

**Diverse Academies Learning Partnership Board (DALP)**  
meeting held on  
**Wednesday 12 December 2018 at 5.00pm at Retford Post 16 Centre**

A absence	=	Trustee name	initial	
A		Mr J Rolph	JR	DAT Trustee and Chair of the Board
		Mrs M Blore	MB	DAT Trustee/Member
		Mr M Quigley	MQ	DAT Chair of Governors Trustee
		Mr S Jones (T)	SJ	DAT Trustee
		Mr I Storey	IS	DAT Trustee
		Mr P Mabbott	PM	DAT Trustee
		Miss C White	CW	DAT Trustee
		Mrs K Mitford	KM	NCEAT Trustee and Chair of National C of E Academy
		Mrs L Allen	LA	National Church of England Academy Trustee
		vacancy		National Church of England Academy
A		Mr J Dickens	JD	CLAB representative

In attendance:

A absence	=	staff	Initial	
A		Mrs A Elway	AKE	Company Secretary and Clerk
		Mr C Pickering	CBP	Chief Executive Officer
		Mr G Corban	GCO	Chief Operating Officer
		Mr S Jones	SJO	Senior Executive Principal and NCEAT Trustee
		Mr D Cotton	DC	Senior Executive Principal
		Mr N Holmes	NH	Senior Executive Principal
		Mrs C Thornton	CT	Senior Executive Principal

**PRESENTATION BY DAVE COTTON – THE INSTITUTE**

Mr Cotton advised Trustees of the progress made in setting up the Institute. All staff training and CPD opportunities will be provided through the centre as identified on Personal Improvement Plans (PIPs)

Trustees discussed the advantages of this centralised solution and through questioning were advised that staff are being guided to think about their career options through discussion with their line managers and can opt or be directed to attend relevant training. They received confirmation that staff have always completed PIPs and recorded training required. By facilitating centralised coordination of training any Trust wide training needs can be assessed. Bluesky has been introduced and all staff will upload their PIPs onto the secure website which is password protected and only line managers are able to see what is recorded unless staff agree to share more widely. There are (and have always been) various groups of standards that staff can link their objectives to. Mr Pickering advised that all staff will have a career pathway so they can see opportunities available to them and a CPD programme that meets their aspirations.

Mr Cotton advised of the 4 core areas and the need to redress the imbalance of courses offered to teaching staff compared to other colleagues in the organisation.

Trustees commended the work undertaken considering the size of the organisation and were advised that the CPD is paid from the central budget with £166k being set aside. Funding training centrally has already had a positive effect on academy budgets and training is more focused to the needs and requirements of the organisation and individuals.



Mr Cotton was thanked for his presentation and Trustees suggested that an update should be given on progress made and succession planning at the Trustees Workshop on 13 February.		
		<b>ACTION BY WHO WHEN</b>
DA/08/1819	<p><b>Apologies for absence</b> Apologies for absence were received from Mr Jones due to illness. Trustees asked the clerk to write to Mr Jones regarding his poor meeting attendance to see if there is anything that can be done to rectify this. Mr Dickens had forwarded his apologies which were accepted due to other commitments. Trustees noted that he is a Board attendee due to his role as CLAB chair which he is to resign from when the group reforms. Mr Holmes gave his apologies due to other commitments.</p>	AKE
DA/09/1819	<p><b>Declaration of interest and any changes to interests previously noted</b> Mr Quigley declared an interest in any discussions about Walton Girls High School and Sixth Form and he is the chair of the joint governance board at Retford Post 16 Centre. Miss White advised that her company works with some of the academies within the Trust. She will ensure her interests are noted at each meeting.</p> <p>The chair advised that the notification and recording of Declarations of Interest had been raised within the Audit Findings Report which supplements the Audited Accounts. To avoid this happening in future he suggested that all declarations whether deemed as 'relevant' or not will be recorded on the Trust website. Trustees concurred and approved this course of action.</p>	
DA/10/1819	<p><b>Standing agenda items:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Safeguarding &amp; Link Trustee update</b> Confidential discussion</li> <li><b>2. Health and Safety</b> There were no issues to bring to Trustees attention</li> <li><b>3. Risk Management</b> No new risks to report. The Audit &amp; Risk Committee review Trust wide risks at each meeting.</li> <li><b>4. Any FOIA/SAR</b> None received since the last meeting</li> <li><b>5. GDPR</b> The Data Protection Officer had sent a newsletter to all staff reminding them of their responsibilities to protect personal data. This has been posted to the staff portal which all Trustees and Governors can access. <a href="https://dalp.sharepoint.com/sites/Staffportal">https://dalp.sharepoint.com/sites/Staffportal</a></li> <li><b>6. Any SIRPS/Data Breaches to report</b> Nothing of any concern to report</li> <li><b>7. Minutes of the meeting dated 17 October 2018</b></li> </ol>	



