

Great Oak Multi Academy Trust
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2019

Directors	Office	Term
Andrew Armour		23/12/2020
Gary Benn		23/12/2020
* <i>David Boatman</i>	<i>Vice Chair</i>	23/12/2020
Melissa Challinor		23/12/2020
John Luke		23/12/2020
Sarah Mitchell	CEO [Executive Headteacher]	Ex-Officio
Andrew Taylor	Chair	23/12/2020
* <i>indicates absence</i>		

In attendance

Liam Tobin	DPA LGB Governor
Tom Bennett	Clerk

The Executive Headteacher opened the meeting with a prayer

ACTION

20/19 Welcome and apologies for absence

The Chair welcomed Liam Tobin to the meeting.

The Chair reported the Board was initially composed of representative governors from the LGBs of each Academy together with two other persons who had previously been GCPA governors and brought specific skills and experience to the Board.

Two of the Directors had stepped down as governors on the DPA LGB and Liam had been invited to meet the Directors and view the workings of the Board prior to confirming his willingness to be appointed a Director and be the link to the DPA LGB.

Apologies were received and accepted from David Boatman.

21/19 Notification of AoB

- **ESFA Letter**

22/19 Notification of business interests

Gary Benn declared that his wife worked for the Academy and he worked for Inglewood Building Design and Consultancy Services that provided services to the Trust.

No other director declared a potential conflict of interest in the business to be discussed or that they had received or given any gifts or hospitality that could or be perceived to compromise their impartiality when dealing with matters for the Trust.

MAIN BUSINESS

23/19 Governance

a) Report of the Annual General Meeting held on 24 June 2019

The Chair reported one of the Trust's members, the Rev'd Canon David Tomlinson was currently on sabbatical and unable to attend the meeting. The Trust had been notified David Tomlinson planned to move away from Saffron Walden and the Trust would need to find a new member.

The Rev'd Tim Elbourne, the member representing the Chelmsford Diocese had met the EHT to review the teaching and learning and progress made at each academy and had

asked challenging questions on the Trust's plans to grow and bring new academies within it.

Tim Elbourne had commended the Trust on the results of the recent SIAMS Inspection held at GCPA.

The members present had approved the appointment of Price Bailey as the Trust's auditors for the financial year ending 31 August 2019.

b) The appointment of the members of each Academy's Local Governing Body from September 2019

The meeting noted the previously circulated list of proposed governors for the 2019-20 academic year for each academy.

The proposed list of governors for GCPA included two new governors (one parent governor). One is to replace Fiona Keys who is stepping down at the end of this academic year and the other is to help with succession planning in the key area of safeguarding as a large number of governors are due to stand down at the same time.

The DPA LGB had asked the Board to consider increasing the number of governors on the LGB to strengthen it and spread the governors work load.

It was noted there was currently a vacancy on the LGB and it was **agreed** to consider the request once the vacancy had been filled according to required skill set.

c) The appointment of the Chairs for the LGBs of both academies

Both Lin Stephenson and Adele Peters had expressed an interest to continue as the Chair for each LGB and it was **agreed** to appoint them for the new 2019-20 Academic year.

d) Audit Committee Terms of Reference

The meeting noted the revised terms of reference for the Audit Committee and it was **agreed** to approve them.

e) Financial Regulations

The financial regulations had been amended to reflect the recommendations from the Responsible Officer and Audit Committee and to bring them in line with the latest issue of the ESFA's Academies Financial Handbook. It was **agreed** to approve them.

24/19 Strategy/ Future Plans

a) 2018-19 School Development Plans [SDPs]

The EHT introduced the previously circulated SDPs for each Academy and highlighted the following:

- The DPA SDP will be reviewed by the existing leadership team to facilitate the transition for the new Head of School and to aid his self-assessment and evaluation of how the school is progressing against each key priority and Ofsted recommendations.
- GCPA had carried out a lot of work since the last Board Meeting on reviewing and updating its ICT equipment under it key computing priority to review and develop the teaching of computing across the school to ensure children are digitally literate. This will to be extended in the new 2019-20 SIP.

