

**MINUTES LSEAT Board held on  
Tuesday 10 December 2024 from 5.30-7.30pm  
in person at Orpington Campus Room C1/C2**

**Part 1 Above the Line 5-30-7.00pm  
Part 2 Below the Line 7.00-7.30pm**

**Trustees**

Rama Venchard MBE (RV)  
Dr Sam Parrett CBE (SP)  
Beverley Eaglesfield (BE)  
Denise James Mason (DJM)  
Charles Yates (CY)  
Dr Christopher Philpott (CP)  
Prof Lynne Revell (LR)  
Marek Michalski (MM)  
Sarah Servantes (SS)  
Milena Cooper (MC)  
Shirley Puxty (SPx)  
George Ryan (GR)  
Daniel Kwalombota (DK)  
Suba Dickerson (SD)

Chair  
Trustee & Group CEO  
Vice Chair  
Trustee  
Trustee  
Trustee  
Trustee  
Trustee  
Trustee  
Trustee  
Trustee  
Trustee  
Co-opted Trustee (LSEC)  
Co-opted Trustee (LSEC)

**Governance Professional & Clerk to the Board**

Jennifer Pharo (JP)

Group Chief of Staff & Governance Director

**Executive Officers in attendance**

John Hunt (JHu)  
Neil Miller (NM)  
Beth Moore (BM)  
Mark Bryant (MB)

Group Deputy CEO & Group CFO  
Deputy CEO Academies  
Group Safeguarding Director (Item 2.1)  
Director Surrey (attending virtually)

## 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.

## FULL AGENDA PARTS 1 & 2

### Welcome Trustees apologies and declarations of interest

Trustees Dr Sam Parrett, Milena Cooper, Shirley Puxty and Officer Mark Bryant attending remotely.

Chair-RV declared an interest in his capacity as a Governor or Orchard Hill College and Sponsor organisation of Orchard Hill College Academy Trust.

Minutes of previous meeting held on 15 October 2024 were **APPROVED**.

### Action Log

Action log was reviewed and updated.

It was reported that the new visit form would be completed for Spring Term.

It was reported that the financial modelling for BTA revised PAN would be presented for next meeting together with an update on the MOU.

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

Ref	Item
A1	<b>Group CEO Update</b>
	Group CEO presented the report which was taken as read. This included the external policy update and update on LASER developments.
	<b>Questions and Comments</b>
	In response to questions on teaching apprenticeships and commenting on the proposed reforms, it was reported that the Trust had made representation to the LGA with the Bexley LA.
	It was reported that the Trust continues to use its levy pot, and many staff had completed up to level 7 provision. It was reported that nationally too much level 7 was being delivered and there was a renewed focus on increasing level 2 and 3 apprenticeship provision.
	In response to questions on the likelihood of Ofsted conducting MAT inspections it was reported that it was highly likely given the current government policy and direction of travel.
	It was reported that a pilot programme of MATSE had been conducted between 2021-23 and the Trust has been preparing for this. It was reported that it was important to be move towards reporting data at trust level as well as individual school. This was currently being reviewed by the DCEO.
	In response to questions on the progress of fire safety works at Warren Road, it was reported that this was not a concern and works were in progress.
	In response to questions on the progress of capital and fire safety works at Heron it was reported that there had been a good progress with Lambeth LA in that works on the boilers and cladding had been agreed, fire access from the first floor had been agreed and it was a question of managing and planning the works on site so as to not disrupt teaching and learning. Ofsted window opens in February 2025, and this will be a consideration for the timing of the works.
	In response to questions on the fundraising events being planned for LASER it was reported that a golf day was being organised for Spring 2025, sponsored by Kier the Constructor and strategic partner of the LSEC Future Greenwich Campus.
	In response to questions on the post transfer status of the Ignis Academy Trust, it was reported that an action plan was in place to implement the post transfer actions around restructure and budgets. The Board requested an update on the progress of reducing budgets and resources through restructuring of business operations, at the next Board Meeting.
	<b>ACTION:</b> The Director Primary and Director Operations & Services would attend the next Trust Board to report on progress.

