**Meeting of LSEAT Board held on**

**Tuesday 12 December 2023 from 4.30-6.15pm**

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

**Part 1 Above the Line 4-30-5.45pm**

**Part 2 Below the Line 5.45-6.15pm**

**Trustees**

Rama Venchard MBE Chair

Dr Sam Parrett CBE (SP) Trustee & Group CEO

Denise James Mason (DJM) Vice Chair

David Bailey (DB) Trustee

Charles Yates (CY) Trustee

Christopher Philpott (CP) Trustee

Prof Lynne Revell (LR) Trustee

Marek Michalski (MM) Trustee

Sarah Servantes (SS) Trustee

Beverley Eaglesfield (BE) 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

Louise Wolsey (LW) Group Chief Strategy Officer (Item A1)

Martin Briggs (MB) Head of Trust Strategic Development (Item A2)

**Minutes**

**Welcome, apologies and declarations of interest**

The Chair welcomed the Trustees and Executives to the meeting.

No apologies and no new declarations provided.

**Minutes of previous meeting held on 17 October 2023**

Minutes of the previous meeting were **APPROVED**.

**Action Log** was reviewed**.** Action log to be updated as follows**:**

* LSEC Skills Exchange Project: DCEO to be invited to Skills Exchange Launch
* Attendance rates and national rates where applicable to be added or referenced in the KPI document.
* Trust Estates Strategy would be prepared for late September 2024/Autumn Term 2024.
* Schools’ visits action log to be updated and added to action log.
* Development of new Exclusions Policy to be added to action log.
* Action log to include column on completion/issue by date.

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

Items **Above the Line** comprise five or six key strategic/operational matters for discussion (10/15 mins per item.)

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| **A1** | **Group CEO Update** |
| Group CEO report was noted and taken as read by the Board  The Group CEO highlighted three key areas for discussion.   * Staff recruitment was reported as a key issue with support staff being lost to retail. * Strategic stakeholder engagement and educational relationships with LAs, important for supporting families and securing better and fair funding. * Trust Growth and capacity.   The Board discussed these items. | |
| **Questions and Comments** | |
| In response to questions on the work between Woodside and Bromley LA on housing issues it was reported that the strategic relationships between Head Teachers and LA officers was developing and was strong. The initiative developed by Woodside would be considered for other schools.  In response to questions on exit interviews it was reported that as far as possible exit interviews are conducted. It is part of the process although as exits are managed locally within the schools sometimes these are not always completed.  In response to questions on EDI Steering Group, it was reported that the Single Equalities Scheme had been developed and approved by the Board in July 2023. The first EDI SG for 23/24 would take place in early Spring Term with representatives from across the Trust both teaching and support staff.  In response to questions and concerns raised about inequitable funding across Bexley schools in the Trust and the impact of taking on more schools in Bexley, it was reported that the move to a national funding system will generate winners and losers. Creating more places in the local system will reduce the costs of sending pupils out of borough, LAs are creating more inclusion units to support reduced costs, this impacts on our Bexley SEMH schools.  It was reported that further opportunities to discuss the SEND and AP reform plan would be provided for the Board however the current MOUs with the LAs restricted funds being used across boroughs. Some school finances were particularly stretched e.g. Aspire.  In response to questions on focus of Trustee visits it was reported that visit forms were linked to the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF). It was reported that DCEO was developing the concept of thematic systems leadership and could link visits to thematic reviews. Concept to be further developed.  In response to questions on capacity it was reported that recruitment to central team in particular H&S has been challenging but work continues to ensure the trust has sufficient capacity to support growth.  The Board **NOTED** the report. | |
| **A1.1 Group Strategy** | |
| The Board received a presentation from the GCSO-LW, outlining the development of the Group Strategy Framework which included feedback from the consultation process.  The Board discussed the strategy framework, its intention and how it would be measured and ensure strategic objectives and targets will be monitored and achieved.  The Board were asked to **APPROVE.** | |
| **Questions and Comments** | |
| In response to questions on whether the Director of Research had been appointed it was reported that the recruitment process was almost complete, and a new post holder would be post in the Spring Term. The offered candidate was currently working in a Policy and Insight role for the GLA.  In response to questions on reducing workload, a feature in the strategy, and how this will be measured it was reported that various initiatives and projects were already underway and would be reported through the monitoring of the plan.  In response to questions on commitment to lead by research and evidence it was reported that this would be included within the operating plans and targets.  In response to questions on what makes social value part of the Trust DNA it was reported that the Trust context is around collaboration and multi-agency working with an outward perspective adding value to every learner and whole child experience. It was reported that during and post covid world schools were the 5th emergency service and so much of the Trust and Schools’ work impacts on the whole life of pupils and their families. Progression and transition are important factors of this and why the group endeavours linking progression pathways is the golden thread. Through the LASER fundraising this will be progressed further with support for attendance, behaviour and progression opportunities.  In response to questions on how this will be measured it was reported that the framework presented will facilitate the production of operating plans for the trust which will be presented for approval at the next Board Meeting. Regular review of progress against the operating plans will be a feature of the Board Reports.  In response to further questions on research it was reported that a plan for commissioned research would be provided to the Board in due course to include strategic items that will make a difference, for example research on attendance and behaviour practice, implementation of AI tools, etc. Head Teachers will be asked to collaborate on ideas for research.  In response to questions on the validation process and rechecking on where strategy may need redirection and tweaking it was reported that the framework was flexible enough to accommodate and would be reviewed annually.  The Board **APPROVED** the Group Strategy Framework. | |
| **A2** | **CONFIDENTIAL ITEM** |
| A confidential Item relating to Trust Growth was discussed by the Board.(See Confidential Minutes) | |
| **A2.1** | **Conversion Update: WRPS** |
| The Board received the updated project plan on conversion of WRPS which was on track for conversion on 1 January 2024.  As approved previously by the Board, the CTA and Deed of Novation and Funding Agreement had been endorsed by both Trusts to effect the transfer on 1 January 2024.  The Board **NOTED** the readiness for transfer. | |
| **Questions and Comments** | |
| In response to questions it was reported that in accordance with the Trust Growth Principles WRPS was a capacity giver and would provide senior leadership support for future growth opportunities.  In response to questions it was reported that reserves on transfer would be used to support outstanding Estates compliance works that were required at WRPS.  In response to questions it was reported that WRPS has a very affluent PTA with c£60k raised for the development of a swimming pool.  The Board **NOTED** the update. | |
| **A3** | **DCEO Operational & Safeguarding Update** |
| DCEO report was presented and taken as read covering school improvement, safeguarding and Bexley  Music KPI Dashboard and Trust Recovery Fund Report.  The Trust Recovery Fund Impact report demonstrated a great use of funding that have supported schools to make a difference and achieve positive outcomes.  KPI report was received and discussed reporting school performance on track. | |
| **Questions and Comments** | |
| In response to questions and following discussions on alternative for recovery fund it was reported that opportunities to be sourced through LASER which could include match funding from reserves if required.  **ACTION**: Further information should be presented to the Board in this regard should opportunities arise for GCFO and GCSO to note.  In response to questions on SCR, Trustees were disappointed at the delay in resolving the issues. It was reported that new proposal would cost c£27k to resolve with additional functionality of Arbor MIS system being used together with iTrent.  In response to questions it was reported that an SCR audit had been completed at the end of November with no concerns raised. Marked improvement reported.  **ACTION**: In response to questions it was reported that Estates Strategy would be prepared for September 2024.  The Board **NOTED** the report. | |
| **A4** | **GCFO Update & Presentation** |
| GCFO presented funding and risks.  It was reported that there were increased risks with Bramley Oak capital programme.  It was reported that Risk Register changes had been applied since last reporting.  Risk T19 had increased due to the filtering and monitoring issues reported previously,  Risk T9 relating to trade union relationships had reduced due to recent pay awards.  The Board **NOTED** the update and presentation. | |
| **A4.1** | **2022/23 Financial Statements & Letter of Representation** |
| Board received the 22/23 Financial Statements for approval alongside detailed update on the year end position. The final forecast outturn for the year was better than originally budgeted.  It was reported that the auditors had provided a clear audit opinion.  It was reported that the Audit Committee had reviewed and recommended the financial statements and letter of representation to the Board for Approval. | |
| **Questions and Comments** | |
| In response to questions it was confirmed that Trust was a Going Concern.  The Board **APPROVED** the 2022/23 Financial Statements and Letter of Representation which would be signed by the Chair and CEO as required. 22/23 Financial Statements would be published on Trust Website, submitted to ESFA and uploaded to Companies House. | |
| **A5** | **GCGO Update** |
| A5.1 | Scheme of Delegation |
| The Board Received the update report from the GCGO outlining the changes to the Group Scheme of Delegation to include LASER and remove Group Board.  The Board received the Chair’s Action in relation to the WRPS transfer. | |
| **Questions and Comments** | |
| The Board **APPROVED** the Scheme of Delegation and **NOTED** the Chair’s Action. | |

