

Coppice Primary Partnership
Meeting of the Trustee Board
Wednesday 20th May 2020
Via Zoom

Present: Carole Hardy (chair of Trustee Board), Peggy Murphy, Carina Cuddington, John Edgar, Isabelle Linney-Drouet, Andrew Maitland

In attendance: Andrew Lacey (Trust Business Manager)

Clerk: Clare Nursey

Agenda item and discussion	Action/decision
<p>1 Welcome and Apologies for absence CH welcomed all to this meeting, the first TB meeting to be conducted via Zoom. All present.</p>	
<p>2 Declaration of business interests No new interests to declare. Trustees noted PM and CC's interim roles in trust management.</p>	
<p>3 Minutes of the last meeting (12th February 2020 & 17th March 2020) and any matters arising 4.1 Minutes were agreed as accurate records of discussions and hard copies would be physically signed when circumstances allowed.</p>	
<p>4 Interim arrangements for trust management 4.1 CH confirmed that Peggy Murphy had been approved by DfE as interim CEO for the trust but discussions were still ongoing about Carina Cuddington's role as acting Accounting Officer. Despite CC's impressive curriculum vitae, concerns had been expressed (via the DfE/ESFA liaison officer) due to her position as both a volunteer and a trustee – the CAO role was usually taken by a paid trust employee. CH had had a telephone conversation with Mark McKinnon (DfE), to which CC and Steve Knowles (CPP Member) had been invited, and DfE had suggested strengthening the trust to support CC in this interim period until a new CEO/CAO could be appointed. 4.2 DfE had since come back with an offer of inter trust support from Rob Carpenter, Leader of Inspire Trust. CH reminded trustees that although there had been no recent contact, Darren had worked closely with Rob in the past. Their thinking was similar, and staff from LPS had visited Rob's school in Greenwich to observe outstanding practice. CH suggested Rob could be very supportive in the recruitment process for a new CPP leader. She had discussed the suggestion of Rob's input to potentially working with school leaders (to be discussed with PM, who knew him by reputation) and they agreed it would be both useful to CPP, and diplomatic in terms of relations with DfE, to accept the offer. Q. Was there a risk that Inspire might be looking to absorb CPP into their trust? CH did not believe this was any part of Rob's thinking, but it was always possible that DfE had another agenda, or were keeping Inspire "in the wings" should CPP run into difficulties. CH reported that she had stressed the CPP ethos to DfE (small trust, primary focus only) and PM advised that the 3 HTs, who were working very well together in the current situation, were determined to continue Darren's philosophy. Q. Was there any idea yet how Rob might be used to help CPP? At this stage the focus was on schools reopening, and the welfare of children and staff, and there was unlikely to be much need for Rob's help between September and Christmas. Thinking had not yet stretched beyond that, but current arrangements required a heavy commitment from CH, PM and CC, sharing the CEO role as Darren had performed it. It was too soon to judge how well interim arrangements would work once PM formally took up the interim CEO role (working 1-day pw), but it would be useful to have Rob available to call on if needed. PM would speak to the 3 HTs to get their input on how Rob might help, and almost certainly he could be useful in the recruitment exercise ahead.</p>	<p>PM</p>

