

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WHITE ROSE ACADEMIES TRUST (WRAT) BOARD OF DIRECTORS HELD VIRTUALLY ON THURSDAY 28 APRIL 2022, COMMENCING AT 5.30PM

Present: Kate Pearlman-Shaw (Interim Chair), Caroline Gruen, Annie McMaster, Craig Williams and Andrew Whittaker (Chief Executive Officer)

In attendance: Sam Bradley, Trust Board Director (TBD) until minute 21/22.49
Sarah Carrie (Incoming Executive Principal) until minute 21/22.49
Alice Ryan (Trust Project Lead)
Christian Wilcocks (Executive Principal) until minute 21/22.49
Seainin Doran (Clerk, Governor Support Service) until minute 21/22.49b

PROCEDURAL MATTERS**21/22.42 PROCEDURAL MATTERS****a. Apologies for absence & welcome**

Apologies for absence were received from Margaret Parkes and David Strachan. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and introductions were made.

b. Declarations of interest

The Interim Chair declared an interest as she continued to provide training support for some staff groups within the Luminare Education Group (LEG).

21/22.43 BOARD MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**a. Minutes of board meetings held on 3 March 2022 and 16 March 2022**

The Minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 3 March 2022 and Wednesday 16 March 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

RESOLVED - That the Interim Chair be authorised to sign the Minutes of the meetings held on Thursday 3 March 2022 and Wednesday 16 March 2022.

b. Matters arising

The matters arising schedule was received and considered.

Meeting held 16.03.2022 21/22.33 Governor applications for approval – this item would be considered under the Chair's Introduction item of the agenda - complete.

Meeting held 16.03.2022 21/22.34 Report on the audit of Trust and Academy website to members

Action: CEO to circulate to members prior to the next meeting of the board.

Meeting held 16.03.2022 21/22.39a Interim Chair to discuss the possibility of appointing additional members to the alternative provision panel – in progress with David Strachan

Meeting held 16.03.2022 21/22.41 ESFA visit/potential sponsorship – The previous clerk to the board had shared details of a potential candidate - complete.

Meeting held 03.03.22 21/22.18 Objective 14 had been added to the governance development plan and the latest version had been uploaded to the shared drive – complete.

Meeting held 03.03.22 21/22.18 Regular update on EDI pilot projects to be presented to the Board. The TBD updated that meeting had taken place regarding the EDI pilot projects and EDI leads, and champions would be agreed. The CEO/incoming Executive Principal (EP) to request regular updates from Alicia Manners to be presented to the board – ongoing.

Meeting held 03.03.22 21/22.21 The Clerk had circulated the minutes from the meeting held on 15 February 2022 and action plan to non-Executive Directors – complete.

Meeting held 03.03.22 21/22.21 The Clerk had circulated the letters from the ESFA to non-Executive Directors – complete

Meeting held 03.03.22 21/22.21 Development of strategic plan – on hold until September 2022

Meeting held 03.03.22 21/22.22 Schemes of delegation – on hold until September 2022

Meeting held 03.03.22 21/22.23 UTC Update – CEO to report on sponsorship negotiations – on agenda to be discussed under item 21/22.

Meeting held 03.03.22 21/22.24 EP to include comparative data across academies in future reports. It was discussed that this was in relation to staffing and was not included in the current report but would be included in the next EP report – ongoing.

Meeting held 03.03.22 21/22.24 Annie McMaster reported that Alder Tree Primary Academy (ATPA) had approached the local authority (LA) about finding an alternative location for the polling station, however it had been too late to change this for the 5 May local elections but would not be used as a polling station in future – complete.

Meeting held 03.03.22 21/22.27 The ATPA use of alternative provision had been included in the EP report – complete

Meeting held 03.03.22 21/22.30 Browne Jacobson had been engaged to provide advice and support on the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) post – complete.

Meeting held 03.03.22 21/22.30 The Interim Chair had contacted the Chair and CFO at LEG regarding the CFO post – complete.

Meeting held 09.21.21 21/22.11 WRAT Away Day Strategy Update – the Interim Chair stated that restrategising would need to take place – item to be removed from matters arising schedule.

Meeting held 09.12.21 21/22.12a A staff training day focussed on wellbeing had been arranged for 4 July 2022 and would be discussed and approved later in the meeting - complete.

Meeting held 09.12.21 21/22.12b A discussion took place around the Academy Improvement Partner (AIP) and the scope of the next report, which Board members agreed should focus on the work of the LABs and the quality of reports received by them. However, it was unclear whether the current AIP would continue as he believed that this contract was complete.

Action: CEO to investigate current/future AIP arrangements and report back to the Board.

