

## The Heath Family (NW) Multi Academy Trust

### MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2014

**Present:** Peter Cook (Chair), Nigel Peet, Jane Ainsworth, Alicia Parry, Stephen Dewhurst, Heather Mullaney

**In Attendance:** Jamie Jardine, Wayne Trafford, Nikki McNamee, Jason Fraser, Trish Roberts (Clerk)

Apologies received from Paula Cain

1. **Welcome** – P Cook welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the purpose of the Data Dashboard presentation.
2. **Data Dashboard Presentations** – N McNamee and J Fraser (Data Managers from both The Heath and SWS) have met on a few occasions and have looked at how data is worked with at both schools. They brought a suggested presentation model to the MAT Board so that it could be discussed and agreed.

The following items were discussed:

- The possibility of introducing visuals to the Data Dashboard; ie traffic light system, whereby it highlights anything that is significantly up or down.
- Ensuring that the data is still fit for purpose for each individual school's needs whilst still allowing the data to be linked back so that it can be easily reported to the Board.
- Ensuring the SIP is involved in the process, therefore providing an external context/commentary to the data.
- The need for each Governing Body to have sight of the data before it comes to the Board. The calendar of meeting dates will need to be looked at so that by the time the data comes to the Board it is not too far out of date.
- Training would need to be arranged for the Governing Bodies, so that Governors will be able to understand the new data reports.
- Once the Governing Bodies have agreed the data, the Chair of Governors (COG) of each of the schools will bring it to the Board meeting. Concerns were raised regarding the COG's ability to report such complicated data. P Cook explained that it is normal protocol for the COG to report back to the Board, but that they were more than welcome to bring somebody with them to the meeting if required.

Following these discussions the Board accepted the model.

P Cook thanked those in attendance for the presentation. J Jardine, W Trafford, N McNamee and J Fraser then left the room.

3. **To receive and ratify the minutes from the MAT Board meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2013**

The minutes were accepted and agreed by all present.

4. **To receive: The Heath SIP Report & Full Governing Body Minutes**

J Ainsworth reported:

The minutes from The Heath School Governing Body meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2013 were emailed out to the Board along with the Agenda. P Cook voiced concerns regarding the timing of when the minutes were being brought to the Board, ie the Governing Body meeting took place just after the last Board

meeting in November but the Board were only discussing them in March. It was agreed that the calendar of meetings would need to be looked at so that minutes of Governing Bodies could be ratified and then brought to the Board whilst they were still current.

The SIP report was not available as it was still in draft form.

NLG advised The Heath to carry out a review of Governance. Following the review the Governing Body have agreed to trial a new format for their minutes. Jane will bring this new format to the next Board meeting.

## **5. To receive: SWS SIP Report & Full Governing Body Minutes**

N Peet reported:

The minutes from Sir William Stanier Governing Body meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2013 were emailed out to the Board along with the Agenda.

The SIP report for SWS will be available on 31<sup>st</sup> March.

3-4 new governors have been appointed.

H Mullaney spoke about the SIP reports. She explained that the reports needed to be checked for clerical errors etc before they could be finalised. H Mullaney suggested that once the report was out of draft it could be emailed out to the Board as it didn't have to go to local level first. All agreed.

## **6. Update on The Park Conversion**

H Mullaney reported:

Submission for FA today

The Park will convert to Bridgewater Park on 1<sup>st</sup> April

Procurement has taken place according to the academies framework:      Project Management  
Educational Services

3 bids were received for each of the projects. Heather and Steve scored them according to the framework. Artelia were the successful bidder, the other bidders were notified and given the opportunity to appeal. No appeals were received.

The contacts for Artelia are:      Samantha Lewis – Admin  
David Donnelly – Educational Brief

Steering Project meetings have been taking place on a fortnightly basis. P Cook, H Mullaney and S Dewhurst have attended, along with Paul Holloway (Acting Headteacher at The Park), David Rawlinson (Hill Dickinson) and Mark Sykes (BDO).

Conditions Schedule has come through.

All staff will be moved across via the TUPE agreement.

Lesley Davies (Business Manager at Weston Primary School) has been handling Finance at The Park. Lesley has been trained to use the same finance system being used at The Heath and SWS (PSF Financials). Steve reported that a lot of informal discussion has taken place regarding Lesley's contract now and in the future, but more formal discussion needed to take place regarding the impact on her role at Weston. Discussion followed.

A Parry asked about Gill Bennett's role as a Governor once the conversion has taken place. Heather reported that Gill would still stay on as a Governor after the conversion, as she has got a wide knowledge in relation to The Park.