<p>4.3 CH advised she would keep trustees informed as the situation developed.</p> <p>Post meeting note – CH received confirmation on 21st May that DfE had approved all CPP’s plans for interim leadership of the trust.</p>	
<p>5 Formal approval of decisions reach via email prior to this meeting</p> <p>Trustees confirmed their APPROVAL of the following decisions which had been reached by email since the previous meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Carina Cuddington to be appointed as interim AO 2. Contract with SPS to be extended to 31 March 2021 3. Notice to be given to current cleaning and catering contractors with effect from 30 April 2020 	
<p>6 Appointment of trust staff</p> <p>6.1 CH advised that there was a need to move more quickly on recruitment of trust staff than had been envisaged at the last TB meeting. Not knowing when schools would be fully operational again, and the speed at which things were moving for schools in the CV crisis, made the current situation more difficult. The trust was unlikely to recruit a new EHT until at least Easter, more probably not until the summer term, and this was a long time to manage without a leader. There was though perhaps a need to think differently and to recognise that the trust was unlikely to recruit a direct replacement for Darren (small trust may be unappealing to an established EHT, possibly attractive to a new or less experienced EHT, difficult to find someone with full range of education and business skills). It was also important to recognise that, with school closures coming so soon after Darren’s death, staff had not yet had time to grieve and they needed time to come to terms with this and the idea of change before being challenged to think about the future under new leadership.</p> <p>6.2 CH proposed setting up a small group of trustees to consider what exactly the trust should be recruiting for before the recruitment exercise itself was launched – did the trust want an EHT, CEO or something else (she was drawn to Rob Carpenter’s title of “Trust Leader”). The role to now had been structured around Darren’s skills and perhaps the future role should be different, even split across several people. Similarly, more thought needed to be given to how the CAO role should be filled – would this be the same person as the CEO? The working group could research the whole area to ensure that what was put in place fitted with CPP’s ethos, and Rob Carpenter’s wider perspective would be useful as would CC’s experience of working with other academy trusts. (CC advised that having too many people at the top complicated decision making, and stressed that business sense was important but without losing sight of the focus on children and staff.)</p> <p>6.3 JE and CC volunteered to join CH on a working group, with advice/input from PM and ILD as needed. CH thanked trustees and advised she would consider things further and then make contact to progress the matter.</p>	CH
<p>7 Matters specific to schools</p> <p>7.1 PM reported that all 3 HTs had stepped up and were performing fantastically well and supporting each other. Paperwork had all been completed and the schools were ready to reopen on 1st June (she commented that there had been no support whatsoever from KCC). HTs had issued clear guidance to parents and had managed home learning well, and she had complete faith in them and what they could achieve.</p> <p>7.2 CH reported to trustees that all 3 HTs had expressed appreciation of PM’s support and reassurance over past weeks.</p> <p>7.3 Trustees asked that thanks to HTs for their exceptional leadership be recorded in these minutes, and they looked forward to thanking them in person when circumstances allowed.</p> <p>7.4 CH advised that the trust needed to approve reopening of the schools to YR, Yr1 and Yr 6 in line with all government guidance, then LGBs needed to consider and approve the reopening of their own school once governors were satisfied that all necessary measures and documentation were in place. LGBs might agree this via email or Zoom meetings.</p> <p>7.5 CH confirmed she had received and was satisfied with risk assessment documents from all 3 schools. PM confirmed that HTs had matters well in hand. There were few issues about staff</p>	

<p>returning, mainly due to concerns about childcare, and HTs would be sensitive to personal situations. Some teachers would still be working from home, setting home learning, and not all classes could be covered by teachers when the schools reopened (eg LPS required 21 classrooms in use from 1 June) but the schools would make it work. The important thing was to ensure that staff followed the risk assessments but it would be very difficult to get 5-year olds to maintain social distancing. CH reported that HTs had sent very clear letters to parents, stressing that staff would do all they could but it was impossible to guarantee social distancing and it was the parent’s decision whether or not to send their child back to school under the new arrangements. PM suggested parents be asked to sign disclaimers as was happening at her own school – she would discuss this with HTs.</p> <p>Post meeting note: This has been actioned in all schools.</p> <p>7.6 PM confirmed that LPS expected 40% of the roll to be in school on 1st June, SKPS 32% and CPS 30%. The schools would look very different to the children and the school experience might be very different for up to a year. She would also discuss with HTs how children might be prepared for changes, eg by posting photos of the reorganised classrooms, and stressed that staff would of course reassure the children when they returned.</p> <p>Post meeting note: This has been actioned in all schools.</p> <p>Q. Children were likely to have gaps in learning after the closures – how would these be filled?</p> <p>CH – the focus was on getting the schools open and thought had not yet been given to what education would be delivered in the new, very different circumstances. Much depended on which children returned to school, making planning difficult, but teachers were of course well used to differentiating learning.</p> <p>Q. How would children be grouped on return to school?</p> <p>PM – this was an operational decision for HTs, but it was likely that key workers’ children (who came from all years) would remain in their established groups.</p> <p>7.7 Subject to following all DfE guidelines, trustees APPROVED the reopening of schools on 1st June.</p>	
<p>8 Policies and key documents</p> <p>8.1 Trustees had received and APPROVED the following documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheme of Delegation 19-20 (rev) • Finance (approval recommended by F&A committee) • Early Years • Sex and Relationships Education • Attendance • Anti-bullying • Risk Register (will be updated again re the general impact of Covid 19) <p>8.2 Trustees noted the Behaviour policy and statement of principles (approval not required as these are the responsibility of HTs).</p>	<p>CH & AL</p>
<p>9 Business Matters</p> <p><i>ESFA letter dated 21st April</i></p> <p>9.1 Trustees noted the contents of the ESFA letter to Accounting Officers (which returns had been cancelled, which had to go ahead, changes to the Handbook etc).</p> <p><i>Report from F&A Committee chair</i></p> <p>9.2 The committee had met immediately prior to this meeting and CC reported the committee had:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewed March management accounts and noted the significant reduction in income from extended services due to closure of schools in the CV crisis. It was not known what the overall cost/impact of the crisis would be for the trust, hence all non-essential expenditure across the trust had been stopped. There was some mitigation of loss through furloughing contracted extended services staff (only reimbursement for March had been received so far). AL confirmed that only staff involved in private traded services (ie extended services) were eligible to be furloughed • Reviewed the 3-year draft budget. Budgets were balanced at the moment based on normal 	

