as recommended by the Finance Committee |
| B3.2 | Trust Reserves Policy – **APPROVED** as recommended by the Finance Committee |
| B3.3 | Trust Financial Regulations – **APPROVED** as recommended by the Finance Committee |
| B3.4 | Group Internal Audit Plan 2024/25 – **APPROVED** as recommended by the Audit & Risk Committee. |
| **B4** | **Governance / Statutory / Regulatory Updates** |
| **B4.2** | Resolutions: Chair’s Action IGNIS – **NOTED** for information. |

**AOB & Date of Next Meeting – 15 October at 5.30pm**