b) Key priorities for the 2019-20 School Improvement Plans for each academy

- The new Head of School and EHT will be working together to identify the ongoing and new key areas to focus on 2019-20. An update / draft will be reported at the following Board Meeting. The main areas for development include:

Chair

EHT

Chair Audit Committee

EHT

- Leadership and management
 - Teaching and learning
 - Assessment
 - English – SPAG
 - Providing a broad and balanced curriculum
 - Governance
- The main areas for development at GCPA in 2019-20 include:
 - Social, emotional well-being for pupils and staff
 - Broad and balanced curriculum
 - Computing
 - Science
 - Building works and school environment including incorporating the outdoor space into the class room.
 - Governance

25/19 Executive Head Teacher [EHT]

The EHT introduce her termly report on the operation and performance of the MAT and highlighted the following:

- The main highlight had been the attainment and progress data that has yet to be externally validated. There had been a marked improvement in the KS1 data for DPA that demonstrated the impact of the intervention strategies to improve the standard of teaching and learning at DPA that was below the “floor” standard the previous year.
- It was likely DPA will have an Ofsted inspection next year. The improvement in teaching and learning will give the new Head of School a good start.
- The KS1 and KS2 results for pupils at GCPA were excellent and higher than National average scores. A particular improvement was the achievement of greater depth writing in KS2.
- The results for Phonics were good across both schools.
- The area to focus on at GCPA going forward, and to put in place the necessary interventions, is the high level of behavioural and academic needs of pupils in the current Reception Class.
- The significant increase in the number of children at GCPA with special behavioural and education needs led to an increase in education support staff that has impacted on the budget for the school. Several agencies are currently involved with the school in providing for these pupils and preparing further EHCP applications.
- The Trust also needs to focus on pupil attendance levels at both schools that are lower than previous years, partly due partly to a lot of illness over the winter months and an increase in unauthorised absences by GCPA taking children out of school for holidays. The attendance levels are in line with other local schools. It was **agreed** to include comparative attendance levels of other local schools when reporting the trust’s pupil attendance levels.
- DPA had experienced a higher level of pupil movement with new pupils of service families joining the school and others leaving when families are reposted to other barracks in recent months.
- There had been a positive change in feedback from parents at DPA following the implementations of the new staff and teaching changes at the school and the improved results. Fourteen pupils had registered to join the Reception Class in September 2019 that was much higher than a lot of other local Primary

EHT

Schools.

- The newly appointed Head of School at DPA had already made a number of visits to the school for meetings with the EHT and Gary Brown. Gary Brown will be both teaching as well as supporting the new Head of School with the experience and knowledge he has built up in the many years as the Headteacher at a local primary school. The new Head of School was keen to work in a collaborative way across the trust and both schools.

The Chair expressed his appreciation for all the work carried out by the EHT and teaching staff at both schools in achieving the improved KS1 attainment results at DPA and KS1 and KS2 results at GCPA.

The Chair felt it would be good to invite the newly appointed DPA Head of School to meet the Directors either at a future Board meeting or at the joint governor/ staff training day.

EHT

26/19 Safeguarding

The meeting noted the previously circulated annual safeguarding reports for each Academy and that there were no safeguarding issues.

The EHT reported that there had been one Fixed Term Exclusion [FTE] at DPA and none at GCPA.

27/19 SEND

The meeting received and noted the previously circulated annual SEND reports for each school.

In reply to a question, the EHT reported the increase in pupils with complex behavioural and education needs was not a rising trend but reflected different yearly cohorts and was in line with similar local primary schools.

28/19 Finance

a) Managements accounts

The meeting noted the previously circulated management accounts for period to 31 May 2019 for each Academy showing the actual income and expenditure totals to date the revised forecasts for the year end together with the explanations provided for the variances against budget.

The EHT reported the provision of catering at DPA was currently running at loss due to the need to acquire new catering equipment and the take up of school meals. Catering moved in-house in September 2018 and it would take time to recoup the cost of setting it up. It was planned to review the type of meals being provided at DPA to increase the number of pupils having school lunches in the summer term and to reduce costs.

b) Budgets 2019-20

The meeting received and considered the draft budgets for the MAT and each Academy and noted the Academies had set breakeven budgets. The spending by each Academy would need to be closely monitored to ensure there were no budget overspends.

