



MINUTES OF THE FULL ACADEMY BOARD MEETING – Tuesday 10 December 2013 at 4.15pm

Attending Directors:

Mr O Bagnara	Mr P Baker	Mrs R Carne
Mr J Coutts	Mr A Davis (Principal)	Ms J Innis
Mr T Marshall (Vice Chair)	Mr R Mills	Dr M Richards (late)
Mr G Rumary (late)	Mrs S Wright (Chair)	

Also present: Mrs S Harwood (Clerk) Mr R Vaughan (Vice Principal) Mr A Brooke (Assistant Principal)

Apologies: Mrs J Glide Mrs T Rose Mr M Watson

Mr L Wilson-Chalon

Absent: Mr P Monaghan

ACTION

1 a) APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mrs Glide, Mr Watson, Mr Wilson-Chalon (work commitments) and Mrs Glide (transport difficulties). **Directors unanimously accepted the apologies.**

b) DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None were declared

2 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

Full – 25 September 2013 – a training Director is still required. The Principal thanked Directors involved in the three days of Review Meetings which had provided some future thinking for the SLT. Departments have now provided their improvement plans; the monitoring group will be meeting again next week. **SSDC Section 106 intentions** – a meeting has been arranged with Steve Joel from SSDC, the Principal and Business Manager for a firm commitment of the Council's intentions. The Chair and Vice Chair also asked to attend the meeting. **Disability discrimination** – the case has now been resolved. **The minutes were agreed as accurate and signed.**

Finance and Premises – 3 October 2013 – looked at the summary of works carried out during the summer – the heating and front elevation works are a big improvement. Other areas for future environmental projects were examined and an energy survey will be undertaken and funding mechanisms agreed. The Committee also discussed how the Academy would demonstrate they try to save money (VFM) as the Academy is funded by public money. **5 December 2013** – examined financial statements from the Auditors; Directors requested that this information be provided earlier next year. As per the Academies Financial Handbook 2013, if the Academy's decision to fulfil the Audit Committee requirement is to have these duties discharged through the Finance and Premises Committee, then the Terms of Reference for the Committee need to reflect this. Mr Davis confirmed that this could be discussed at the Strategy Meeting on 18 December. The EFA surveyors report was discussed; the Academy also received 10/10 for meeting compliancy regulations. Congratulations and thanks are to be passed on to the Site Manager and his staff. The Committee also discussed write-off of bad debts and the Item 6 of the Board meeting contains their recommendation. The LA service for checking internal controls at the Academy (the Responsible Officer Checks) had been purchased and a good first report had been received. **Minibus seatbelts** – the LA has clarified the position of students wearing seatbelts, which was that students are informed by the driver and notices on the minibus that they should wear seatbelts but the driver had no powers to enforce it.

Leisure Board – 1 October 2013 – it had previously been agreed that any profit would be Gift Aided to the Academy; however the Board had later agreed that the leisure Centre be allowed to retain an amount to gradually build up a reserve which will incur payment of Corporation Tax on that amount. There had been a good summer programme where 137 people attended the summer camp; there were 92 new promotion memberships and use of the pool was good. The District Council

want the Board to use their expertise to maximise potential at the Centre. The Chair queried the final bullet point of item 6; the Business Manager and Chair of the Leisure Board explained that this was purely to decide how income from the Artificial Grass Pitch VAT in the accounts would be treated. This outcome will be a factor in the discussion on whether to proceed with the project, should planning permission be granted. It was noted that the cost of using a solicitor and auditor had risen on what was expected but the Business Manager said this was as a result of the EFA changing their requirements on what is provided and some rollover from last year. Provision for both solicitors and auditors will be reviewed early next year.

Teaching and Learning – 14 October 2013 – there was a detailed debate on the analysis of exam results, which was fully minuted and had made the Directors aware of the current position. Directors welcomed the three day review that had taken place.

3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ACADEMY AND LEISURE CENTRE

The paper submitted outlined the legal position concerning the relationship between the Academy and Leisure Centre, bearing in mind the outside bodies that are also involved. The Chair questioned whether the Centre reimbursed the Academy for the use of the facilities. The Business Manager confirmed that this happens on a termly basis. For the first time a separate financial system has been put in place for the Centre so that a review can ensure all is covered. The temporary Responsible Officer was concerned at the small financial surplus and posed the question of whether the Leisure Board should consider how to increase the sum to stave off any future deficit and to maintain the Centre's viability. He felt it would seem prudent to have a contingency plan in place. The Chair of the Leisure Board said that the last two months' income was a concern and will be a challenge for the Board to address. It was always known that most Leisure Centres run at a loss, however the Board will try to improve the situation; community involvement needs to be addressed. The Business Manager pointed out that finances are monitored monthly. A Business Plan will be taken to the next Leisure Board meeting, which will look at expenditure and historical costs; the Academy would not be responsible for any debt incurred should the Leisure Centre go into a deficit financial position.

