



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



**Thursday 28th January 2021, from 7.15pm
Online meeting due to the Covid 19 pandemic**

<u>ATTENDING :</u> Donna Bryant Sean Davis Alan Hinchliffe Alan Horne Kristin Pryor Susan Reynolds Kevin Thomas In Attendance Karen Teague [Trust Administrator] Lucy Wandless [DSL Network Group Lead]		DBr SDa AHi AHo KPr SRe KTh KTe LWa
<u>APOLOGIES :</u> Pam Miller		PMi
		<u>ACTION</u>
3.	<u>WELCOME AND DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS</u>	
	The Chair welcomed all those present. Under Declarations of Pecuniary Interests , no additional declarations were forthcoming at this time.	
4.	<u>SAFEGUARDING PRESENTATION</u>	
	Lucy Wandless, DSL Network Group lead, provided Trustees with an overview of the many elements of safeguarding within the Trust. Points raised and discussed included: Designated Safeguarding Lead [DSL] Network Group DSL Network Group meetings had continued to take place every term, with the meetings held in May and October 2020 being held virtually. The meeting scheduled for February 2021 would also be held virtually. In addition to DSLs from across the Trust, some Deputy DSLs were also now attending so scope of who attends had been opened up. There was an agenda for each meeting which focused on key areas for safeguarding. Focus items had included: My Concern. All schools were successfully using My Concern - safeguarding software developed by child protection experts which allowed anyone responsible for the protection of children at risk to manage and record safeguarding and wellbeing concerns. Network Group meetings looked at how many new concerns had been recorded since the previous meeting, the types of issues recorded, etc. My Concern had proved its worth time and time again but no more so than recently, as DSLs / other staff could share or report concerns from wherever they working which had been ideal when the hub model was used during the first lockdown. This had been a real strength and feedback on the software was very positive. Discussion linked to the full return to school in September 2020 following the closure period. DSLs were asked if they had experienced a significant rise in the number of concerns or changes in the needs of their pupils / families and how they were managing with the	

capacity they had. Points raised and discussed by DSLs were shared with Trustees for their information. LWa assured Trustees that concerns and issues from across the Trust would be monitored again after schools returned from the current lockdown situation. Likewise, information around mental health support networks etc would be sent out to schools as promptly as possible so all parents could be signposted to these.

Policy reviews. These included the Trust's: Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; Peer on Peer Abuse Statement; Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Addendum for Covid 19 [updated on several occasions as circumstances / guidance changed]; and Bereavement Policy. DSL monitoring visits had shown the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy had consistently been made available to staff, governors, parents, etc so this was good to note.

Safeguarding updates. In addition to the minutes circulated from the DSL meetings, LWa continued to circulate a Safeguarding Update to Headteachers / DSLs at least once a month. These included up to date information, reminders and links to useful safeguarding information. An increased number of Safeguarding Updates were being forwarded to DSLs and Headteachers during the school closure period. While there was a great deal of information in these, there was no expectation that DSLs read and follow up on every item but rather that they look for those items pertinent to their own settings. Selected items could also be used in staff meetings to inform other staff.

Training. Safeguarding training was currently being accessed online. Training opportunities could be sourced through School Messenger, Cornwall Learning, NSPCC, etc and LWa ensured training information was shared through the Safeguarding Update.

LWa had led a Safeguarding online training session for governors during the last half term and this had been well attended, with representation from a majority of the Trust schools.

DSL visits and new pro forma for 'virtual visits'. These visits took place virtually last term. LWa undertook all of the visits, which had given her a real understanding of safeguarding within the Trust, and a new pro forma had been devised to reflect the current changes to these visits. Aspects of this were shared with Trustees for their information. Strengths identified during these visits included a strong safeguarding culture across the Trust, led by knowledgeable and experienced DSLs / DDSLs - with those that were newer to the role having undertaken relevant training and being supported by a more experienced DSL – and schools engaging well with outside agencies to provide the best support for pupils. Areas for development or improvement identified included ensuring future DSL visits included pupil conferencing.

S157 Annual Safeguarding Return 2019 – 2020. The annual quality assurance of 157-175 returns now formed an integral part of safeguarding processes in Cornwall. As in previous years, a group of Headteachers had kindly volunteered to complete all the Trust-wide aspects of the return. Headteachers then completed those aspects specific to their individual schools before submitting their returns. All of the schools had returned their quality assurance to KTe / LWa and together they had picked out the common themes. Strengths identified included strong support from the central Trust and yet care having been taken to ensure the individuality of the schools came across. Areas for development or improvement identified included having a safeguarding induction checklist as part of the induction process to ensure everyone from volunteers up had the relevant induction and there was evidence this has happened. Other strengths and areas for development or improvement were also shared with Trustees for their information.