<p>extended services income, but the committee felt it prudent, and trustees agreed, to reduce this expected income by 25% as there was unlikely to be a resumption of the services until January at the earliest. This would leave LPS with a small yearend surplus but CPS and SKPS would have an in-year deficit. HTs need to trim budgets and be advised that wish list spending plans would have to be deferred, but could be fed back in if the position improved. CC would speak to HTs at their next budget review meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered cleaning and catering contract tender information and recommended new contracts – see below. <p><i>Report from TBM</i></p> <p>9.3 AL had provided a brief report and advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Teacher Pension return would be submitted unaudited by 31st May, and resubmitted after audit in September • The new PS Financials system should be in place to go live for 1st September • Decisions on CIF bids (funding for capital projects) had been deferred until June. If CPP was successful with bids for roof work at SKPS and CPS, quick decisions would be needed to enable the work to be completed over the summer holiday. Trustees AGREED that the F&A committee would be delegated to make necessary decisions on behalf of the TB. <p><i>Approval of catering contract</i></p> <p>9.4 The F&A committee had reviewed tender information (copied to trustees and filed with these minutes) and recommended awarding a 4-year contract to CDC. The contract offered best value (including a rebate in year 1) and the contractor was known to the trust, having held the contract at LPS for over 6 years. Trustees AGREED that CDC should be awarded a 4-year contract for catering meals across the trust.</p> <p><i>Approval of cleaning contract</i></p> <p>9.5 The F&A committee had reviewed tender information (copied to trustees and filed with these minutes) and recommended awarding a 3-year contract, with a 1-year break clause, to Ecoclean. The company offered best value and the 1-year break clause would mitigate risk in offering the contract to a relatively small company. Trustees AGREED that Ecoclean should be awarded a 3-year contract, with a 1-year break clause, for cleaning services across the trust.</p>	<p>CC</p>
<p>10 Governance</p> <p><i>Annual audit programme</i></p> <p>10.1 Trustees confirmed approval of the amended audit scope (email 24 April filed with minutes).</p> <p>10.2 Trustees agreed that LGBs should be asked to approve school reopening on 1st June.</p> <p>10.3 Trustees noted that LPS LGB was in need of 2 new governors – arrangements to fill vacancies would be made next term.</p> <p>10.4 Trustees noted that terms of office for several governors on LPS and CPS LGBs expired on 31 August – reappointments would be reviewed at the next TB meeting.</p>	<p>Next agenda</p>
<p>11 Safeguarding matters including Health & Safety and Disability matters</p> <p>Nothing urgent to report.</p>	
<p>12 Chair's Actions/ Correspondence and any other business</p> <p>Chair had no further actions to report and there was no other business to discuss. She thanked all present for their work and support, especially PM and CC.</p>	
<p>13 Confidentiality & Publication of minutes</p> <p>No confidential discussions. Minutes to be circulated to LGBs now, and be publicly available once approved at the next meeting.</p>	
<p>14 Next meeting</p> <p>Wednesday 15th July 2020 – 5:30pm (likely to be held via Zoom)</p>	

Signed.....

Date.....