The Chair questioned the obligation to repay to SSDC the sum of £250k if the agreement between them and the Academy were terminated. This was the amount of the Council's original investment when the Leisure Centre was constructed in 1991, which would have to be repaid in full. At the time of the original contract nothing was agreed about depreciation of this amount as time progressed. The Leisure Board Chair said that the Academy Board should make the Leisure Board aware of its concerns and request a meeting to consider the matter. The Leisure Board should be given notice in order to bring suggestions to the meeting. The Principal felt that the relationship with SSDC was vital to be able to access additional funding.

5.05pm Mr Rumary arrived.

After a robust discussion it was agreed that a joint meeting of all interested parties should be arranged to fall after the next Leisure Board meeting (4 February) which will give them time to consider this Board's concerns. Date to be arranged

4 CATERING CONTRACT

Proserv went into administration at the end of August. Taylor Shaw took them over at short notice and were able to deliver the Academy needs for the start of the new term. Taylor Shaw were told they would be given the opportunity to put forward a proposal later in the term. The situation was reviewed in November when they provided their ideas for development. Taylor Shaw met with a group of Directors and Jon Garside, a catering adviser from the LA, to look at the options available and the tendering process. The adviser gave reassurance that the tendering process could not be started due to the short time frame and the urgency that provision was required. Taylor Shaw also needed sufficient time to make it a viable exercise. The group did not feel that a five year contract was appropriate and

agreed to recommend a three year contract to the Board. This would mean that the Advanced Guarantee sum would stand at £3k, with the Academy receiving a 50% share of the profits on an annual basis. Checks have been carried out with Companies House but no references have been taken up to date.

Directors were impressed with the presentation and auditors were happy with the proposal. The Principal felt that there should be a significant improvement in provision with the opportunity to redevelop all the food areas. Taylor Shaw will also provide apprenticeships for our students and Proserv staff will be TUPE'd across and be provided with additional training. One Director commented that a lot of students prefer to go to the local Tesco store because they were cheaper. However, Taylor Shaw had been told they would need to match prices.

5.20 Mr Vaughan arrived.

A Director felt that it was appropriate that references/recommendations should be sought from other schools that Taylor Shaw have serviced for some time as reassurance, especially as Proserv had given a good presentation initially but in reality had not met expectations.

It was proposed that **subject to satisfactory references being received**, Taylor Shaw should be awarded the three year contract.

Business
Manager to
seek
references

**Proposed: Mr Baker
Unanimously agreed.**

Seconded: Ms Innis

5 ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

All documents have been scrutinised by the Finance and Premises Committee. The Chair of the Committee felt there were many positive outcomes – a good, clean audit; good cash flow; a healthy balance sheet and a Risk Register in place. He recommended their acceptance to this Board and the AGM Board.

6 WRITE OFF OF BAD DEBTS

The Business Manager explained that the Scheme of Delegation needed to be updated as it originally stated that the Board was authorised to write off bad debts up to £1k. However the Academies Financial Handbook only requires the Academy to seek approval when write offs or liabilities exceed either 1% of the total income or £45k per single transaction.

The proposal was for the Scheme of Delegation to be amended and that authority to write off debts becomes: up to £100 – the Principal; £100 to £1k – the Finance and Premises Committee, who will report to the full Board; £1k and under £45k – the full Board and all write offs over £45k – the Secretary of State through the EFA.

**Proposed: Mr Mills
Unanimously agreed.**

Seconded: Mr Rumary

A discussion ensued on the proposed write-offs submitted for this meeting. The Board agreed to write off the bad debts as follows: Proserv Corporate Ltd £29,774.78; William Bingham £106.90; Emma Littlewood £36; Stephanie Knight £37.90 and Taunton Association £33.84. It was noted that there may be a very small amount of money recouped from the administrators of Proserv.

7 a) GHANA EXCHANGE

Mr Brooke gave a presentation of our students' visit to Ghana during the October half term. Twelve students were involved and had found the interaction with the Ghanaian students invaluable; they were very ambitious, hardworking and religious. It had been a rich and life changing experience for them. The next phase of the exchange will be very expensive. The Ghanaian students would like to come here next Autumn but as they are so poor they cannot afford the cost. It is anticipated that this would be in the region of £15k and fundraising will begin after Christmas.

