

## HADRIAN LEARNING TRUST

### Minutes for Meeting of Board of Trustees

6pm, Wednesday 11 December 2019

**In attendance:** Simon Kitchman (SKi), Graeme Atkins (GA), Sarah Kemp (SKe), Veryan Johnston (VJ), Barbara Hignett (BH), Kate Chaplin (KC), David Hartland (DH), Tony Brown (TB)

**Also attending:** Charlotte Gaines (CG, Clerk to Trust Board), Sarah Sparke (Chief Financial Officer)

#### Part 1 Classified Non-Confidential

##### 1) Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Jonathan Holmes and James Andriot.

##### 2) Declaration of pecuniary, business or personal interests

No declarations of pecuniary, business or personal interest were made in addition to those already recorded in the Register of Interests.

##### 3) Minutes of meetings - approval and matters arising

The Minutes of the following meetings, having been circulated to Trustees, were adopted as a true record:

- Hadrian Learning Trust Board – 16 October 2019 – Part 1

Trustees confirmed that their school e-mail accounts are set up. Some trustees are experiencing difficulties accessing the accounts through outlook if they have other e-mail accounts. Trustees asked if they could be sent bullet point instructions as to how to access the accounts.

CG

##### 4) Report & Accounts 2018-19

Trustees discussed the previously circulated Annual Report and Financial Statements.

SS explained that the F&A Committee had met recently with the Auditors to review the document, noting that once signed it will be sent to the Auditors to then be registered with the ESFA. It will be added to the school website by 31 January 2020.

The academies accounts return will be submitted by 20 January 2020.

The final outturn is largely as presented at the last meeting of the Trust Board. Confirmation has been received of the improved position relating to water billing, amounting to £144k, shown as an exceptional item in the accounts. Depreciation of HMS land has not been reflected in the accounts, but will be next year.

Changes to the pension fund have resulted in an increased deficit of £2m in the accounts. However, indications from NCC pensions are that there is only likely to be an increase of 1-2% in ongoing payments from April 2020, with the possibility of the deficit payment going altogether due to a different calculation methodology.

SKi noted that the auditor had been asked for guidance relating to the use of reserves, which was to continue to adopt a prudent approach while a number of uncertainties remained. SKi noted that the ESFA require a trust's reserves policy and financial position when making a

significant change application. DH asked if reserves could be allowed to build up. SS explained that there are no restrictions on the amount of reserves a trust can have.

Discussion followed regarding the content of the report. SKi noted that the auditors had commented favourably on the Trust's improved financial position, which was not the case for many of the academies they work with. GA noted that this created the opportunity for carefully-considered and targeted school improvement expenditure, but that the underlying prudential approach should continue. KC commented that the positive position was particularly helpful in the context of the forthcoming large capital project.

Trustees approved the 2018-19 Report & Accounts.

#### **5) Complaints policy**

SKi advised that the proposed changes to the circulated revised complaints policy arose due concerns associated with the previous version's timescales. The revisions ensure that investigations can be carried out in a timely manner within more appropriate timescales. Trustees approved the amended policy.

#### **6) Stakeholder Engagement**

GA advised that he, SKi and KC had attended the funeral of former head teacher, Patrick Eavis. A card has been sent to the family. Trustees noted that much of the Trust's ethos is rooted in the approach adopted by Mr Eavis during his tenure.

Several trustees also attended the music concert in the Winter Gardens, which had impressed.

Various stakeholder events are taking place before the end of term. CG will remind trustees of dates and times.

CG

DH noted that the alumni posters around school look good and suggested that these are put on the website. GA advised that these a careers body has highlighted these as good practice. SKi asked for congratulations to be passed to KI and LC.

#### **7) Urgent business with agreement of the Chair**

None.

#### **Close and confirm date of next meeting**

Part 1 of the meeting was concluded.

The next Part 1 meeting will take place on Wednesday 15 January 2020.

Trustees moved onto Part 2 of the agenda.