

Minutes of the Southerly Point Co-operative Multi-Academy Trust Board Meeting



Thursday 14th May 2020, from 6.00pm Online meeting due to the Covid 19 pandemic

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ATTI	ENDING:					
Donna Bryant						
Sean Davis						
Alan Hinchliffe						
	Alan Horne Pam Miller Kristin Pryor					
	n Reynolds	KPr SRe				
	n Thomas					
In At	tendance					
Rich	Richard Lawrence [Deputy Executive Leader]					
	Sean Pinhay [Chief Financial Officer]					
Kare	en Teague [Trust Administrator]					
ADO	LOGIES :					
None						
		ACTION				
		<u>ACTION</u>				
3.	WELCOME AND DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS					
	The Chair welcomed all those present.					
	Under Declarations of Pecuniary Interests, no additional declarations were forthcoming at this time.					
4.	MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING					
	The minutes of the meeting of the Trust Board on Thursday 19 th March 2020 were agreed to be an accurate record and were to be duly signed by the Chair.					
	Matters arising included updates on:					
	MyConcern Feedback for Trustees. DBr informed Trustees she had spoken with the Trust lead on Safeguarding and with the Safeguarding Trustee, in this respect as a result of which a way forward was in place for when circumstances allowed.					
	Ofsted training. An apology for having to postpone the Ofsted training session had been forwarded to Paul Hodson.					
	Trustee Skills Audit. Completed audits had now been received from all Trustees and these had been collated to provide a Trust wide overview.					
	Reasons to Celebrate and Causes for Concern. This had now been added to the Trust Board meeting agenda as a standing item.					
	Virtual meetings. The holding of virtual meetings had been checked against the Trust's Articles and Government guidance to ensure these were permissible.					
	Matters Arising from LGB Meetings. DBr had asked Clerks to Governors to ensure LGBs were clear on matters to be raised so that these could be minuted more accurately.					
	Approval of Pen Portraits of Prospective Governors. A letter confirming confirmation of appointment had been written and would be forwarded to the respective governor as soon as the present circumstances allowed.					

Free School Meals during the lockdown period. During the previous meeting, a query had arisen as to whether a letter from the Trust confirming a child's entitlement to free school meals would be sufficient for foodbanks if circumstances necessitated this and DBr was to follow the matter up. However, a successful local voucher system had been set up by the Trust in the first instance and this had then been replaced by a national voucher scheme with Edenred so the query was no longer applicable. [See also Item 7 below] External catering contract query. SPi advised Trustees a fixed charge for the duration of the closure period had now been agreed with the Trust's external catering provider in order to allow them to retain / pay their staff. While this was above the usual payment rate, it should be possible to reclaim this money at a later point so the Trust should ultimately not be out of pocket. ICT strategy. SPi informed Trustees it would not be possible to link the new server provision at Mullion Secondary School to SCA funding. However, this project could be offset against other funding – such as DFC – if necessary and the amount which the school then had to provide would be manageable within its budget. Trust Plan. It was recognised that, given the current circumstances and workload, it was not possible to move forward with much on the plan at the present time but this would be revisited in due course and a change to the format explored further. Trustees' Away Day. The action around setting up an away day for Trustees to look at 'The **DBr** Nine Characteristics of Effective Trust Boards' or similar and the 3 to 5 year strategic plan was to be carried over to when the current crisis was properly over. Financial Governance. The action around the Chair of the Finance and Resources Committee SRe touching base with the CFO from time to time over the next few months was to remain ongoing. Letter of thanks to all staff. KTh, on behalf of the Trustees, had written a letter of thanks to all staff following the last Trust Board meeting. A further letter was to be written before 1st KTh June 2020 to thank staff for their continued hard work and commitment during such a difficult period. See also Confidential Notes SPCMAT 20 04 CON. RATIFICATION OF FINANCE & RESOURCES / STANDARDS / C-SAW COMMITTEE MINUTES Not applicable on this occasion. **LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES** Not applicable on this occasion. **EXECUTIVE LEADER REPORT AND UPDATES** DBr invited questions on her report, which had been forwarded to Trustees ahead of the meeting. Key areas presented and discussed included: **Update on Covid-19:** Current Situation. The Trust had five centres open currently, with two acting as hubs for the schools in their areas. Pupil numbers had been lower over Easter but the centres had remained open, as they had over the more recent Bank holiday, as required. Teachers had provided a rich variety of learning activities for children working from home through a variety of online medium. Where pupils had not engaged, staff had made follow up calls and encouraged participation. Welfare calls were also being made to the most vulnerable, alongside other initiatives such as a wellbeing classroom via Google classroom for pupils to share concerns with pastoral staff. Throughout the period, there had been a wide variety of returns to the DFE and to County to ensure that provision was in place for all; this included checking on those who should be attending and chasing up the reasons for why they were not attending.