	<p>The minutes of the meeting having previously been received were agreed and signed by the chair</p> <p><b>8. Matters arising from the minutes not on the agenda</b>  <i>DA/04/1819/ Conselho Ltd (Catering) and Ampron (QEA Boiler) confirmation</i>          Following previous email correspondence, Trustees confirmed their approval of the above contractors.</p>	
<p><b>DA/11/1819</b></p>	<p><b>Additional Executive Items:</b></p> <p><b>1. CEO's report</b></p> <p>Mr Pickering presented the new style report which will be refined according to Trustee's requirements.</p> <p><i>Part A</i> – Mr Pickering advised that he and Mr Corban had met with Mark Foley, Deputy Director at the ESFA which had been very positive. However, the growth of the Trust remains on pause until the ESFA is satisfied with its financial stability and reserves are evidenced. The next meeting is in March when it is hoped the growth pause will be lifted. Until that time the Trust will continue to deliver SLAs to schools in difficulty. <b>Following questions</b>, Mr Pickering advised that the ESFA will allow growth if reserves are seen. As and when this happens, growth will only happen if it's appropriate. He confirmed that there is capacity within existing staffing numbers to grow by 4/5 schools. There is no optimal size for the group however, the ESFA has been made aware that the organisation will not grow for growth's sake and any new schools must match the ethos of the organisation.</p> <p><i>Part B</i> - Letters from the Local Authority (LA) to SBPA and QEA about their performance had been tabled. Mr Pickering reminded Trustees that SBPA has only been in the Trust for a year and QEA is on an upward trajectory. Mr Jones confirmed that QEA's FAR report shows significant improvements in T&amp;L &amp; L&amp;M and in-year data also shows improvement. Mr Pickering gave background to the offer that the Trust will receive of National Leader of Education (NLE) support following these letters.</p> <p><i>Part C</i> – Confidential minutes</p> <p><i>Part D</i> - Confirmation was sought to use £35k of the contingency monies within the Capital Plan to future proof WGHS for additional numbers of students arriving in September 2019. Following a discussion, this was approved by Trustees.</p> <p><b>D2.1 – Trustees expressed their concern</b> that QE Trustees were not contributing towards the new boiler at QEA academy. Mr Corban confirmed this had been discussed with them and they have agreed to draw up a plan for future capital works. Through the submission of the Land and Building Collection tool, the ESFA has raised the issue that there is no lease over the academy however, recent confirmation has been received that QE Trustees have instructed their solicitor to</p>	



	<p>draw up a 30-year lease on the building. The 30-year lease coincides with the useful economic life of the building used in the Accounts preparation.</p> <p><b>Mr Rolph reminded</b> staff that the Academies Financial Handbook states all leases in/out must be approved by the ESFA.</p> <p>E – ADP RAG rated summary. Trustees noted that all objectives were amber and progressing as expected at this time of year.</p> <p>F – Mr Corban discussed the development of the dashboard and the information that will be available to Trustees at each meeting which will be split into staffing, finance and student performance. Termly information will be dependent upon when data collection points are held.</p> <p>Turning to the sickness absence data, <b>Trustees asked for confirmation</b> that processes are in place to support illness and staff who are off with work-related stress. Mr Corban confirmed there is a process of support in place which includes return to work interviews and referrals to Occupational Health at certain trigger points. Staff can also self-refer. <b>Trustees requested</b> benchmarking data both across the Trust and nationally so that absence levels can be contextualised. Annual performance was also requested to evidence that there is a reducing trend.</p> <p>Claims against the Trust were reported and anonymised exception reporting will be received at each meeting.</p> <p>The FAR headlines were included in the report and Trustees were advised that the way this is reported will be changed so that they can see year-on-year grades in a more readable format.</p> <p><b>2. Policies for ratification since last meeting</b> The following policies, having previously been received were approved; Health &amp; Safety (updated), Premises Management (new –non-PFI only), Safer Recruitment (updated to take account of new guidance), Attendance (update) Mr Corban confirmed that the new Financial Regulations manual will be received at the next F&amp;R meeting for approval with recommendation to the Board at the meeting on 6 February.</p> <p><b>3. Governance Restructure</b> <b>4. Scheme of Delegation (SoD)</b> Mr Pickering advised that both of the above items are being dealt with and final drafts will be received at the next Board meeting. Trustees will receive the new SoD and updated Terms of Reference (ToR) for delegated functions at each level of governance.</p>	<p>GCO- future reports</p> <p>F&amp;R 28/1/19</p> <p>Agenda 6/2/19</p>
<p><b>DA/12/1819</b></p>	<p><b>Trustee Items:</b> <b>1. Committee meetings:</b></p>	