The Park has been given an Environmental Improvement Grant of £50K. N Peet kindly agreed to be involved in relation to this. Amey will be completing the external building works, and Bridge Timber will be completing the internal works. (Heather only received one quote for the internal works; she emailed Becky Gohr to inform her. Becky gave the go ahead to say that Bridge Timber could be used. )

Signage has been agreed and is currently being amended.

Website – Weston Primary pay £1K per year to a company so that their website is kept up to date and fresh; looking at using the same company for Bridgewater Park.

Best Sports are the official uniform suppliers for Bridgewater Park. All children will receive a new school uniform which will include Cardigan, Tie, T-shirt/Shorts for PE, PE/Book Bag, Jogging bottoms for the Nursery children, coats and summer dresses. It was thought appropriate that this uniform is provided free of charge due to the high number of Free School Meal children at The Park. The uniform will cost £3,800 in total (excluding the summer dresses).

Educational Brief – Full Sponsored Academy. This is fairly confidential as it involves staffing restructuring. Steve asked when this will be shared with the Governing Body at The Park. Heather explained this would be discussed after conversion.

Health & Safety Issue – Amey will also be looking at the woodland steps at the back of school to ensure they are safe for the children's use.

## **7. Finance Update**

S Dewhurst handed out 4 documents to those present and updated the Board in relation to the figures and how each of the schools were coping with the move to the new finance system (PSF Financials). The documents that were handed out were:

- The Heath Income & Expenditure to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2014
- Sir William Stanier Income & Expenditure to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2014
- The Heath Family Trust (NW) Income & Expenditure to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2014
- The Heath Family Trust (NW) Cash Flow Statement 2013-14

### **Sir William Stanier**

S Dewhurst reported that there were no major concerns at the moment. The forecast is currently showing a slight overspend, but it is nothing to worry about. Some of the budget headings are showing that they are overspent, these overspends are caused by Finance staff being unsure of where to post certain expenditure. N Peet also reported that he had spoken to Brian Donlan (Business Manager) about the "other travel" costs, and Brian had explained that this had also been caused by some things being wrongly posted to this budget heading. S Dewhurst reported that he will be consulting with Bright Tribe so as to get some advice on posting expenditure. Discussion also went on to pupil numbers and the impact this will have on next year's budget.

### **The Heath**

Figures are currently showing a deficit, but S Dewhurst drew the Board's attention to the "Employee Related Costs". The salary costings for the staff employed by the MAT are currently included in The Heath's figures. £106K has now been recharged to the MAT. S Dewhurst reported that there was a lot more to be paid back to The Heath before the end of the year, so he was not worried about what the current figures were showing. Plus, there is a repayment due back for insurance. The main concern raised was in relation to supply costs, as this is the budget heading that has the potential to cause an overspend.

The Heath have also experienced the same problems as SWS in relation to posting expenditure.

### **MAT**

At the time of reporting the Environmental Grant (£120K) had not been received, but since then payments totalling £46K have been made. The recharges for salary costs will not show until February. The professional fees are in relation to the work that the SIP and Clive Hurren have provided.

The cash flow statement that has been provided does not include any of the specific grants, it is purely income from the schools within the MAT.

N Peet asked whether a risk analysis had been performed in relation to having a hosted system. S Dewhurst said that it hadn't, but maybe would need to look into this retrospectively.

## **8. Heath Sixth Form Business Case**

The Board had met on 2 occasions to discuss solutions to accommodating the Sixth Form. The EFA had also looked at the 3 solutions that had been suggested:

The Heath Business Park  
Castle House (former DfE buildings)  
The Heath School

The Business Park came in quite expensive. Although Castle View was rent free, the rates came in at £100K.

Halton Planning department then suggested that we use the planning permission for The Heath site that we had already been given. This has been checked out with Halton's legal team and we have been told that once planning permission has been given it cannot be taken away, and we are still within the lifespan of the permission. The EFA have agreed to The Heath housing the Sixth Form on site. It is due to open on 1<sup>st</sup> September and we are expecting approx. 100 students. H Mullaney and S Dewhurst also spoke to the Board about a one off opportunity that had come to light, regarding office furniture/equipment that had been offered to the school from the old DfE buildings. We would only need to find a storage solution so that it can be stored in readiness for the Sixth Form buildings.

The Board were happy with how things were progressing and were in total agreement regarding the furniture.