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Teachers, teaching assistants and secretaries were participating in the rotas and, when not in school, they were directed by their Headteachers on a variety of tasks. DBr noted staff enthusiasm to do all they possibly could to support the children had been a joy to see.

Headteachers were meeting weekly on Google to review emergent issues, respond to changes in Government guidance and plan ahead.

DBr had been part of the Cornwall Covid 19 steering group which was meeting weekly to discuss any emergent issues or critical updates. It had been a useful way of avoiding duplication, swiftly resolving glitches and having a more joined approach across Cornwall.

Free school meals. The provision of Free School Meals had been a huge challenge. The Trust's initial scheme with Tescos had been easy to set up and roll out. However, the Government had replaced this with the Edenred scheme, which had been completely unwieldy and not fit for purpose. The vouchers have begun to roll out to families but there was a 3 week delay. It has caused significant work for the Finance Team and thanks were expressed for the Trust Business Manager's doggedness in pursuing these vouchers for Trust families. The back log vouchers had now been sorted and the Trust was ordering in advance to ensure parents received future vouchers in a timely manner. The Trust Business Manager was working with Headteachers to contact families who had not downloaded their vouchers to ensure that extra assistance was not required. A great deal of very positive feedback had been received from parents and, to date, only one negative email on this matter had been received.

IT Update:

There had been significant steps forward on the Trust IT strategy, despite infrastructure delays. Staff were becoming increasingly familiar with working on line and Google was becoming established in a number of ways. Eg. Google Meet being used as a forum for staff and governance meetings; Google classroom being used to manage online learning; some schools uploading stored documents from their servers to Google Drive in a systematic way. The new telephone system was being built. The devices were being installed, with the information ready for the system to go live later in the current term. Alarm update devices had been ordered for five schools so that, when the telephones went live, the redundant BT lines could be cancelled.

The Rural Gigabit Project had been continued during this period, with Openreach managing the installation of the main lines. They were on hold for internal works until at least July.

The broadband had been pushed back because of Coronavirus inhibiting internal telephone line work. However, the system should be built during the current term, with schools migrating over with an initial date later in the calendar year.

The Government had launched a scheme to provide IT devices / internet access for children with a social worker and Y10 disadvantaged children. Trust schools had loaned out some equipment already but there were more children who could benefit and so the full allocation was being requested. Smoothwall filtering solutions were building a system to ensure online safety for all devices that were loaned out.

Premises:

Throughout the current period, the Trust had kept health and safety to the fore with additional cleaning throughout the day at each open setting. Schools that were currently closed had had regular visits to ensure that basic health and safety measures were taken. Ongoing compliance work had been taking place where contractors were happy to attend and where social distancing could be maintained. The caretakers continued to work and were being deployed to undertake tasks across the Trust so that essential work could be carried out. They had been asked to work four out of five days in order to give them some flexibility in line with other staff.

In addition, development work had continued at several sites.