Meeting held 09.12.21 21/22.12c Equality and Diversity update – the TBD outlined that when P Quinn had reported to the Board there had been some key information unavailable regarding the ethnicity data of staff. The TBD is working with academy data managers to capture this information for existing staff and new starters will be asked to complete a form requesting this information, however it was noted that there was no statutory requirement for staff to provide the information. The Interim Chair added the need to increase diversity on the WRAT Board and LABs as part of this work and the TBD responded that this would be part of the remit of the EDI working group – complete.

Meeting held 09.12.21 21/22.13a Feedback had been provided by the EP on the Safe Task Force – complete.

Meeting held 09.12.21 21/22.13c Feedback from the LEG to be added to the Board work plan – remove from matters arising schedule as no longer required.

Meeting held 09.12.21 21/22.16a Senior Postholder Remuneration and Objectives – the Interim Chair highlighted the need for a performance review and pay review for the CEO. She had consulted with Browne Jacobson who had confirmed that the benchmarking within the Hays review of executive pay was still valid, however the role of the CEO had changed and so assessment could not take place against the same criteria. The Interim Chair committed to ensure that a performance review of the CEO take place during the summer term 2022. Further discussion around pay review for senior postholders took place – the Hays report scope was for the CEO/EP/Academy Principals/CFO and TBD. It was agreed that a working party be set up to review the terms of reference of the previous remuneration committee and the Hays report with a view to reviewing pay of senior postholders.

Action: Interim Chair to ensure performance review of CEO takes place during the summer term 2022.

Action: Working party to be set up to review the Hays report and terms of reference of previous remuneration committee.

Meeting held 09.12.21 21/22.16d The CFO role and interim arrangements were on the agenda and would be discussed later in the meeting - complete

Meeting held 03.11.21 21/22.04a It was unclear what this matter arising related to – ongoing.

Action: The CEO to review minutes of the meeting held 03.11.21 and report back to the Board

Meeting held 03.11.21 21/22.04b The EP had provided feedback to the AIP – complete.

Meeting held 03.11.21 21/22.06e The TBD had met with David Strachan regarding risk management and would put together a report on managing risk to be presented to the Board at the next meeting. Board members discussed whether a heatmap of risks could be presented and the TBD responded that he was exploring alternative software to manage the risk register which would include a heat mapping option.

Action: The TBD to provide a report to the Board on risk management and the risk register.

Board members discussed who would update the matters arising schedule in the absence of a Governance Manager and it was agreed that Alice Ryan would cover this in the interim.

Action: Alice Ryan to update the matters arising schedule.

CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

21/22.44

The Interim Chair had circulated a report to Board members two weeks previously and she provided an update.

The ESFA report had recommended a compliance and governance review which had been taking place – during informal conversations with the ESFA, the Interim Chair had been informed that the reports on this would be received by the Board in May/June 2022. Reviewers had been well received at Leeds City Academy (LCA) and the Interim Chair thanked David Strachan and Craig Williams for engaging with interviews. The Interim Chair noted that it was likely governance would be an area for development in the report.

A Board member outlined that the Audit, Risk and Finance (ARF) committee had discussed governance with the internal/external auditors, and they had commented that governance was strong. The Interim Chair responded that the Board had taken rapid action and was

now in a stronger position but there had been a lack of challenge previously.

A Board member questioned whether the governance of the LABs was in the scope of the review and the Interim Chair responded that the review was not looking at LAB governance. She added that the Board are demonstrating making progress, including dealing with the conflict of interest of the previous CFO, who had now been transferred to the payroll of the LEG.

The Interim Chair outlined that there would be three investigative reports produced and two would be available to the Board – extraordinary Board meetings would be required to consider these reports prior the next scheduled meeting of the Board in July. The third report related to the LEG and a full report would not be made available to the WRAT Board although a summary might be available.

The Interim Chair reported that Helena Phillips had resigned as it had been realised that she was a Board appointee, and this was the only position available to increase independent Board membership without Member approval.

An interview with a potential appointee, Phil Wheeliker had taken place. He had been sourced from the Academy Ambassadors website and was strongly recommended by the ESFA and Browne Jacobson. The Interim Chair provided detail of his previous experience, including being Chair of another Trust in the region and on the Board of a local MAT. Potential conflict of interest had been explored carefully and resolved. The interview process had been robust, and it was noted that his reputation within the sector would bring added value to the Board. The Interim Chair and CEO recommended Phil Wheeliker be appointed to the Board

Resolved: that Phil Wheeliker be appointed to the WRAT Board with immediate effect.

Action: The Interim Chair liaise with the CEO, TBD and Alice Ryan to begin induction arrangements for Phil Wheeliker.

The Interim Chair tendered her resignation as Chair and invited nominations from Board members for the position. She outlined that she would remain as Vice Chair of the Board. An extra-ordinary meeting had been arranged to take place on 19 May 2022 at which a new Chair would be elected.

