

**Coppice Primary Partnership  
Meeting of the Trustee Board  
Wednesday 13th July 2022 at 5.30pm**

**Present:** Carole Hardy (Chair of Trustee Board), Mark Chatley (Trust Leader), John Edgar, Isabelle Linney-Drouet, Peggy Murphy, Neil McDonald, Andrew Maitland

**In attendance:** Carina Cuddington (CFO)

**Clerk:** Nicky Wheeler

Agenda Item & Discussion	Action / Decision
<p><b>1 Welcome &amp; Apologies for absence</b></p> <p>1.1 The CoT welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>1.2 Apologies were received and accepted from Andrew Lacey (COO) and the meeting was declared quorate.</p>	
<p><b>2 Declaration of business interests</b></p> <p>2.1 PM declared an interest in the Five Acre Wood (FAW) proposal as she is the Principal of FAW.</p>	
<p><b>3 Minutes of the last meeting (25<sup>th</sup> May 2022) and any matters arising</b></p> <p>3.1 The minutes of the last meeting held on the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2022 were agreed and signed by CoT.</p> <p>3.2 Matters arising included the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governors at CPS have asked for further clarity regarding the purpose of their attendance at finance meetings. JE has drafted a role description and CH &amp; MC agreed to draft a letter to circulate to governors to explain the rationale.</li> <li>• All of the HT have confirmed that they do not circulate a survey to EYFS parents but their feedback is gathered from the annual surveys sent to all parents. MC explained that the main issue raised by EYFS parents usually relates to the school transition arrangements.</li> <li>• NW to check that amendments were made to the health &amp; safety policy and NM will contact AL to discuss further possible amendments.</li> <li>• MC confirmed that AL has booked IOSH training and, once complete, he will decide how best to address the training requirements of the site teams.</li> <li>• CC explained that she has realised that she has until August 23 to agree the new audit contracts so work has not commenced on this yet.</li> <li>• Contained in the confidential annex.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CH/MC</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>NW/NM</b></p>
<p><b>4 Trust Matters</b></p> <p><u>Recommendation from Steering Group</u></p> <p>4.1 CH advised trustees that at the last steering group meeting OAT agreed to recommend to their trustees that the trusts move forward to the next stage of the process. As the incoming trust, CPP will look to increase the size of its trust board and take on four existing OAT trustees and CH has asked NS (CoT OAT) to discuss who is interested in transferring and identify their skill set so that CPP can look for trustees that complement the skills of the existing trust board. In addition, NS is interested in joining the CPP member board.</p> <p>4.2 CH confirmed that all of the Due Diligence work was conducted thoroughly and is now complete. There were a number of issues identified at OAT including the absence of some compliance checks and conditions surveys. These issues are now being addressed and a revised MoU has been drafted to identify the work that needs to be</p>	

completed before the merger can be completed. AL will oversee the work in conjunction with the OAT site manager. Some of the work involved is cosmetic and OAT have reserves available to complete the necessary improvements.

4.3 CH advised trustees that no one attended the recent merger consultation meetings.

4.4 Barming Primary School (BPS) has had a number of staffing issues which have absorbed a large amount of SLT capacity, however, most of these have now been addressed.

4.5 MC explained that he recently met with the HTs of the OAT schools individually to discuss how future working arrangements will look and both were positive about the merger. He was clear about the CPP approach and where he would see possible changes happening and explained that further changes may be identified going forward and some standard processes will need to be introduced to bring all of the schools in line with each other. Both HTs welcomed the support that CPP will be able to provide as, whilst they both face different challenges, they can see the benefits the merger will bring.

4.6 MC explained that the main concern for the OAT schools is the increase in central recharge costs, however, NS did acknowledge that many of the issues that OAT currently face are the result of a lack of capacity and the need for this central support is evident.

4.7 – 4.9 Contained in Confidential Annex

4.10 On balance, CH advised trustees that the steering group believe there is huge potential for both trusts from the merger. Therefore the recommendation is to proceed to the next stage of the process with a revised MoU in place and subject to satisfactory outcomes from the conditions survey and the results of the OFSTED inspection at APS.