Recruitment – Safer Recruitment

The importance of following the recruitment procedures laid out in the Trust's HR pack had been reiterated with Headteachers and secretaries. There had been a number of updates to the recruitment documents to reflect changes in guidance, Brexit and other factors so bespoke training for Headteachers and secretaries had taken place earlier that month.

Any additional questions from Trustees were sought.

Q. Can we target schools not represented at the Safeguarding for Governors training for the next round of training?

	<p>A. Yes. I am happy to repeat the training and target the schools whose Local Governing Bodies were not previously represented.</p> <p>A query arose as to how Trustees could ensure Governor Monitoring was still taking place during the lockdown period. It was pointed out that Google Meets with children could still take place, as long as these were with children in school, and Single Central Record checks could be done by secretaries sharing their screens, for example, so there were a number of ways in which the Safeguarding Governors / other governors could continue to monitor remotely. Similarly, schools could have safeguarding as an agenda item for staff meetings and invite governors to attend for that part of the meeting.</p> <p>It was proposed it would be helpful to provide Local Governing Bodies with a list of the key foci they should be thinking about, through a letter to LGBs or through the Chairs' Network Group meeting, so KTh agreed to sign off on this on behalf of Trustees and to follow it up at the next Chairs' meeting.</p> <p>Trustees thanked LWa for a detailed, informative and reassuring presentation. LWa left the meeting at 8.10pm.</p>	KTh
5.	<u>MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING</u>	
	<p>The minutes of the meeting of the Trust Board on Thursday 22nd October 2020 were agreed to be an accurate record and were to be duly signed by the Chair when circumstances allowed.</p> <p>Matters arising included updates on:</p> <p>Trustees' Away Day. This action was ongoing.</p> <p>Trust Plan. The success of Teaching and Learning from home was being monitored by Executive Leaders and the Trust Standards Committee.</p> <p>Health and Safety Policy. KTe had followed up on the query around whether references to the Estates Manager[s] should specify one of the two Estates Managers but the Estates Team had advised this should not be the case as each school had one Estates Manager as its first point of contact for any matters and, in the absence of one Estates Manager, the other Estates Manager covered in all aspects.</p> <p>Trustee Declarations. Most Trustees had now signed and returned the SPCMAT Code of Conduct for Trustees, the declaration of having read The Essential Trustee and the declaration of having read Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 – Part 2. Any Trustees who had not yet done so were reminded to return the signed documentation to KTe as soon as possible.</p> <p>Training for Trustees. Trustees were reminded to inform KTe of any relevant training they had undertaken or were to undertake, as this was an important aspect of the Trustee role.</p> <p>Recruitment Policy. Work was currently being done on the Trust's Recruitment Policy in order to ensure this reflected the changes brought about by Brexit.</p> <p>All other actions had been completed.</p> <p>See also Confidential Notes SPCMAT 21 02 CON.</p>	All Trustees
6.	<u>RATIFICATION OF FINANCE & RESOURCES / STANDARDS / C-SAW COMMITTEE MINUTES</u>	
	<p>A meeting of the C-SAW Committee had taken place on 11th January 2021, where the minutes of the meeting on 6th October 2020 had been approved.</p> <p>A meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee had taken place on 10th December 2020, where the minutes of the meeting on 9th July 2020 had been approved.</p> <p>A meeting of the Standards Committee had taken place on 21st January 2021, where the minutes of the Committee's meeting on 15th October 2020 had been approved.</p> <p>Trustees ratified these minutes.</p>	

