

Pele Trust Board of Directors



MINUTES

Meeting of the Board of Directors 5.00pm on Thursday 19th September 2019

Directors: Gerry Miller (GM), Revd. Steven Harvey (SH), Beryl Condra (BC), Ross Golightly (RG), Hugh Clear Hill (HCH), Chris Gill (CG), Marian Stromsoy (MS), Rishi Kohli (RK)

In Attendance

Kieran McGrane (KMC) – CEO
Lynn Blain (LB) – Deputy CEO
Claire Hancock (CH) – Business Manager
Julie Collins (JC) – Management Accountant
Steve Leigh (SL) – Clerk to the Board

Action

1.	<p>Welcome from the Chair The meeting opened at 5.00pm with the Chair welcoming all to the meeting.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the meeting was quorate and could move to business.</p>	
2.	<p>Apologies for Absence Directors RESOLVED to consent to the absence of Richard Bliss who was unable to attend the meeting.</p>	SL
3.	<p>Any other urgent business approved for discussion under item 13 There were no other items of urgent business to consider under item 13 of the agenda.</p>	
4.	<p>Board Information Update</p> <p>4.1 To declare any personal or pecuniary interests in any matters arising from the agenda of the current meeting All Directors were reminded that any personal or pecuniary interest relating to items on the agenda should be declared. There were no declarations of interest made by any Director in relation to items on the agenda.</p> <p>4.2 Register of Business Interests 2019/2020 Directors were reminded of the need to record a register of business interests for each academic year. This would be a standing agenda item on future meetings to ensure regular update of the register.</p> <p>It was reported that the registers were not up to date for all Directors. It was also noted that recent audit guidance had advised that all business activities of each Director should be recorded on their respective Business Registers. It was agreed that a copy of the Business Register for 2019/2020 be circulated for all Directors to complete and return to the Business Manager.</p>	CH / All to action

5.	<p>Minutes and Matters Arising</p> <p>5.1 Minutes of the Meeting held on 16th May 2019 Directors RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 16th May 2019 be approved for signature by the Chair as an accurate record of the meeting with a signed copy being provided for the school file.</p> <p>5.2 Matters Arising from the Minutes There were no matters arising from the minutes.</p>	CtoB / Chair / KMC
6.	<p>Pele Academy Trust – Sub Board Updates</p> <p>6.1 Minutes of the Resources Sub Board meeting held on Thursday 20th June 2019 The draft minutes of the Resources Sub Board meeting held on 20th June 2019 were received and noted.</p> <p>There were no items raised from the minutes for discussion.</p> <p>6.2 Minutes of the Achievement & Standards Sub Board meeting held on Thursday 18th July 2019 The draft minutes of the Achievement & Standard Sub Board meeting held on 18th July 2019 were received and noted.</p> <p>There were no items raised from the minutes for discussion.</p>	
7.	<p>Pele Trust Admissions Policy Review Attention was drawn to the following documents which had been previously circulated:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation on proposed Admission Arrangements to Pele Trust schools for the 2021 / 2022 academic year, and; • a letter from the Diocese of Durham and Newcastle which highlighted their concerns in relation to Whalton CE Primary School and Stamfordham Primary School and the uncertainty over their admissions into Ponteland High School in future years. <p>Directors noted the content of the letter from the Diocese together with the suggestions made for consideration / inclusion into the drafted admission arrangements for consultation.</p> <p>KMC explained that it would be unreasonable to have Stamfordham Primary and Whalton CE Primary School named as a higher priority in the selection criteria over and above Ponteland Community Middle School and would likely be subject to challenge. Likewise, to have deemed Whalton CE Primary and Stamfordham Primary as Associate Schools to the Trust, warranting a greater priority in the selection criteria, would look contrived and likely subject to challenge. Legal advice had supported this view.</p> <p>Taking legal advice, the drafted consultation document now specifically identified Stamfordham Primary, Whalton CE Primary and Ponteland Academy (and their catchment postcodes) within the oversubscription criteria for Ponteland High School, providing an equitable position for these 3 local primary schools should the criteria need to be applied.</p> <p>Directors discussed the content of the consultation document, offering some further suggested wording to the over subscription criteria for Ponteland High School in relation to Feeder Schools. Directors also noted that an additional</p>	KMC