Trustees **APPROVED** this proposal.

#### Benefits Package

4.11 MC explained to trustees that it is increasingly difficult to recruit and retain staff in the trust so he is seeking approval to investigate offering additional benefits to staff such as Healthcare, cycle to work schemes etc. Currently some staff benefit from free WAC for their children and he would like to investigate alternatives that would ensure equity for all staff. One possible option is for all staff to have access to a main benefit for free with additional options available for selection. Before conducting further research he would like trustee approval to proceed.

4.12 In addition, he would like to review the pay of TAs as other schools pay TAs more and the trust are therefore losing staff to these establishments. Trustees also suggested that MC consider a referral payment scheme to help address recruitment issues.

Trustees **APPROVED** further investigation of a staff benefits package.

#### **Q: Is WAC a benefit in kind?**

CC explained that as it is offered to all staff it is not, however, healthcare would be taxable but the trust can opt to pay the tax on behalf of its employees.

#### **Q: Should the trust consider making a payment to support staff with the cost of living increase?**

CH explained that this option has been considered but is not believed to be the most effective way to help staff so MC would prefer to explore other options.

SEND review by link trustee

4.13 PM advised trustees that she met with the SENCOs from all three schools in June and discussed the work taking place in the schools and how they support each other. Going forward she intends to meet with them 3 times / year for a review and to encourage them to work more closely together as there are inconsistencies across the trust at the moment.

4.14 MC has circulated a role description for the link trustee as requested by trustees at the last meeting.

**Q: Why are there different approaches at the moment?**

PM explained that if the SENCO has direct experience of dealing with a SEND child this makes the issues more relatable. MC added that the SENCO at LPS is the most strategic whereas at the other schools the role is still more operational. Trustees discussed the possible need for a trust SENCO to oversee the school SENCOs as the trust grows.

**Q: Do all of the SENCOs have the same job description?**

MC agreed to review the JDs to check if this is the case.

MC

**5 School Reports**

School Specific Matters

5.1 MC confirmed that there were no additional issues for discussion.

Feedback from LGBs

5.2 CH explained that due to a change in date of the STK IEB meeting and, as trustees had been present at all of the LGB meetings there was no Chairs' catch up last week.

5.3 JE advised trustees that LPS governors had asked him to raise the following points:

- Governors liked the new HT report format
- In terms of behaviour recording should the term exclusions still be used and they felt more context in terms of numbers and offences recorded would be useful
- On the staff training surveys it would be useful to have a comments box and the option to include the respondents name
- Is it possible for the trust to consider a tender process using core suppliers?  
MC confirmed that this is being discussed by the finance team.

5.4 PM advised that at STK the following points were raised:

- Rewording of the previous TB minutes Para.6.13 where it mentions Year 1 data to make it clear that the data was not intentionally over inflated but had occurred prior to STK joining the trust when teachers were not challenged as much as they are now. After discussion it was agreed to reword the minutes to 'these results did appear to be overinflated due to a lack of rigour.'
- RP referred to the mention of nurture provision in para. 5.3 of the ECC draft minutes and explained that STK have worked hard to ensure that nurture and behaviour are separated and clear processes are in place to deal with behaviour issues. MC explained that the minutes were not specifically referring to STK and agreed to amend the wording to 'within all three schools' to reflect this.

5.5 CH attended the CPS LPS meeting and still felt that there is insufficient challenge but the introduction of new governors may help to address this. It was the last meeting for D Jones (Co-opted) and S Grimley (Staff) whose terms of office had expired and both were thanked for their hard work and support. The trust donated a bench to the school with a plaque to mark DJ's long service as a governor. The school council also attended the meeting to feedback on their work over the year.