	<p><b>A&amp;R Committee 4/12/18 &amp; Audit Account recommendation – verbal update</b> Mr Quigley reported that Smith Cooper (SC) Auditors had given both Trusts ‘going concern’ confirmation for the next 12 months. He advised that NCEAT’s Accounts were approved at the meeting but DATs had some technical issues regarding fixed asset reserves to reconcile. The Committee had given responsibility for signing them to Mr Pickering and Mr Rolph when they were satisfied issues had been rectified. Smith Cooper had confirmed that effective controls are in place and the audits had gone well.</p> <p><b>F&amp;R Committee 10/12/18 – verbal update</b> Mr Rolph advised that the reconciliation of fixed asset reserves had been an issue for a few years. SC had done a lot of work to resolve the issue and the ESFA has now approved how the split between revenue reserves and capital reserves has been accounted for. Now that this issue, which relates to 2015 has been resolved all parties are in a position to sign the Accounts. <b>Trustees recognised and commended</b> the significant progress that had been made centrally and in academies to turn around the forecasted deficit budget in the last twelve months. They acknowledged that if the 2 Trusts could be reported as one the outturn for 2017/18 would have been positive however, the ESFA will only look at the Trusts separately. There were very few deficiencies reported and management responses have been added to the Audit Findings Report which also included some ‘for reference only’ comments. These are to ensure that the Trusts fulfil the new requirements in the AFH for 2018/19. One of the new requirements is to gain approval for Related Party Transactions from 1 April 2019 and Mr Corban advised that he is preparing a list of those that will take place between DAT &amp; NCEAT to gain approval from the ESFA prior to completing the transaction. He will forward a copy to Trustees. Mr Rolph suggested that now all issues have been resolved from previous years’ the 2018/19 Accounts should be prepared by staff with SC auditing the information the Trust has given them. This may mean procuring some help with FRS102, but it will enable draft Accounts to be produced earlier in the cycle for approval. All Trustees will receive a copy of the finalised Accounts.</p> <p><b>P&amp;P Committee – 7/11/18 – minutes of the meeting had previously been received.</b> Mr Rolph advised that one of the references within the Audit Findings Report had been to review executive pay. Mrs Blore confirmed that the committee had looked closely at this and had received benchmarking information, reviewed the appropriateness of salary levels using the School Teachers Pay &amp; Conditions Document (STPCD) and had ensured the process had been fair and thorough with parity for all staff.</p> <p><b>Extra-Ordinary Trustee Workshop – notes previously received.</b> There were no questions.</p>	GCO
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	<p><b>2. Cancellation of Trustee/Governor Conference – feedback</b></p> <p>Attendees had received a copy of the responses requested following the cancellation of the event which had been regrettable but it was not financially viable to run it with low numbers.</p> <p>Reviewing the information received, Trustees associated with academies discussed whether governors at a local level want to know what is happening at Trust level or if they prefer to concentrate on their academy. This could account for the low responses received, however this should not be perceived as them not being 'on-board' with the MAT or the MAT culture as it was reported that this is not the case, especially with newer governors. Trustees hoped that governors feel they are able to challenge at all levels without it being seen negatively or taken out of context.</p> <p>Trustees acknowledged that there will always be some governors who are unable to attend due to work commitments. Previous evaluations had stated that Saturdays were not a preferred day.</p> <p>There is a need for engagement and Trustees requested that senior executives and principals ensure that anything governors have raised concerns about are addressed before a new structure is put in place. Whilst the proposed new governance structure will enable the development of the MAT so that all governors know what their roles and delegated responsibilities are these need to be talked through and clearly articulated at all levels. The Chair of Governors is key to discussing the importance of networking and attending the events and training.