	<p>In response to questions it was reported that a post transfer action plan template and process was in place.</p> <p>The Board NOTED the update and actions.</p>
<b>A2</b>	<b>DCEO Operational Update</b>
	<b>KPI Dashboard</b>
	<p>Deputy CEO presented the operational update and KPI Dashboard. The papers were taken as read. The DCEO highlighted two key issues funding for BTA, and recent complaints received from the agency. It was reported that funding at BTA was a critical issue which needed to be resolved and would be reported back to the Board in January.</p> <p>It was reported that the complaints received from the agency were vexatious and skipped the Trust Complaints procedure. The Board were advised that all complaints had been resolved, and assurances had been provided and confirmed by the Agency.</p>
	<b>Questions and Comments</b>
	<p>In response to questions on the complaints it was reported that the complaints had been received on a Friday afternoon over consecutive weeks. Head Teachers mental health and wellbeing had been significantly impacted by this late receipt of complaints.</p> <p>In response to the proposal on the Wellbeing Charter it was reported that the Charter could be tracked at school level through Local Academy Council. It was reported that the Director Surrey-MB was leading on the Wellbeing Working Group the outcomes would be shared with all Heads and could be reported through Academy Council.</p> <p>In response to questions on the complaints process and whether parents were being educated on how to use the complaints process, it was reported that better communication and visualization on the complaints process was required to enable and support better understanding of how to make a complaint. It was agreed that a simplified decision tree was required alongside the planned revised complaints policy.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> It was agreed that the revised Complaints Procedure would be presented to the March Board to include user friendly visualisations for parents to be published on the Trust website.</p> <p>In response to questions on CPD offer and related outcomes of the staff survey, it was reported that health and wellbeing action had been picked up and being reviewed and assessed in the Wellbeing Working Group.</p> <p>In response to questions on attendance it was reported that the Head Teachers track attendance against national levels. Current attendance for the first half term looked positive.. BBA attendance looked slightly lower than national, and it was reported that it was unfair to compare BBA and SEMH attendance with national rates. Contextualized safeguarding issues had a detrimental impact on attendance and it was necessary to disaggregate these pupils.</p> <p>In response to questions on interrogating attendance information at EPS Committee it was reported that Trust aggregated data was being prepared for the Committee and changes to reporting.</p> <p>In response to questions on the current working groups underway it was reported that there was an AI Working Group and Sustainability Working Group.</p> <p><b>ACTION:</b> It was agreed that summary report on both working groups would be presented to the April Board.</p> <p>In response to the interim report on Therapies across the Trust it was reported that the report had been very comprehensive. This was currently being reviewed by the Executive.</p>

	<p><b>ACTION:</b> An update on Therapies and a way forward would be provided to the April Board.</p> <p>Trustee-CP provided an update on Bexley Music and reported that the first South East London Music Education Limited Directors meeting had been convened. Significant work had been completed by the Hub leads including Bexley Music Lead-JS and each of the individual partners, including LSEAT and Group Governance Director-JP to get to ensure the company was operational and would be receiving and awarding the funding from ACE through the new company.</p> <p>The Board <b>NOTED</b> the update and actions.</p>
<b>A2.1</b>	<b>Safeguarding Update</b>
	<p>Group Director Safeguarding, presented the report and provided an update on the SCR and Smoothwall web filtering service</p> <p>It was reported that Safeguarding Audits had been completed at Bedonwell, Barrington and Heron.</p> <p>It was reported that Barrington overall safeguarding is good with some issues on the SCR and some aspects of record keeping to be actioned.</p> <p>It was reported that Heron Safeguarding records need strengthening. Meetings have been convened with the school on a weekly basis to support record keeping.</p> <p>It was reported that overall Bedonwell safeguarding practices are good. CPOMs needed some updating.</p> <p>It was reported that Positive Handling records and approach needed some action.</p> <p>It was reported that a visit to Horizons had been planned before Christmas.</p>
	<b>Questions and Comments</b>
	<p>In response to questions on the filtering and monitoring system it was reported that the new system would be rolled out after Christmas.</p> <p>In response to questions on the SCR and the full deployment of the process, it was reported that data had been released from the iTrent System into Arbor and was being checked and validated by Heads. Each Head would be asked to sign off the data.</p> <p>It was reported that that checks and validation would be completed by early February. An alternative data solution was running in parallel to ensure that there was always an accurate and compliant SCR until the full systemised solution was available</p> <p>The Board were provided with assurance that the solution would be fully implemented by February, there had been significant delays in the past and the Board were advised that the Executive were confident that the technical solution was working. Validating the data was a priority task for Heads to complete.</p> <p>In response to final questions from the Board on the need for assurance and compliance it was reported that every school was validating and checking the SCR, and it was confirmed that that the Executive would meet the completion deadline now that the systemised solution was complete.</p> <p>In response to questions on supervision and support for DSLs it was reported that most DSLs have access to supervision and there are a network of supervisors available.</p> <p>In response to questions on the strategic growth and impact on safeguarding it was reported that discussions on growth were underway to determine what support is required.</p>