7.	<u>LOCAL GOVERNING BODIES</u>	
	<p>Matters Arising from LGB Meetings. Trustees discussed the matters raised and agreed responses to these. KTe was to forward the responses to the respective Headteachers / Chairs of Governors for their information and that of their LGBs.</p> <p>Governor Training Attendance. The Governor Training Programme for the current academic year continued to run remotely and engagement was still good. Upcoming training sessions included Understanding Your School's Budget, Understanding Primary Data, Governor Monitoring and An Update for LGBs.</p> <p>Trustee feedback from LGB Meetings. Trustees talked through any pertinent feedback from recent LGB meetings.</p> <p>Forums / Forum Member. Not applicable on this occasion.</p> <p>Pen Portraits of Prospective Governors. The Pen Portraits of RDu [Halwin LGB] and VHo [Mullion School LGB] had been approved by Trustees via email.</p> <p>KTe had sent a letter to formally confirm these appointments.</p> <p>See also Confidential Notes SPCMAT 21 02 CON.</p>	KTe
8.	<u>EXECUTIVE LEADER REPORT AND UPDATES</u>	
	<p>DBr invited questions on her report, which had been forwarded to Trustees ahead of the meeting. Key areas presented and discussed included:</p> <p>Update on Covid-19</p> <p>Schools were now in their second period of lockdown and numbers attending schools this time were much higher than last Spring. Helston had the greatest number of students attending a secondary setting in Cornwall with approximately 150 children on site. Overall numbers across the Trust ranged from 20% to 40% attendance. Executive Leaders and Headteachers were keeping a close eye on this and taking additional steps if schools got closer to 50% occupancy, as the Trust had a duty of care to both staff and children. With infection rates reaching new highs locally in the last month and more positive cases amongst the Trust's staff and pupils too, there was an understandable degree of anxiety. The DfE quoted research from November that indicated the infection rates in school staff were in line with the national average; however a more recent study, published by Secondary Ed, had showed rates for December to January well above the national. This did not inspire confidence amongst staff.</p> <p>Staff were working incredibly long hours preparing lessons, videoing them and uploading them, teaching in real time in school, and responding to pupils' work and lots of queries from parents. Executive Leaders were hearing of several staff working until 11.00pm. All members of staff were working hard to support children whatever their role. Staff were energised and enjoying the challenge of working in a new way but are also in danger of burn out. Headteachers had discussed ways to help reduce workload.</p> <p>The DfE had advised schools would be closed for the half term holiday to give staff a much needed break but a member of staff would still have to be available for contact tracing.</p> <p>Parental feedback had been very positive overall and there was a clear step change from provision last Spring. Schools were continuing to refine their practice based on parental and pupil feedback.</p> <p>The Standards Committee had reviewed the monitoring arrangements that had been put in place to track provision. This would be revisited throughout the lockdown period.</p> <p>DBr continued to be part of the Cornwall Covid 19 steering group which had been a helpful conduit for addressing any emergent issues and receiving critical updates.</p> <p>Free school meals</p> <p>Edenred was being used to provide FSM vouchers during term time; school meals were also being provided for those in school. During the half term break, the council would pay for the vouchers from its winter grant and so the Trust was moving to Tesco vouchers for that week, then back to Edenred thereafter.</p>	

Testing

The Trust secondary schools both had test sites established to test staff twice weekly; primary staff had home testing kits. The government currently planned for secondary schools to mass test pupils on their return to school, which would be a logistical challenge.

Exams

Ofqual had a consultation running at the current time. There would be additional work arising from this, ranging from establishing Centre Assessed Grades using whatever methodology emerges; potential new exam papers to help inform / verify CAG marked internally or externally; potential external moderation arrangements; and appeals process with step one being in school appeals before going to external appeal. There was also a potential change to timelines that meant an interim grade that could be appealed before the final grade was awarded. That could all happen with schools operating with all pupils back in the classroom, depending on the trajectory of the pandemic and government plans for schools to return. Given that senior leaders would still have to keep the mitigation and health and safety arrangements in place, which saw them losing up to two hours every day, there would be increased pressure on senior leadership teams. DBr was to update Trustees further as more information emerged.

Trust Plan

This had been updated but limited progress had been made due to the demands of responding to the here and now.

Pay and Pay Reviews

Performance management reviews had been completed.

See also Item 11 below.

Pre-schools

Halwin: The legal process for transfer of the preschool had been completed.

Breage: DBr and the Headteacher of Breage School were working with the preschool and Breaney Chapel to find alternative accommodation for the preschool to enable the school to improve provision for its EY/KS1 pupils.

Manaccan: A plan had been put in place that secured the provision of the preschool in a more cost effective way. This would be kept under review.

Breakfast Clubs

Manaccan breakfast club had been given a local community grant to help them continue provision through to Easter in the first instance. This was a changing picture but DBr and SPi were working with the community to do their best to support them without weakening the school's financial position.

KTh noted his agreement with the decision to shut schools at half term, as staff needed a well-earned break. Similarly, given the announcement schools were not likely to reopen before 8th March, he fully supported the monitoring of attendance for continued creep in numbers over coming weeks as safety had to be the first priority. Moreover, if vaccine targets were not met, this date could be delayed further.

Additional questions were sought from Trustees.

Q. Given there will only be two weeks' notice of reopening, at what stage of planning are schools already at?

A. As it is not yet known if there will be a full reopening or some form of phased return, schools do not know what they need to plan for at this point. Testing could be a significant logistical issue if there is a full return so CST are pressing for greater clarity. It may be necessary for us to meet as a Board to make our own decision around whether or not a full return would be unmanageable straight away, for example. The only thing we know for certain is the testing centres are set up and, if there is a full return, schools will return to the protocols that were in place in September because there is nothing more they can do. There is also a huge amount of work to be done around CAGs etc but schools cannot plan for this as there is not yet enough detail.

See also Confidential Notes SPCMAT 21 02 CON.