<p><u>Outcome of complaints Panel at CPS</u> 5.6 – 5.8 Contained in Confidential Annex</p> <p><u>STK Staffing</u> 5.9 – 5.14 Contained in confidential annex.</p>	
<p><b>6 Strategic Direction</b></p> <p><u>Feedback from Inset Day</u> 6.1 MC said that the Inset Day had been positively received by staff and was a valuable opportunity to bring everyone together. One of the issues discussed was the need for a clear mission statement. MC explained that as a result he has put together a document to focus on ‘excellence’ across the trust and what this should look like and circulated it to all staff for comments. CH asked MC to also put an explanation of the role of the trust in the newsletter to parents.</p> <p><u>Scheme of Delegation</u> 6.2 The revised Scheme of Delegation had been circulated for trustees to note.</p>	<b>MC</b>
<p><b>7 Policies and key documents</b></p> <p>7.1 Trustees received and <b>APPROVED</b> the following documents :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lettings Policy</b></li> <li>• <b>Governors Code of Conduct</b></li> <li>• <b>Extended Services</b></li> </ul> <p>7.2 JE felt that the appraisals policy should include mention of support staff as well as teachers and TAs so MC will ask KF to review it for consideration in Term 1 22-23.</p> <p>7.3 JE was concerned that the staff absence policy directs all appeals to MC or the HTs so MC agreed to review the policy and bring it back to trustees in term 1 22-23.</p>	<b>KF</b> <b>MC</b>
<p><b>8 Finance &amp; Audit Meeting</b></p> <p><u>Report from F&amp;A Chair</u></p> <p>8.1 Trustees had received the draft minutes of the F&amp;A meeting. AM advised that the committee discussed capital spending reviews and ensuring the schools seek value for money. He advised trustees that AL is going to obtain a quote for strategic overview of IT across the trust to plan for the future which is especially pertinent as the trust grows.</p> <p>8.2 The possibility of a teachers strike had been discussed and the pressure of additional refugees but neither were considered to be significant risks to the trust at the current time.</p> <p>8.3 AM advised trustees that the recent safeguarding audit by Hacker Young is complete and the outcome was extremely positive.</p> <p><u>Management Accounts</u></p> <p>8.4 CC summarised the management accounts and advised that the forecast for the year-end outturn for August 2022 is £840k; and it is above the original budget by £322k. This is mainly due to the increase in the brought forward figures from 20/21, due to underspent restricted funds and capital projects and audit adjustments.</p> <p><u>22/23 Budgets for Approval</u></p> <p>8.5 CC advised that the budgets had been amended following the recent F&amp;A meeting and all of the assumptions had been circulated to trustees for review. Whilst the future</p>	

<p>teachers' pay increase remains unknown and the biggest risk to budgets, CC would expect any significant increase to be covered by additional government funding.</p> <p>8.6 The CPS budget remains healthy and surpluses are being used to increase leadership capacity. LPS has a small in year deficit due to brought forward capital spending and there is a small surplus after capital expenditure is included.</p> <p>8.7 At STK the in-year application to reduce PAN has still not been approved and MC continues to chase for a response. At the moment STK have 60 in year R for September which helps to improve the budget forecasts. Going forward STK will be reducing the number of classes year on year as the PAN reduces. All recruitment is now on a fixed term basis only however, this does make it more difficult to recruit staff.</p> <p><b>Q: When are the final numbers for September confirmed?</b></p> <p>MC explained that these are the final numbers and RP has held a meeting with parents to advise them of the classes set. Until the in-year PAN variation is approved the school could be asked to take more children however, as Snodland CEP still have spaces RP would have a strong argument against this.</p> <p><b>Q: What is the plan for the reserves that STK have?</b></p> <p>CC explained once all of the staffing needs are covered the school can start to look at priorities for spending reserves. Trustees discussed using making of the reserves could be available for additional school improvement capacity.</p> <p><b>Q: Could some of the reserves be used for additional leadership capacity?</b></p> <p>MC explained that it will be about finding the right person to provide the support and at the right time and he agreed to discuss this further with RP to identify what help she feels she needs.</p> <p>8.8 Trustees <b>APPROVED</b> the 3-year budget plans presented, for submission to the ESFA.</p> <p><u>STK Budget Proposal</u></p> <p>8.9 A draft agreement between CPP and FAW had been circulated to trustees for review. The proposal is for FAW to establish a satellite provision onsite at STK using two classrooms. PM advised trustees that she has spoken to NA (AEO) and he is happy for the proposal to proceed. Trustees agreed that the proposal offered benefits to both parties and were happy to <b>APPROVE</b> the agreement.</p> <p><u>Risk Register</u></p> <p>8.10 The risk register had been circulated to trustees for review and no issues were raised.</p>	<p><b>MC</b></p>
<p><b>9 Education &amp; Curriculum Committee</b></p> <p>9.1 Draft minutes from the ECC meeting had been circulated to trustees for review and the following points were discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• JE advised trustees that the first meeting of the new committee went well with lots of challenging questions posed to MC. Feedback from the governors who attended is extremely positive and the governors from LPS &amp; CPS have asked to continue attending.</li> <li>• IL-D commented that it was useful for governors to see the level of challenge offered by trustees and the questions asked.</li> <li>• PM asked if one of the STK IEB members could join the meetings and she agreed to speak to LP to see if she has the capacity to attend.</li> </ul> <p>9.2 The training calendar had been circulated to trustees for information and was noted.</p>	<p><b>PM</b></p>