	<p>In response to questions on safeguarding resource considerations it was reported that support resources for each onboarding school would be different depending on the type of provision, operational structure and dissemination of resources across existing teams.</p> <p>It was reported that post onboard reviews and lessons learned exercise, needed to be completed following transfer/conversions of school. The new SCR process has been designed to ensure it fits the onboarding process.</p> <p>In response to questions on historic safeguarding concerns and significant complaints that could emerge post transfer and conversion it was reported that due diligence checks including ongoing LADO referrals are covered.</p> <p>The Board <b>NOTED</b> the update.</p>
	<b>CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS A3.1 and A3.2</b>
<b>A3</b>	<b>Trust Growth Update and Financial Plan</b>
	Information not published.
<b>A4</b>	<b>GCFO Update</b>
<b>A4.0</b>	<b>2023/24 Audit &amp; Risk Committee Annual Report</b>
	<p>Group Chief Governance Officer presented the Audit Committee Annual Report for LSEAT, which provided details of the key activities and oversight of the Group Audit &amp; Risk Committee during the period of 2023/24.</p> <p>The report outlines the constitution of the Audit &amp; Risk Committee, the performance of the internal and external auditors, details of how risk and assurance has been completed, any other specific issues raised in relation to the individual organisations and an overall opinion of the Committee.</p> <p>The report was prepared as a final review of the 2023/24 academic year and presented to the Trust Board to provide assurance to Trustees on the activity and opinion of the Group Audit &amp; Risk Committee.</p>
	<b>Questions and Comments</b>
	The Board noted the report and the work of the effective work of the Group Audit & Risk Committee.
<b>A4.1</b>	<b>2023/24 Financial Statements &amp; Letter of Representation</b>
	<p>The Board received the 23/24 Financial Statements and Letter of Representation presented by the Group CFO.</p> <p>It was reported that the Financial Statements for year ended 31 August 2024 were prepared on the going concern basis and show a net income of £18.9m. After excluding the net assets inherited on the transfer of Warren Road Primary School, transfers between reserves and adjustments for capital grants and depreciation, the surplus for the year is £817k and is consistent with the value in the period 12 management accounts. An analysis of the final forecast outturn for the year and the actual outturn for the year was provided to the Board.</p> <p>It was reported that the Financial Statements have been audited and include comments made by the external auditors following the completion of their audit fieldwork. The financial statements agree with the final period 12 Management accounts, reconciliation of the latest forecast outturn and actual results for the year.</p> <p>The Board was asked to consider the Audit Representations letter, which had been considered and recommended by the Audit Committee. The letter sets out the representations the Board is making to the Financial Statements auditors regarding a number of key issues relating to their audit work. It was reported that these representations include but are not limited to the responsibility to prepare Financial Statements which give a true and fair view, providing unrestricted access to persons within the Trust in order to obtain audit evidence, the going concern basis upon which the accounts are prepared, use of appropriate accounting policies, awareness of irregularity or fraud, undisclosed liabilities, and suitability of the actuarial pension assumptions for the FRS102 pension disclosure.</p>

