

NOTES OF THE WHITE ROSE ACADEMIES TRUST'S STRATEGY MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 8 MARCH 2021

Present: Colin Booth, Erica Hiorns, Paul Morrissey, Kate Pearlman-Shaw, Helena Phillips (Chair), Annie McMaster, David Strachen, Andrew Whitaker and Craig Williams

In attendance: Sam Bradley, Business Manager, Sam Corbett, Clerk to the Board, Yvonne Hare, Head of Communications and Projects, Stuart Jolley, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Christian Wilcocks, Executive Principal (EP)

1. Welcome & Introduction

Apologies for absence were noted from Lydia Devenny and Caroline Gruen, further to which introductions were made.

The Chair provided a brief outline of the session and desired outcomes, specifically to have dialogue around the WRAT's Vision, ambitions for the Curriculum, Growth and Achieving Excellence, which subsequently, would shape the future strategy.

2. Milestones and Future Direction

The CEO provided an introduction to the session explaining that he hoped to develop a robust development plan based upon the agreed strategies. He hoped to create a legacy for the Trust and communities served. The CEO encouraged Board members to scrutinise the proposals to ensure they aligned with the vision and culture expected as well as being achievable within the timelines set out.

The CEO delivered a presentation which covered the executive teams' view on the scale of challenges faced and the future vision. He focussed on two key areas; quality of education and personal development, behaviours and attitudes. He outlined how securing excellence in these areas through a staged process would achieve the ultimate vision; legacy schools, organisations within the school communities working seamlessly together and altruistic former students. Key milestones to achieving the vision were noted.

Discussion took place in respect of the use of popular role models and other stakeholders to address poverty of aspiration.

The Board noted that the detail of achieving the vision would be reliant on the allocation of appropriate resources.

The proposed vision was supported by the Board, which they agreed was ambitious and challenging but achievable.

3. Growth 2021-25 & Curriculum Roadmap 2021-25

The EP delivered a presentation which outlined key milestones on the journey to achieving excellence in all WRAT academies by 2025. He articulated seven strategic priorities which were high performance learning, culture, nurturing talent, access to the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Curriculum through links with the UTC, Curriculum X (remote/blended learning), ethical leadership and capacity for improvement. It was noted that attendance was a key barrier in achieving excellence.

A suggestion was made in respect of the terminology used in the plan which was to abandon Ofsted's terminology around achieving Outstanding, amending to achieving community transformation, which was reflective of the Vision outlined earlier in the meeting.

The Board made a number of observations, which included the importance of:

- protecting of the executive team
- not being restricted to government policy
- supporting parents with regard to ever changing teaching methodologies
- considering the implications of community transformation on the curriculum
- embracing the Vision
- the Board being the guardians of the Vision.

The Board were unanimously supportive of the strategic priorities.

Discussion took place in respect of the Board's future scrutiny of the strategic priorities and appropriate delegation. It was agreed that this would be picked up through Governance Working Group discussions.

The CEO outlined four criteria assessed when considering future growth, which were would the incoming school be an enhancement of the Trust's ability to:

- provide first class education in the community
- provide a broad, specialised and balanced curriculum for families and communities
- provide first class progression into post-16 and post-18 education and employment
- deliver aspirational value and practical support.

The Board felt the following needed to be more explicit in the plan;

- financial considerations and sustainability
- capacity to grow not negatively impacting current capacity
- to remain a regional based Trust.

Comments were made in respect of improvements in system efficiency prior to further conversions and transparency of the plans with Regional Schools Commissioners (RSC's).

4. Ambition for Excellence

The EP delivered a presentation outlining the four main pillars for achieving excellence which were:

- Effective Communications and Marketing
- Luminare Professional Services
- Ethical Leadership
- Staff Culture.

A Board member suggested that the final pillar be changed to organisational culture rather than staff.

5. Next Steps

It was noted that engagement with LABs would be key to the next stage of development.

The CEO and EP advised that Board members' feedback would be reflected in the documentation produced at the next stage.

It was agreed that the next stage of the process was for all Board members to be involved with developing a written strategy based on the agreed vision.

Action – the Clerk to organise a further session focussed on developing a written strategy