There was a short discussion on how students were selected to go on the trip and the cost involved. Directors asked how they could help with the new fundraising drive. Mr Brooke explained that although our students had to do some fundraising, for themselves to go, it would have to be stepped up in order to reach such a target. He asked that Directors used their network and business links to try and gain some financial support. Directors were happy to do this.

b) INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

The Link Director gave a short presentation of what was involved in recently being awarded the full International Dimension Award and how it is incorporated into the curriculum. Huish will now be entering the fourth phase of accreditation with the British Council, which is very difficult. It is expected that Huish should enter a tripartite and have been sent details of a school in Sudan. He rejected this as it was too dangerous and has instead been looking at other schools, particularly in India, where three have expressed an interest. Ideally the Link Director would like to have formed a tripartite with a school in China but several initial contacts had failed. However he had approached a school in Bristol who already had links with China, to see if Huish could join with them. There is also a private Chinese school near Bridgwater that has an arrangement with Haygrove School and we have entertained their Chinese students when they have spent time in England. Huish has been informed that we will be included in this arrangement again for two or three visits from January.

The Chair thanked the Link Director for the presentation and asked that he keep the Board up to date.

8 ACADEMY IMPROVEMENT

a) Principal's Report

Pupil movement – numbers were very positive. There had been some difficult students joining since September. The Principal was pleased to report that following the first round of admissions for next September, the number stands at 255, which was pleasing. From past experience following the next two rounds, this should rise to around 270. **Exclusions** – there was a big difference in the numbers for the same period last year, following his strategic decision to keep students in the Academy. The Principal did not consider fixed term/permanent exclusions worked or solved any problems and would only be considered if there were no other option. Numbers were also down for internal isolation due to SLT actively going around the site looking at issues as they arise and teachers/support staff working with students to tailor their curriculum.

b) Academy Improvement Plan

The plan was colour coded for the current position, with a narrative at the end of each Key Performance Indicator. This will be updated three times per year.

KPT1 – almost every member of teaching staff has been observed, including some paired observations with SLT. Gradings are shared with the relevant Line Managers. Staff have been identified that will need additional support. A consultant from Incyte will be visiting the Academy later this week to assist with improvement.

KPT2 – at the present time indications point to a 70% rate overall with English at 77% (the gap is closing) and the Maths mock indicated 70% which he is confident of achieving. The Principal was asked if the SISRA data was robust and well used. He replied that it was a good programme but only as good as the data added. Staff are continually encouraged to use it and SISRA is referred to in all discussions. A Director asked whether there had been any progress in arranging training in SISRA, Raise Online and FFT; the Principal pointed out that there were some concerns on what personal student information Directors would be able to access and this was being looked at. Another Director said that he was aware that FFT were going to release a 'Governor friendly' area of their site that all Directors could have access to. Boys' performance is still a big challenge. Some courses will be changing and good progress is being made on the new curriculum.

6.45pm Dr Richards arrived.

KPT3 – Kirkland Rowell survey should be annual and still has to take place. **KPT4** – a detailed plan for Post 16 uptake is being developed with a view to student numbers being 225 by 2016. Having now joined Pixl, Huish should be made aware early of any information/initiatives. Assessment in English and Maths will become more rigorous and will affect current Year 8 students. **KPT5** – work is being carried out with Middle Leaders to take ownership of their areas. **KPT6** – it has been stressed that Pupil Premium is an important area.

c) Directors Reports

- The Child Protection Link Director has met with the Child Protection Officer to discuss Safeguarding. He also met with the School Nurses.
- The Link Director for Lead Learning has met the Lead Learner Coordinator. She was very impressed with a book that had been written by one of the students and thought other work of the students was of a very high standard.

d) Risk Register

The updated document had been distributed with any changes made listed inside the front cover. Following the earlier discussion, the Business Manager was asked to include the Leisure Centre risk of realising a deficit.

e) and f) Summary of Academy and Leisure Centre accounts

No comments

g) Training for Directors

A Director was unclear of the expectations of training; whether Directors could be criticised if no external training was undertaken, if there was a statutory or legal requirement to undergo training and how to encourage younger Directors to join the Board. She had attended some courses through the LA but they did not seem geared to Academies or even very useful. The Director also suggested that when courses are booked they should be given an information sheet of the content together with a claim form for expenses should they wish to make a claim.

It was pointed out that there had been a Working Party set up to look at these issues together with a skills audit but it had been delayed after the previous Principal had announced his retirement and efforts were put into securing his replacement. It was suggested that the Working Party should be reformed to look at these areas. **Directors agreed – date to be set.** The Business Manager also reminded Directors that they could have some training on the Academy Accounts next year. The Chair again reiterated that a Training Director was still required.

Date for meeting to be set

9 ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) Policies approved by Committees

Pay Policy and Directors Expenses Policy. A Staff Director pointed out that there may be a number of appeals from staff regarding the new Pay Policy, as it was considered that it had not gone through the correct process for consultation with Unions. The Principal pointed out that there was an obligation to refer to Unions only if there was a change to Terms and Conditions and this was not the case.

10 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

Nothing tabled.

11 PAY AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

Deferred to the next meeting



Full 10-12-13
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The meeting closed at 7.30pm