Finance:

The Finance Team were working on next year's budgets and the latest Management Accounts but, due to the additional workload arising from Covid-19, they were not as far on

with either of these tasks as planned. On a more positive note, all other daily financial tasks were up to date, payroll was happening as usual and suppliers were also being paid in a timely manner. The Finance Team were also working to arrange for parents to receive reimbursements for residential / day trips that had been cancelled due to the current climate and, to date, around 60% of the trips cancelled had been refunded to parents. There were only six trips left to either rearrange with tour operators or cancel and, to date, the Trust had lost less than £300 due to the cancellation of school trips.

Furlough:

The Government had been clear that the Trust could not furlough any member of staff paid for from the public purse. Where colleagues were employed through an agency, the agency was at liberty to furlough staff. Where colleagues were self-employed, the Government had made provision for them. The Trust had honoured any pre-booked arrangements with casual / supply staff.

For staff who were partly funded by private income [wraparound provision; in-house catering; nursery], the Trust was furloughing staff in relation to the privately funded income It was not permissible to apportion hours equally across the work force so it had been necessary to match contracts as a best fit to the hours the Trust can furlough. Therefore, some staff were furloughed and others not. All were being paid equally. The furlough arrangements would be reviewed on an ongoing basis, to reflect the requirements of Headteachers from the point at which schools reopened for the given year groups in addition to the children of key workers / vulnerable children currently attending, and further claims made as applicable. The first claim had now been received by the Trust so hopefully there would be no issues with any claims the Trust submitted in the future.

Other staffing:

There had been little movement in current staffing and very little requirement to advertise new posts. Some staff who were planning on leaving had agreed to extend their contracts in order to give schools a better opportunity to recruit once they had returned to a more normal working pattern. To manage some vacancies and budget controls, the Trust had been able to use secondments to move staff between schools. Where there was a need, an online recruitment process would be utilised, adhering to new safer recruitment guidance around identity checks, and a probationary period would be emphasised.

Planning for Return to School:

There was currently a great deal of speculation about the return of schools. Trust leaders had been involved in a variety of consultative groups who are making representation at Government level.

The Government had set out their five tests but there were a number of other matters to be considered before the Trust could begin to open schools. [A discussion summary arising from a questionnaire and online discussion by Executive Leaders with the Confederation of School Trusts had been shared with Trustees beforehand for their awareness of the depth of debate.]

At a local level, Cornwall Academy Chief Executives were sharing ideas and creative solutions about how to manage a blended learning approach over what could yet be several months. Some children would have thrived with online learning, whilst others would not have had the necessary self-efficacy, support or access to maximize their learning. A critical question was therefore one about Equity – how do we make provision for everyone and try to address the increasing gap of disadvantage?

At a Trust level, consideration was being given to the practical implications of preparing to return and steps towards potential partial opening: health and safety implications, PPE and how social distancing could be managed; classroom layout and resources; availability of staff to teach an increased number of classes; impact on staff teaching in school and on line lessons concurrently; transport; base line assessment and analysing gaps in learning; supporting mental health and well-being of children who had experienced differing home situations in lockdown. Eg. domestic violence; poverty; bereavement; attachment; etc.

Throughout this period, everything was being kept under constant review and adapted to reflect the latest Government guidance.

Policies:

See Item 12 below.

Trustees expressed their admiration for all that had been achieved in hugely difficult and complicated circumstances. The positive feedback from parents, staff, etc had been very encouraging to note.

DBr assured Trustees that Executive Leaders were challenging Heads about consistency of provision, pushing levels of engagement, encouraging staff to give formative feedback in addition to praise comments, etc to ensure the provision was as robust as possible across the Trust.

8. REASONS TO CELEBRATE AND AREAS OF CHALLENGE

Trustees shared a set of reasons to celebrate and areas of challenge.

See also Confidential Notes SPCMAT 20 04 CON.

9. REOPENING OF SCHOOLS

Recovery planning: guidance for re-opening your school - Phase I [Current] / Phase II [Gradual managed expansion] / Phase III [Sustained provision until elimination of risk].