## **9. Update on the status on the MAT website**

H Mullaney explained that the website was not live at the moment. Discussion then followed regarding the following items:

- Website needs to show pictures of children from all of the schools within the MAT
- The name needs to be changed to "The Heath Family (NW)
- Board and Governance needs to be included
- Finance Statement needs to be uploaded
- Ensure that the website does not go live until it has been finalised and agreed
- Whether the use of The Heath logo on the home screen was appropriate, and whether the MAT should have its own logo
- Pen portraits for all Board members need to be uploaded

**ACTION:** P Cook requested that a link to the website be sent to him so that he can have a more indepth look at it.

Discussion then moved onto Risk Management. P Cook spoke about how the Trust Board would be able to protect themselves against risk, ie as the rules of Ofsted change; this could result in losing 'Outstanding' status. How do we mitigate this?

N Peet spoke about producing a Board level risk register, which would work on a traffic light system, which would include mitigation. Discussion then went onto how this should be completed by experts in the field. Heather suggested that Artelia (the company who have been involved in The Park conversion), may be able to assist with this. She said that she would speak to David Donnelly, if he wasn't able to advise, he would know somebody who would have experience with this. N Peet said that this would be good, but they would need to provide examples of previous work that they have been involved in.

## 10. AoB

### a. Proposed increase/expansion to the MAT Finance Team

H Mullaney and S Dewhurst spoke about the need to increase and expand the finance team within the MAT:

#### **Business Manager (The Park):**

Lesley Davies (Business Manager at Weston Primary) is performing this task for The Park and will continue to do so once the conversion takes place.

#### **Company Accountant:**

BDO have been tasked with a piece of work; to look at the possibility of the MAT employing our own Company Accountant.

H Mullaney and S Dewhurst will be looking at CV's next Tuesday. We have asked Mark from BDO to look at them in the first instance so that we can draw on his expertise in relation to this role.

Job Description/Person Specification have been drawn up

S Dewhurst spoke about the need for the appointment, ie specialist on site, instead of paying an external company (BDO) for their services.

Following discussion the Board were more than happy to agree with these appointments.

**RESOLUTION:** Appointment of Business Manager (The Park and Bridgewater Park once conversion has taken place) and Appointment of Company Account agreed by all present.

### b. Retirement of Business Manager at Sir William Stanier

H Mullaney reported that an external team are currently in the process of looking at Support/Admin staffing levels at SWS. The MAT will cover 50% of the cost and SWS will cover the other 50%.

The replacement of the existing Business Manager at SWS has been looked at and it has been agreed that the role should be made into a full time position, whereby SWS will still have the same services for 4/5 of the time (as at present), and the MAT will have 1/5. The successful candidate will take on the role of Business Manager at SWS for a probationary period, following review of this they will then become the Secondary Business Manager of the Trust. Interviews are due to take place on 25<sup>th</sup> March.

W Trafford is currently looking at moving jobs such as estates, maintenance etc to another member of staff, thereby leaving the Business Manager to concentrate on Finance.

Consideration has been given to whether the MAT needs to employ an Estate's Manager, who would take on responsibility for Health & Safety, Contractors and Site Maintenance for all of the schools. They would also be able to direct the caretaking/site staff on a day to day basis.

P Cook said that he agrees with this idea in principal, but would need to know how the extra costs would be funded.

H Mullaney reported that staffing costs at SWS will be reduced following the review of support staff. She also suggested looking to the LA to see if there is an SLE who would be able to take on the task, which would then result in no salary implications.

S Dewhurst reported that there was a change in culture in some academies whereby Estate Management is managed externally.

P Cook repeated that it was a good idea in principal, but that it would need to be developed and brought back to the Board, along with costings.

All Board members agreed.

**c. Mileage – Consultation re Travel**

H Mullaney spoke to the Board regarding mileage claims. She reported that she claims mileage for travel between schools within the MAT. At the moment this is claimed as a teacher, which means it is paid at 40p per mile. H Mullaney now feels that due to the nature of the travel it should be classed as "Essential Mileage" as it is part of her role to visit the other schools on MAT business. Following discussion it was agreed that no member of staff should be out of pocket whilst travelling on MAT Business, and that full details should be given to P Cook so that he can look into this issue further.

**ACTION:** H Mullaney to send full details re Mileage claims to P Cook

**d. Safeguarding Audit**

A Parry spoke about whether there was the need to have a representative at the Halton Safeguarding Board. H Mullaney reported that there was no intention for each school to have representation on the Board, but that the Board should report back to schools via groups such as HASH etc. H Mullaney said that if this feedback isn't coming through to Governors then they would need to contact the Safeguarding Board to report this.

**e. Audit Committee**

Heather spoke about Audit Committees within Multi Academy Trusts. She explained that if any Trust has a combined budget of over £10 million then one has to be set up. BDO are also looking into this issue.

Meeting closed at 11.30 am