	<p>paragraph needed to be included within the consultation document to specifically reflect the arrangements for Richard Coates.</p> <p>With the inclusion of these suggested amendments to the oversubscription admissions criteria, Directors RESOLVED to approve the Admission Arrangements 2021/2022 consultation document.</p> <p>Directors RESOLVED to approve a six week consultation to the reviewed admission arrangements for Pele Trust Schools for the 2021/2022 academic year, with the consultation process commencing 1st October 2019.</p> <p>It was agreed that a letter be sent from the Chair to the Headteacher and Chair of Ponteland Academy Trust to make them aware of the admissions consultation and to establish that the consultation document was using the correct name for PCMS. It was agreed that KMC would draft this letter.</p>	<p>KMC</p> <p>KMC</p> <p>KMC / Chair</p>
8.	<p>CEO Update Attention was drawn to the CEO's Update which was presented for discussion. Key points highlighted from the update were noted as follows:</p> <p>Pele Trust Website – Directors noted that the new Pele Trust Website would be live as from 23rd September 2019. Key documents relating to the governance arrangements for the Trust (for example, Scheme of Delegation and Articles of Association, Policy documents) would be uploaded to the platform over the coming weeks, building a portfolio of material that Directors can have ready access to. For future meetings, Directors would be provided with login details to a secure area of the website for access to documents in support of Director meetings.</p> <p>Central Services Team – KMC reminded Directors of the reviewed Central Services Support Team, reporting on the appointments that had now been to the reviewed structure with all staff now in place. KMC informed Directors of the working arrangements for both the Central Services Education Team and the Finance / Business Mgt Team</p> <p>It was noted that a very strong team of experience and expertise had been appointed with all members of the team quickly finding their feet.</p> <p>In response to a question from Directors as to how the process of appointment to the new structure had gone, KMC reported that one member of staff was currently on sick leave due to stress arising from the process.</p> <p>With CH appointed to the Chief Operating Officer role, a replacement Business Manager for Ponteland High had been appointed. This was being funded from Ponteland High budget rather than centrally held funding.</p> <p>New Build – Directors noted that the new build for Ponteland High School continued to make good progress and was scheduled to complete to given deadlines. A site visit was being arranged for the end of September 2019. It was agreed that an invitation to this visit be circulated to all Directors once arranged.</p> <p>Directors were informed that discussions were in play regarding the provision of FM services to the new site. It was agreed that RK be provided with a copy of the legal advice received regarding the procurement / provision of FM services.</p> <p>GCSE Headlines – Directors noted the GCSE headlines for Ponteland High School as presented. More details on the results would be presented at the Governance event that was being arranged for 5th October 2019.</p>	<p>CH</p> <p>KMC</p> <p>CH</p>