<p><b>10 Governance</b></p> <p><u>Governor &amp; Trustee Terms of Office</u></p> <p>10.1 NW advised trustees that the terms of office for CH, PM &amp; AM expire on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022. All have confirmed that they would like to be reappointed and NW confirmed that all of the members have now <b>approved</b> their reappointment for a further 4 year term to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2026 by email.</p> <p>10.2 The term of office for KA (parent governor at LPS) expires on the 24<sup>th</sup> September and trustees <b>approved</b> her appointment her as an Associate governor for a further 2 year term. An election has been held for a new parent governor and Thea Affleck was elected.</p> <p>10.3 The term of the office for the staff governor at CPS (SG) and co-opted governors CN &amp; DJ all expire on 31<sup>st</sup> August. DF has been elected as the new staff governor and Trustees <b>approved</b> the appointment of CN as a co-opted governor for a further 2 years to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024. DJ did not wish to continue.</p> <p>10.4 CPS received two applications for the other co-opted governor vacancy so trustees were asked to approve Claire Webb as a co-opted governor and Katherine Tunicliffe as an Associate Governor, both for a 2 year term from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022. GM has met with them both to explain the roles and trustees <b>approved</b> their appointments. NW will start the induction process for all new governors.</p> <p>10.5 PM asked if the IEB at STK could look to appoint additional governors to support it and CH agreed to discuss this further with PM.</p> <p><u>Governance Calendar</u></p> <p>10.6 The governance calendar for 22-23 had been circulated to trustees and they were advised that the STK IEB meeting in October had changed to the 17<sup>th</sup> October as PM is unable to attend on the 10<sup>th</sup> October.</p> <p><u>KCSIE Update</u></p> <p>10.7 NW advised trustees that the updated KCSIE which takes effect from September 2022 highlights the importance of trustees and governors undertaking regular safeguarding training &amp; monitoring visits. I L-D (link safeguarding trustees) will continue to meet with SH (lead DSL) annually and she has provided a template for SH to complete on behalf of all of the schools and report back on Safeguarding to the trust board annually. In addition, IL-D has suggested that SH accompany the nominated safeguarding governor from each school on a monitoring visit annually to ensure they are aware of the necessary compliance checks to conduct.</p> <p>10.8 NW will also ensure that all new governors &amp; trustees are invited to attend safeguarding training when appointed, either in person or online.</p> <p>10.9 Trustees <b>approved</b> the proposed safeguarding monitoring which will involve 5 annual reviews.</p>	<p>NW PM/CH</p>
<p><b>11 Safeguarding Matters including Health &amp; Safety and Disability Matters</b></p> <p><u>Summary of Reportable Accidents</u></p> <p>11.1 NM asked if further historical information could be included on the report that AL had circulated to trustees to give some context to the information provided. He explained that there is guidance regarding which incidents are reportable however it is not always clear. For example, if an incident occurs on the playground it does not need to be reported if there was sufficient supervision and he wants to ensure that incidents are not reported unnecessarily. Trustees asked if comments could also be added to action taken on the report to provide additional context.</p> <p>11.2 MC explained that due to a misunderstanding when the schools became Academies incidents were not being reported so there may be some information missing but he agreed to investigate and see if any historical data is available.</p>	<p>AL MC</p>