This document had been shared with Trustees prior to the meeting. The guidance comprised a series of checklists with a range of questions leaders may want to consider when thinking about the process of re-opening their schools. Leaders could use this as a basis for their thinking, planning and their discussions with senior leaders, staff, pupils, families and governors, adding/deleting as appropriate for their own school. The considerations could be applied and adapted to primary [including nursery, where applicable] and secondary schools. The checklists covered: Safeguarding; Premises; Health and Safety; HR; Governance; Staffing / wellbeing; Phased return of pupils; Vulnerable pupils; Curriculum – home / school; Communication pupils and parents; LA / Trust; Transition of pupils; Finance; Covid 19 infection control. It was emphasised this was a draft working document which would evolve over time and would be updated as the latest information / guidance came out over coming weeks.

DBr outlined where the Trust currently stood with regard to reopening. The Government's position was that all pupils in Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 should be given the opportunity to return to school as soon after 1st June 2020 as could safely be achieved. The Government's ambition was that remaining year groups should be given the opportunity to return for 4 weeks before the summer break. In secondary schools, some provision was to be offered for Year 10 and Year 12 which would supplement their online learning. The exact nature of this provision was unclear but it was likely this would take the form of tutorials, whereby pupils could talk with staff about the work that had already been completed and around next steps.

Key items raised and discussed by Trustees included:

Planning. It was acknowledged there was a need for a draft opening timetable to be shared with staff and parents, given the proximity of the potential reopening. However, it would be important to emphasise that this was only provisional — as it was still subject to the Government's five tests being met and to Trustee approval — and that no fixed date for return had yet been set. Headteachers were to complete a pro forma planning sheet for their own schools, a copy of which would be forwarded to Trustees for their information.

Union concerns. Unions were to meet with the Government to discuss their concerns around staff being able to social distance etc and would communicate with schools following this. It was hoped the Trust / school leaders could continue to work with staff to address or allay their concerns and to bring staff along with them.

Risk Assessment. Headteachers were undertaking a comprehensive risk assessment in addition to their current risk assessments. These would be shared with Trustees in due course.

Hub provision over half term. The provision for children of key workers and vulnerable children over the upcoming half term break was to be located in the two secondary schools so that the primary schools that had been used could be thoroughly cleaned.

Staff briefing, reorganisation of classrooms, etc. No primary schools would be open to pupils on the Monday or Tuesday after the half term break to allow time for staff briefing, classrooms being reformatted, etc prior to potential reopening.

Bubble model. Headteachers were to plan on the assumption that all pupils in the given year groups would return, even though it was acknowledged this might not be the case, so all eventualities around numbers would be covered. Each bubble group would consist of no more than 15 children and would likely be less than this, depending on the space available in each setting. Each bubble group would have consistent staffing and learning spaces. The class teacher would plan lessons and lead these through IT, or outside, or from a safe space. This would maximise continuity of provision but mitigate risk of cross infection as far as was practicable.

Parents. There would be no parental access to the learning spaces themselves in order to maintain the integrity of the bubbles. Pupil access to the learning spaces would be via external doors wherever possible.

Hygiene protocols. Clear hygiene protocols would be in place and there would be hand sanitiser stations for every learning space.

PPE. While Government guidance was that PPE was only required for intimate care, PPE was to be ordered for all schools so that masks etc would be available for any members of staff who wished to use them. Guidance suggested the medical benefit of wearing masks was minimal but it was important to staff wellbeing that they be confident within their settings. Equipment such as face shields would also be in schools for specific use in the case of a pupil / member of staff exhibiting symptoms.

Isolation room. A designated room would also be provided for use in the case of a pupil / member of staff exhibiting symptoms.

Amended arrangements. The staggering of drop off / pick up times, the rearranging of lunchtimes and so on were also being considered on a school by school basis to mitigate the potential risk at busier times of the school day. This might also help with PPA / leadership time, which would be needed by teachers who were both leading on site lessons and planning online lessons.

On site nursery provision. While it was unlikely there would be a huge take up of nursery places, any private nurseries on school sites would need to undertake their own risk assessments and either be self-contained or stick rigorously to any protocols the school had in place if there was any cross over.