	<p>It was reported that the Trust had completed a fraud assessment covering the areas susceptible to fraud and the controls in place. The board were reminded of the small fraud previously reported in September 2023. It was reported that the former member of staff and perpetrated the fraud has pleaded guilty in court and will be sentenced on 23 December.</p> <p>The Board were requested to <b>APPROVE</b> the 2023/24 Financial Statements on the Going Concern basis.</p> <p>The Board were requested to <b>APPROVE</b> the letter of representations.</p>
	<b>Questions and Comments</b>
	<p>The Board expressed thank and appreciation to the Executive on the comprehensive 2023/24 Financial Statements which were <b>APPROVED</b>.</p> <p>The Board <b>APPROVED</b> the letter of representation.</p>
<b>A4.2</b>	<b>2024/25 Finance &amp; Property Update</b>
	<p>The Board received the Management Accounts for period 2 to 31 October 2024 reporting a year-to-date adjusted operating deficit prior to FRS102 pension adjustments of £180k. This was circa £285k better than the profile for the year to date and was mainly attributable to increased pupil numbers at BBA and Aspire, which are almost at full capacity.</p> <p>It was reported that in addition, interest income from Treasury Activities were also fairly high in the first two months, and there have been some savings from delayed recruitment and delayed support pay award.</p> <p>It was reported that the Board had approved a resolution on the pay awards for staff the impact of which was covered in the report. It was reported that with the exception of Bexly Music, the expected impact was positive for most Schools.</p> <p>The Board were advised that since the last reporting period, the main project works had been completed at Bramley Oak Project 1, with the school now occupying the last remaining section of the project. It was reported that the planning application for Project 2 on the expansion works being led by Surrey County Council, had been validated and a mini tender had been released to Contractors with tender returns due to be received on 10 January 2025.</p> <p>It was reported that a 'next steps' meeting is currently in the process of being arranged with SCC's professional team.</p> <p>The Board were advised that the Strategic School Improvement Capital Budget (SSCIB) funded the project at Heron Academy and most works have now been completed. There will be a small element of the works involving window replacement that will not be concluded until the end of the year owing to long lead-in times.</p> <p>It was reported that there had been no meaningful further progress on the use of the first floor of the building for mobility-restricted pupils, despite assurances from the Director of Education in February 2024 that Lambeth would resolve this issue in accordance with the agreement when the school transferred.</p>
	<b>Questions and Comments</b>
	The Board <b>NOTED</b> the update. No questions or comments.

<b>A4.3</b>	<b>Group Risk Register</b>
	<p>The Board received the updated risk register which had been reviewed by the Audit &amp; Risk Committee.</p> <p>It was reported that of the 21 risks on the Trust risk register, 3 are High, 14 are Medium, and 4 are considered to be Low.</p>

	<p>The following risks were reported to the Board.</p> <p>Risk T2 covering capacity and infrastructure to support growth has been increased with our ambitious and fast-paced growth plan to transfer 8 Schools by December 2026.</p> <p>Risk T8 covering breaches of health and safety legislation / major H&amp;S incident has been updated to reflect the impact of Trust growth with a need to mitigate the capacity of the team and its systems.</p> <p>Risk T19 covering IT Monitoring &amp; Filtering systems do not comply with KCSIE 2023 requirements still remains a High risk on the risk register with the risk score being unchanged at this time.</p> <p>Risk T21 covering the risk posed by the change of Government and the potential for policy reforms to have an impact on school operations, curriculum reform, the SEN system and funding has been added to the risk register as a Medium risk.</p>
	<b>Questions and Comments</b>
	The Board NOTED the update. No questions or comments.
<b>A5</b>	<b>GCGO Update</b>
<b>A5.1</b>	<b>External Board Review (Verbal)</b>
	Group Chief Governance Director recommended to the the Board that a review of local governance aligned to the growth plan be completed followed by an external board review in 2025/26. The Local Governance Review would be supported by an Advisor from CST. The Scope of the review would be presented for discussion and approval at the January 2025 Board.
	<b>Questions and Comments</b>
	The Board NOTED the update. No questions or comments.



**PART 2: BELOW THE LINE**

The following items were presented as below the line items to be monitored and noted by the Board.

Ref	Item
<b>B1</b>	<b>Group Strategy Update</b>
B1.1	Group Strategy Officer Update including Marketing & Communications Plan. NOTED
<b>B2</b>	<b>DCEO Operational &amp; Performance Update</b>
B2.1	Trust School Development Plans
	Trust Directors had provided Trust Development Plans . This was a new and important development for the Trust, which had been discussed and scrutinised at the EPS Committee. NOTED
B2.2	Bexley Music Update – Chairs Action NOTED
<b>B3</b>	<b>Group CFO Update</b>
B3.1	Item A4.2: 2024/25 Financial P2 Management Accounts. NOTED
B3.2	Item 4.3: Group Risk Register Appendices. NOTED
<b>B4</b>	<b>Information or Recommendations from Committees</b>
B4.1	<b>EPS Committee Recommendations</b> : Chair’s Summaries. NOTED
B4.2	Complaints Policy Update. NOTED
<b>B5</b>	<b>Governance / Statutory / Regulatory Updates</b>
B5.1	Visit Reports – update provided to the Board.

**AOB & Date of Next Meeting – 21 January 2025 at 5.30pm**

Minutes APPROVED :



Rama Venchard, Chair

21<sup>st</sup> January 2025