The GCPA Budget included a number of expenditure cuts on training, CPD and cover staff. The EHT advised free staff training and CPD was available and would be used and the reduction in providing leadership and teacher support to DPA would free up time to provide teaching and other staff-cover.

The meeting discussed whether the budgets should be updated to include the government's recent announcement that National Teacher Awards for 2020 would be 2.75% rather than the 2% provided in the draft budgets. As there been no indication whether the government would fund the additional 0.75%, as it had done in the past, it

was **agreed** not to include the new rate but reflect it in the financial forecasts for the new financial year together with any additional funding.

The meeting approved the draft 2019-20 budgets for the MAT and each Academy to be submitted to the ESFA by 31 July 2019.

c) **2018-19 Capital Funding/ Expenditure Budget**

The meeting considered and approved a tabled paper setting out capital expenditure in the current financial year for each Academy.

d) **2019-20 Capital Funding/ Expenditure Budget**

The meeting considered a paper setting out a proposal from GCPA to build a multi-purpose education space to be funded in part by S106 funding.

The Academy was eligible for Section 106 funding in the region of £105k arising from a residential development in Great Chesterford. It was proposed to use the funding to build a multi-purpose education space at an estimated cost of £190k to provide break-out areas to small pupil groups for specialised teaching and learning including practical science and other subject experiments. The balance of the funding [£85k] would need to be met from the Academy's accumulated reserves. This would reduce the Academy's reserves from £230k to £145k.

Essex CC had already agreed the S106 funding could be used by the Academy and if the Trust agreed to proceed, a legal agreement would be out in place between Essex CC and the Trust on the use of the funds.

It was **agreed** to approve the proposal.

e) **Requests for expenditure that exceed the EHT's approval limit**

There were no requests for expenditure exceeding the EHT's approval limit.

ROUTINE BUSINESS

29/19 Minutes of the previous meetings

The minutes of the previous meetings held on 21st May 2019 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

30/19 Matters arising

Minute 17/19 Training

It was **agreed** to circulate to all Directors details to access the NGA's governor training platform.

All other matters arising had been completed or were included on the agenda

31/19 Minutes/reports of committees

a) **GCPA**

The Board received and noted the minutes of the GCPA LGB meeting held on 2 July 2019.

b) **DPA**

The Board received and noted the unconfirmed minutes of the DPA LGB meeting held on 4 July 2019.

32/19 Any other business

ESFA Letter

The meeting received and noted a letter from the ESFA dated 19 July 2019 sent to all academies.

The letter summarised the major changes to the updated Academy Financial Handbook, and the Academies Accounts Direction, the availability of good practice guides and the availability of an ESFA School Resource Management Advisor (SRMA) who were available to work collaboratively with trusts and make recommendations about how they could better direct more of their available resource to the areas that have the greatest impact on educational outcomes. SRMAs produce reports that provide recommendations about how this can be achieved. It is then the responsibility of the trust to decide which recommendations to implement, based on their individual circumstances.

Gary Benn advised the conditions of the successful bid by DPA for ESFA Capital Improvement Fund [CIF] funding to replace the boiler included the requirement for a mandatory visit by a SRMA who would produce a report with a number of recommendations that DPA and the Trust would need to implement.

It was felt that while the Trust was not in a deficit position, the responsibility and decision to implement any recommendations made by an SRMA remained with the Trust.

[Further comments on the SRMAs visits relating to CIF funding can be found using this link:

<https://schoolweek.co.uk/schools-handed-repairs-cash-expected-to-follow-dfe-cost-cutting-advice/>]

33/19 Date/time of future meetings

- Safeguarding training – Tuesday 3 September 2019 – St Thomas More Catholic Primary School [Directors unable to attend should complete the online NGA Safeguard training by the end of September 2019]
- MAT Board Meeting – Wednesday 4 September 2019 19:45 hrs

Signed by Andrew Taylor [Chair] on 4 September 2019