**PART 2: BELOW THE LINE** (30-45 mins to cover pre questions and comments on papers and decisions)

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| **B1** | **DCEO Operational & Performance Update** |
| B1.1 | Edurio Staff Survey |
|  | The Board discussed the Staff Survey results presented by DCEO. It was reported that response rates were 48%. In response to questions it was reported that a target for improved response rates for this year’s had been set.  The requirement for all staff to respond to the survey had been raised at the Trust All Staff Meeting. It was anticipated that higher return rates would be achieved for this year’s survey.  The Board **NOTED** the update. |
| **B2** | **Group CFO Update** |
| B2.1 | 2023/24 Financial Update Management Accounts (P3) |
|  | The Board **NOTED** the update provided. |
| B2.2 | Risk Register & Appendices |
|  | The Board **NOTED** the update provided. |
| **B3** | **Information or** **Recommendations from Committees** |
| **B3.1** | **Audit Committee Recommendations**  2022/23 Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report |
|  | The Board were presented with the Audit & Risk Annual Reports which had to be approved by the Audit Committee. |
| **B3.2** | **EPS Committee Recommendations**  Chair’s Summaries and Trust Exclusion Policy Update |
|  | The Board received the summary of the EPS committee and Provision Board.  The Board discussed the information flow from Provision Boards to EPS and considered duplications. It was agreed that more scrutiny of Educational Advisers’ Reports would be presented and reviewed by the Committee.  **ACTION**: It was reported that a working group of EPS Trustees would review the information flow and reporting cycle to ensure EPS Committee was fully functioning and completing its full remit.  **ACTION**: New Trustees to be appointed to EPS Committee to complement the mix of balance of independent Trustees and Provision Board Chairs who are members.  It was confirmed that Exclusion Policy had been referred to lawyers for review and would be represented to Trust Board for approval in Spring Term.  The Board **NOTED** the update. |
| **B4** | **Governance / Statutory / Regulatory Updates** |
|  | Trustee Visit Reports were presented to the Board.  The Board NOTED the report. |

**AOB: The Chair expressed thanks to both Trustees and Executive for their contributions.**

**Date of Next Meeting – 23 January 2024 at 5.30pm**

Minutes APPROVED :

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Rama Venchard, Chair

23 January 2024