Other considerations. While safety should always be paramount, it was also important to consider the fact that Covid would not be going away for some time so schools needed to extend their offer as soon as was safely possible – not only to minimise the impact of any loss of education to pupils' future lives but also because of considerations around social development and – in some cases – the safety and welfare of pupils.

Supply staff. If necessary, supply staff could be brought into schools but they would have to be solely for the use of that one setting or the integrity of the bubble model could not be maintained.

Executive Headteachers. The Executive Headteachers within the Trust would be based in the school where they were most needed, for logistical or other reasons, but would still liaise closely with all their schools via electronic communications.

Attachment issues. It was acknowledged some of the younger pupils might initially experience attachment issues when it came to leaving their parents and returning to the classroom. Measures could be put into place to encourage pupils to confidently return, such as placing them with a familiar member of staff or putting activities near the gate / door which might catch their interest. If this is not successful, it will be suggested they leave again for the time being and come back again the next day, as the key is settling children back in and rebuilding relationships.

	Co-operative working. At Godolphin School, limitations around space meant that it would not be possible to accommodate all the given year groups there so discussions were being had with Helston Community College around whether a bubble of Year 6 pupils might be housed there with their own lead teacher so the offer could still be made to these pupils.	
	Behaviour. If pupils returned and wilfully ignored requests to comply with the safety protocols that had been put into place, Trustees agreed they would be supportive of headteachers saying those pupils could not be on site for the safety of all pupils / staff.	
	Phase 3: extending the offer to all classes before the end of the summer term. This would introduce a whole new set of issues but, as circumstances were constantly changing, it was suggested the focus remain on the first two phases so that schools could get this as right as possible and that the next phase be looked at in another meeting.	
	Any further questions from Trustees were sought.	
	Q. In terms of monitoring attendance, can we ensure staff practice is good from the	
	outset? A. Staff are already doing this in hubs and ensuring returns are made to the relevant agencies. For those pupils return to school after 1st June, staff will have to register in the normal way but may also have to continue to advise the Government on vulnerable children so it could be necessary to have tandem registers for a period. However, this will be reinforced with staff.	DBr
	Q. If Governors are expected to monitor staff workload and work / life balance, how will	
	they obtain the information they need to be able to do this?	
	A. Headteachers will be asked to let their LGBS have some information around this but	
	in such a way that it will not cause a significantly greater workload at this challenging time. Eg. A paragraph on this might be included in the Heads' Report etc.	DBr / RLa
	Q. Do we need to amend the Health and Safety Policy when risk assessing all the time or is it sufficient to say the Trust is following Government guidance?	
	A. We will look at this again as further, more detailed guidance is provided.	DBr
	DBr asked Trustees if they would be happy for her to carry on making the pragmatic decisions and Trustees unanimously <u>approved</u> this.	
	Trustees were asked if they would be happy to ratify the direction of travel in terms of the reopening of the Trust schools and Trustees unanimously <u>ratified</u> this.	
	Trustees added this was an outstanding piece of work given the timescale and they had been assured that the central team / schools were doing all that could be done to make settings as safe as possible / to allow children to return as soon as safely possible. Trustees would also be happy to receive any updates in this respect.	
	DBr requested that Trustees check in daily in case decisions needed to be made quickly and to ensure the steps being taken were reasonable.	
	RLa added that shortly an app linked to the new telephone system could be placed on Trustees' mobile phones so that any calls between the Trust and Trustee mobiles would be	
	free and the fact everyone was using the same system would make communication easier. RLa was to talk Trustees through this.	RLa
10.	SPCMAT PROTOCOL FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF TRUSTEES	
	The protocol had been forwarded to Trustees prior to the meeting and their feedback invited.	
	Any additional questions or suggestions were sought but none were forthcoming. Trustees unanimously approved the SPCMAT Protocol for the Appointment of Trustees.	
11.	TRUST PLAN	
	DBr shared the most recent version of the Trust Plan with Trustees and their feedback was invited.	