<p><u>Outcome of minibus investigation STK</u></p> <p>11.3 NM advised trustees that he has concluded the investigation &amp; will now speak to MC (commissioning officer) to discuss the outcome. He will circulate a full report to trustees once the outcome has been decided as he may require additional trustee involvement.</p> <p>11.4 PM commented that as the incident happened in October the investigation is taking place a long time after the event. NM advised that AL conducted an informal investigation in March when the incident was uncovered however, the formal investigation only started after trustees requested it in May. CH said that lessons have been learnt from the process and in future any necessary action will be taken more promptly.</p>	<b>NM</b>
<p><b>12 Any other urgent business including Chair's Actions / Correspondence</b></p> <p>12.1 The Chair had no further actions to report.</p>	
<p><b>13 Confidential Items</b></p> <p><u>STK Support Staff</u></p> <p>13.1 Contained in confidential annex.</p>	
<p><b>14 Confidentiality and action points</b></p> <p>14.1 Confidential items were agreed and are contained in the confidential annex.</p>	
<p><b>15 Next Meeting Dates</b></p> <p>15.1 Tuesday 23<sup>th</sup> July (Social Event) 5.30pm  Wednesday 19th October 2022 at 5.30pm</p> <p>15.2 CH thanked everyone for their hard work during the year and trustees thanked the steering group for all the additional work they have conducted.</p>	
<p><b>16 Meeting Outcomes</b></p> <p>16.1 Ensuring clarity of the vision, ethos and strategic direction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steering Group Feedback</li> <li>• Inset Day 6<sup>th</sup> June</li> <li>• Budget discussions</li> <li>• Safeguarding arrangements</li> <li>• Accident reporting</li> </ul> <p>16.2 Holding the executive Leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils and the effective and efficient performance management of staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ECC Meeting</li> <li>• STK Staffing Structure</li> <li>• Minibus Investigation</li> </ul> <p>16.3 Overseeing the financial performance of the schools and making sure that money is well spent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits Package</li> <li>• Budget discussions</li> <li>• FAW Proposal</li> </ul>	

Signed .....

Date.....

<b>Para</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By Whom</b>
3.2	JE has drafted a finance governor role description and CH & MC agreed to draft a letter to circulate to governors to explain the rationale	CH/MC
3.2	NW to check that amendments were made to the health & safety policy and NM will contact AL to discuss further possible amendments	AL
4.14	MC agreed to review the SENCo JDs to check if they are the same.	MC
6.1	CH asked MC to put an explanation of the trust in the newsletter to parents.	MC
7.2	MC will ask KF to review the appraisal policy for consideration in Term 1 22-23.	KF
7.3	MC agreed to review the staff absence policy and bring it back to trustees in term 1 22-23	MC
8.7	MC agreed to discuss the possibility of additional leadership support further with RP to identify what help she feels she needs.	MC
9.1	PM asked if one of the STK IEB members could join the meetings and she agreed to speak to LP to see if she has the capacity to attend	PM
10.4	NW to start the induction process for all new governors	NW
10.5	PM asked if the IEB at STK could look to appoint additional governors to support it and CH agreed to discuss this further with PM	PM/CH
11.1	Trustees asked if comments could be added to action taken on the accident reporting report to provide additional context	AL
11.2	MC agreed to investigate and see if any historical data is available on accident reporting	MC
11.3	NM will circulate a full report to trustees once the outcome of the minibus investigation has been decided	NM