	<p>Directors were informed that transition arrangements for the High school's September intake had proved to be extremely successful with students quickly settling into school life. A staggered entry to lunchtime provision had been made to effectively accommodate numbers and this was working well.</p> <p>KMC was thanked for his report.</p>	
9.	<p>Finance Report</p> <p>Attention was drawn to two reports that had been produced for Directors consideration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019 Teacher Pay Award, and; • Internal Assurance & End of Year Pension Audit reports <p>2019 Teacher Pay Award</p> <p>Directors were informed that each year, DfE publishes the School Teachers Pay and Conditions (STPCD) document which forms part of the framework for teachers' pay. From this document, the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) had recommended that from September 2019, all pay and allowance ranges for teachers and school leaders should be uplifted by 2.75%. The national consultation process to this document and recommendations had just been concluded with final decisions yet to be announced.</p> <p>Directors were reminded that the budget setting process for Pele Trust academies had allowed for a 2% increase across all points in the teacher and leadership pay scales, noting that expected additional government funding of 0.75% in the form of the teacher pay grant would contribute to the difference and negate the increased pay award.</p> <p>Directors RESOLVED to approve in principal the application of the 2.75% pay award across all points within the pay scales, subject to any changes from the Teacher Pay Award consultation which was yet to be published. Final decision to be approved when definitive position known and confirmed.</p> <p>Directors discussed the potential differences across Trust schools that may exist between similar teaching roles / responsibilities and salary levels. It was agreed that the Resources Sub Board consider a comparison review of roles and salary points across all schools in the Trust.</p> <p>Internal Assurance and End of Year Pension Audit Reports</p> <p>Directors were informed of the requirement for the Teachers' Pension End of Year Certificate to be audited prior to submission to the ESFA, providing an assurance that all contributions have been correctly calculated, administered and paid to the Teachers' Pension Scheme. Findings and recommendations from the audit were noted.</p> <p>Directors also received a summary of the findings and recommendations from Baldwins recent internal assurance audit of the Trust, noting the response made to each of the recommendations.</p>	<p>CH</p> <p>CH</p>
10.	<p>Academies Financial Handbook – September 2019 Review</p> <p>Directors noted that the ESFA had undertaken a review of the Academies Financial Handbook, introducing a number of changes with effect from September 2019. Baldwins had produced a summary of the changes being introduced which was circulated for the attention of Directors.</p> <p>CH confirmed that the measures introduced were already complete or in hand.</p>	All to note

11.	<p>Pele Trust Policies 11.1 Staff Code of Conduct Directors received a copy of the Staff Code of Conduct, noting that the drafted document, modelled on the policy developed by Northumberland County Council, had been consulted with staff and Unions. Directors noted that some minor changes needed to be reflected in Appendix 1 of the document which referenced the County Council rather than the Trust.</p> <p>With these amendments, Directors RESOLVED to approve the Staff Code of Conduct Policy for adoption by the Trust with immediate effect.</p>	KMC
12.	<p>Academy Committees – Autumn Term 2019 Agenda Directors received and noted a copy of the proposed agenda which would be presented for each of the Trust’s Autumn Term 2019 Academy Committee meetings.</p> <p>Responding to a question from the Directors, KMC reported that all Headteachers had been provided with a writing framework for the completion of their termly report to governors.</p>	
13.	<p>Any Other Business raised under Item 3 of the agenda There were no other items of business raised for discussion.</p>	
14.	<p>Approval of documents for inspection Directors RESOLVED to approve for publication the approved minutes of the previous Board of Directors meeting held on 16th May 2019, plus the agenda and supporting papers for this meeting which had been circulated and tabled.</p>	KMC
15.	<p>Board of Directors Proposed Meeting Schedule – 2019 / 2020 Academic Year Directors noted the 2019 / 2020 meeting schedule for the Board of Directors, Resources Sub Board and Achievement & Standards. It was acknowledged that these dates may have to be reviewed and adjusted as the work and activities of the Trust develops over the coming academic year.</p> <p>Directors were informed of the arrangements for a Governance Day event which had been arranged for 5th October 2019 at Darras Hall Primary School. All Academy Committee governors had been invited to attend. This invitation also extended to all Directors.</p> <p>Directors also noted that a training day event for all school staff across the Trust was arranged for 4th November 2019. Again, all Directors were invited to attend.</p>	KMC / SL All to note All to note
16.	<p>Dates, times and venues of future meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Directors - Thursday 17th October 2019 at 8.00am at Darras Hall Primary School <p>Directors were thanked for their attendance. There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 6.30pm</p>	All to note All to note

Chair.....

Signed.....

Date.....