It was reiterated this should be revisited when circumstances allowed Executive Leaders a chance to look at information gleaned and when priorities could be different. At the present time, continuing to function, supporting home learning and preparing for the safe reopening of schools were fundamental so the Trust Plan should be paused except for these essentials. Trustees suggested that, over time, it would be helpful to have an idea of what the levels of engagement had been in each school. This would not need to involve huge amounts of data or notably increase the workload of school leaders but rather the basic data that would allow them to contextualise RLa's data when the Trust returned to some form of normality. Executive Leaders were to decide upon the parameters for this. DBr / RLa 12. **POLICIES** Ratification by the Trust Board was sought for the following policies and the Modern Slavery Statement. Draft copies of these policies and the Modern Slavery Statement had been forwarded to the Trust Board beforehand, for their prior consideration. **Managing Medical Conditions** Bereavement Safeguarding addendum for Covid 19 Modern Slavery Statement See also Confidential Notes SPCMAT 20 04 CON. Subject to one recommended amendment to the Safeguarding Policy addendum for Covid 19 and one query around the Managing Medical Conditions Policy being checked up on, Trustees ratified these policies and the Modern Slavery Statement. 13. **HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE** See also Items 7 and 9 above. Incidents. The Health and Safety Trustee advised the Trust Board there had been no reports of incidents since the last meeting. The reopening of school sites. Emphasis was being placed on ensuring sites were being prepared for pupils' safe return. The Estates Team and Central Team were already acting on this. A list of actions had been created for each site, particularly areas that had been closed down and a schedule of visits was being put together. School visits. Unannounced visits to schools by the Health and Safety Trustee were to remain on hold until after the current crisis, as monitoring visits were not permissible at the present time. In the interim, SPi would report verbally where appropriate. Risk Assessments. Headteachers were to share the risk assessments around reopening their respective schools with the Trustees and their Health and Safety Governors so the latter would have an opportunity to come back with any questions. 14. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS Updates from the CFO: Procurement of Modular Unit.** An order was being placed for a new modular unit at Mullion School. This had been out to tender and the best company had been determined to be Acrol. Full costings etc were available from SPi. In light of concerns around the stability of companies in the current economic climate, a revised payment schedule had been agreed which would allow the Trust to delay payments and thereby mitigate any financial risk as far as possible. This was also an established company which was highly unlikely to go into liquidation. A good discount had been possible as the company was looking for a project of about this size to allow it to bring staff back. The September opening date was still expected to be adhered to. Trustees formally confirmed their support of this process. Personal Protective Equipment [PPE]. A joint order was being placed for PPE on behalf of all the Trust schools. The cost should amount to approximately £500 per school on average

	but these costs should be reclaimable through grant funding. The provision of PPA would be monitored through a stock control process and parameters for its use would be put in place. Trustees formally confirmed their support of this procurement.			
	Q. Are these soft steps into central purchasing?			
A. No. Big ticket items are already being procured centrally and there are a number of good reasons for the procurement of smaller items to continue to be done locally.				
	General Insurance. Discussion was being had around moving the general insurance from Zurich to RPA, the Academies Risk Protection Arrangement under which the Government covers the losses instead of commercial insurance. Costings were being sought and more information would follow but it was likely the Finance Team would be recommending this change. It would be necessary to purchase the motor insurance separately but this was not deemed an issue. Further information would be shared once the Finance Team was in receipt of this.			
	See also Confidential Notes SPCMAT 20 04 CON.			
	Action: All Trustees to ensure they have forwarded their contact details to KTe.			
	Trustees noted their admiration of the excellent community effort made by staff at Helston Community College and Mullion School in manufacturing face shields for local NHS settings. DBr added that additional face shields were to be manufactured in order to provide two for each of the Trust schools as part of the PPE allocation.			
	There were no further matters for consideration so the meeting was brought to a close at 8.00pm.			

Chair's Signature _____ Date _____

The next meeting of the Trust Board is scheduled to take place on Thursday 9th July 2020,

14.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

from 6.00pm, in the Trust Conference Room.