</p> <p>Trustees acknowledged that the budget setting process had caused considerable disquiet last year but now this has settled down governors need to be able to realise that the savings made in the academies is having a positive effect to front line teaching. They will then value the role of the centre and will probably not question the central spend when the formula for calculation is advised.</p> <p>Mr Pickering left the meeting at 6.45pm</p> <p>Trustees were advised that LABs are receiving cost saving information and are aware of the need to address finance issues; they may not be taking this on board and it was acknowledged that it is the role of the senior leader to communicate and explain this.</p> <p>Suggestions were made which included discussions around a communication balance and the need to ensure governors are advised of positive messages as they only appear to receive negative information. This could be via a termly VLOG.</p> <p>Mrs Blore asked if there was more negativity than positivity in the academies. Mr Jones and Trustees directly involved with academies advised the vast majority are very positive and that communication has improved over the last year. Mrs Thornton reported that the new</p>	<p>Principals via SELs</p>
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	<p>primaries into DAT are very positive and whilst they acknowledge that there is a significant change in the role and their responsibilities, they recognise the benefits of being part of a MAT compared to being a LA school.</p> <p>Mr Quigley advised that the outcomes for students are much greater than in a LA school. Mrs Allen suggested that this should be the focus for governors rather than business functions.</p> <p>Another conference is planned for 1 May 2019 and Trustees will consider themes for this at the next meeting.</p> <p><b>3. To consider any incidents to report to Charities Commission</b> Trustees confirmed that there were no issues discussed to report to the Charities Commission.</p> <p>Mr Jones, Mr Cotton, Mrs Thornton and Mr Corban left the meeting.</p> <p><b>4. Term of office for Chair and Vice Chair</b> Mr Rolph advised that the election of chair at DAT and NCEAT Trust level is an annual statutory duty within the Articles of Association. The chair of the DAT Board will always be the Chair of this Board and therefore the election of chair at this meeting is not necessary.</p> <p><b>5. Election of Chair of the Board</b> As above. The election of Chair is an agenda item on the following DAT Board meeting agenda. NCEAT had elected Mrs Mitford as their Chair at their meeting on 11 December 2018.</p> <p><b>6. Election of Vice-Chair of the Board</b> Trustees agreed the Vice-Chair of the Board could be a Trustee from DAT or NCEAT. Mrs Mitford's term of office as a NCEAT Trustee expires on 31 August 2019 and at that time she intends to step down and has expressed an interest in becoming a DAT Trustee which will be discussed at the DAT meeting. Following a discussion, it was Resolved To appoint Mrs Mitford as vice-chair for the remainder of this academic year.</p>	<p>Agenda 6/2/19</p>
<p>DA/13/1819</p>	<p><b>Determination of Confidentiality and Equalities Act consideration including Nolan Principles.</b> Trustees considered whether anything discussed during the meeting should be deemed as confidential and whether during their discussions any equal opportunities issues have arisen. It was Resolved That agenda discussions within DA/10/1819 and DA/11/1819 should remain confidential and names in part of the CEO's report should be removed. There had been no equality issues raised. The Nolan Principles had been received by all and it was agreed that all discussions and decisions had been made in accordance with them.</p>	



<p><b>DA/14/1819</b></p>	<p><b>Date and time of 2018/19 meetings:</b>  <b>5.00pm – 7.00pm</b> at Retford Post 16 Centre – to be called Diverse Education Centre          Wednesday 6 February 2019          Wednesday 3 April 2019 &amp; DAT Meeting          Wednesday 5 June 2019          Wednesday 10 July 2019 &amp; DAT meeting</p>	
	<p>The meeting closed at 7.07pm</p> <p><b>Signed.....Chair Date.....</b></p>	