9.	<u>REASONS TO CELEBRATE AND AREAS OF CHALLENGE</u>	
	Trustees shared a set of reasons to celebrate and areas of challenge. See also Confidential Notes SPCMAT 21 02 CON.	
10.	<u>RECRUITMENT UPDATE</u>	
	<p>DBr advised Trustees new paperwork had been created to ensure the appropriate contract details had been agreed in advance and a tighter system was in place. Training on this had been given to Headteachers and secretaries so it could be adopted with immediate effect.</p> <p>Trustees were also informed that, following Est's resignation from her Executive Headship role with effect from the end of August 2021, a recruitment process was in place and the deadline for applications was 1st February 2021. KTh and SRe were to be involved in the interview process, which would include a range of activities in addition to a formal interview. This post had been advertised to internal applicants only in the first instance and the number of really strong potential applicants was testament to the development of leadership within the Trust.</p>	
11.	<u>PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT / PAY REVIEWS</u>	
	<p>A Pay Review Report, including a breakdown of figures from across the Trust schools and recommended actions, had been shared with Trustees prior to the meeting. Key areas presented and discussed included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay Review meetings. These had taken place in November, with KTh and AHO representing Trustees on the Pay Review Panel. Headteachers had provided documentation relating to the staff who were due to progress and their rationale for recommending them or not. Where members of staff had not applied for progression [M6>UPS], the reasons for this had been probed. • An evaluation of the process • Matters arising to be considered <p>Trustees were asked what they would like to see going forward. It was suggested that, where teachers were on M2 and going to M3 automatically for example, Trustees only needed to be involved if there was an issue. Trustees' main focus would be on reviewing pay progression though the Threshold and Upper Pay scales.</p> <p>DBr was to advise Headteachers that, as long as the Performance Management paperwork and procedures were being followed, it would only be necessary for them to discuss M1 to M6 with the Executive Leader and not Trustees - unless there were any contentious issues or exceptional progress.</p> <p>Trust policies were to be checked to ensure they aligned with this arrangement.</p>	<p>DBr</p> <p>DBr</p>
12.	<u>POLICIES</u>	
	<p>Approval by the Trust Board was sought for the following updated policies. Details of the additions or amendments had been forwarded to Committee members beforehand, along with draft copies of the full policies, for their prior consideration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SPCMAT Admissions Policy 2022 / 2023 • SPCMAT NQT Policy • SPCMAT Complaints Procedure • SPCMAT Education of Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children Policy • SPCMAT Online Safety Policy <p>Trustees ratified these policies pending the need for further adjustment.</p>	
13.	<u>HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE</u>	
	Covid continued to be the main focus in respect of Health and Safety.	

	<p>As discussed at the December meeting of the Finance and Resources Committee, a Compliance Schedule had been created which gave an overview for each school in respect of equipment / services and – against each item or service – Frequency, Supplier, Start Date, Reminder and Expiry Date. This had been shared with the Health and Safety Trustee and he was liaising with the Estates Manager who led on compliance in order to monitor compliance. Any concerns identified would then be reported back to the Trust Board.</p> <p>Covid meant access to sites had been limited over past months so some aspects were marginally out of date but these were being monitored and would be picked up as soon as was practicable.</p> <p>Health and Safety walks by the Health and Safety Trustee were also still on hold due to the pandemic.</p> <p>See also Confidential Notes SPCMAT 21 02 CON.</p>	
14.	<u>TRUST PLAN</u>	
	<p>A copy of the most recent version of the Trust Plan had been shared with Trustees prior to the meeting for their information.</p> <p>DBr asked Trustees how they wished the Trust Plan to progress and how they saw their role in that.</p> <p>It was suggested the Trust Plan was there to provide evidence of Executive Leaders / Trustees thinking and planning ahead. The plan was inevitably subject to events but behind this was a strategy, which was coming to the fore now. While things would sometimes be cut across, there was still a need to plan and record. The Plan should be kept up to date and continue to be used by Executive Leaders but Trustees should be aware it might not always be possible to deliver on it due to events.</p> <p>Trustees agreed they would undertake a thorough review of the Trust Plan once a year, ideally during the Board's away day, but the Trust Plan would remain available to them throughout the year. In the interim, Executive Leaders would continue to update and monitor the Trust Plan, reporting any issues or concerns to Trustees as appropriate.</p>	
15.	<u>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</u>	
	<p>Chartwells billing. As the issue around this had been resolved, the matter no longer required discussion.</p> <p>See also Confidential Notes SPCMAT 21 02 CON.</p> <p>There were no further matters for consideration so the meeting was brought to a close at 9.00pm.</p>	
16.	<u>DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</u>	
	<p>The next meeting of the Trust Board was to take place on Thursday 18th March 2021, from 6.00pm, in the Trust Conference Room - or via Google Meet if face to face meetings were still advisable.</p> <p>Thereafter, meetings were to take place on:</p> <p>13th May 2020 8th July 2020</p>	

Chair's Signature _____ Date _____