In response to a Board member question, the CEO confirmed that a leaving card and gift had been sent to both Helena Phillips and Sam Corbett, previous Clerk to the Board.

The Interim Chair reported that Margaret Parkes had tendered her resignation as Board member and LAB Chair of Leeds East Academy (LEA) effective 31 July 2022 due to work commitments.

It was reported that the previous CFO had transferred to the payroll of the LEG and had been thanked for his work on behalf of the WRAT Board.

The EP would be leaving WRAT, and it was noted that this would be his last meeting. He was thanked for his work.

There was currently one vacancy for a LAB Chair on the Board. It was reported that the CEO and Caroline Gruen had met with John Leech, a retiring academic from Leeds Trinity, and suggested the possibility of him becoming Chair at LCA, which he was currently considering. His knowledge and experience were recommended to the Board.

The CEO and Craig Williams had met with Liz Sandwith, who again would be a strong appointee to the Board, however it was noted that the only vacancies available were Member appointments.

The Chair explained that one of the Member appointments was the Chair of the ARF committee. The Interim Chair and CEO were scheduled to meet with a potential appointee who had been highly recommended and had a strong background in strategic financial leadership at board level and following interview it was likely that they would recommend this person be appointed to the Board. Members had been reluctant to make appointments to the Board until the investigation reports had been received, however the Interim Chair had stated to Members that due to the ESFA recommendations a strong AFR committee Chair was required. Members had agreed to appoint as long as the appointee was completely independent but would not appoint to the second vacancy, which meant that Liz Sandwith could not be appointed currently.

The Interim Chair noted that recommended appointees would be brought to the next meeting of the Board for approval.

STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

21/22.45 a. Link Director Reports

i. Safeguarding

A report prepared by Annie McMaster, Link Director for Safeguarding, had been circulated in advance of the meeting. She noted that there had been a high turnover of staff and LAB governors responsible for safeguarding but that this had not impacted on pupils across the Trust who she was satisfied had been kept safe throughout.

The report outlined two recommendations from the Link Director, the first being to request the new Director of Safeguarding include the following in her workplan:

- Consider and recommend the most useful timing for LCC audits and peer reviews;

- Urgently reconvene the Safeguarding Working Group and establish clear terms of reference and relationship with the WRAT Board, through the link director;
- To view the approach and consistency of professional and case supervision;
- To review the WRAT safeguarding risk, particularly to take account of where students are off site, and consider how assurance is gained that appropriate procedures are effectively implemented. To take account of lessons learnt, and the extent to which a focus on culture could strengthen this area;
- To review the pastoral provision in academies with a view to ensuring that this helps mitigate safeguarding risks

The second recommendation was to require safeguarding link governors to formally consider their academies risks relating to safeguarding as part of their link governor reports.

The Link Director was thanked for her report and recommendations. A Board member asked if the new Director of Safeguarding should have a link with and co-ordinate the work of LAB safeguarding governors?

The Link Director responded that previously there had been a safeguarding working group led by an officer but due to the turnover in staff these meetings had not taken place and agreed that the Director of Safeguarding should co-ordinate this group, including safeguarding link governors and their development needs.

Resolved: that the Board accept the recommendations included in the Link Director report with the addition of a bullet point under Recommendation 1 that the Director of Safeguarding should co-ordinate the work of safeguarding link governors and their development needs.

Post meeting note: the following were the agreed recommendations made:

Recommendation 1 To ask the new Safeguarding Director to include the following in their workplan:

- Consider and recommend the most useful timing for LCC audits and peer reviews;
- Urgently reconvene the Safeguarding Working Group and establish clear terms of reference and relationship with the WRAT Board, through the link director;
- Review the safeguarding link governor role at LAB and WRAT Board level with a view to ensuring appropriate support, sharing of best practice and issues (for peer support), development and training is in place;
- To view the approach and consistency of professional and case supervision;

- To review the WRAT safeguarding risk, particularly to take account of where alternative provision students are off site, and consider how assurance is gained that appropriate procedures are effectively implemented as part of due diligence with any new providers. To take account of safeguarding lessons learnt in relation to contracted provision, and the extent to which a focus on culture could strengthen this area;
- To review the pastoral provision in academies with a view to ensuring that this contributes to the mitigation of safeguarding risks

Recommendation 2 To require safeguarding link governors to contribute to, consider and monitor their academies risks relating to safeguarding as part of their link governor work and reports.

A Board member questioned the suggestion of appointing a Trust Educational Psychologist included in the Link Director's report and the EP responded that this was due to long waiting times for referrals and noted that academies have bought in additional Educational Psychologist time from the local authority as necessary. He added that the academies support pupils with additional needs regardless of any diagnosis but that sometimes an Educational Psychologist was key to putting strategies in place and for Education and Health Care Plan applications.

A Board member commented that he welcomed the strategy of buying in services in order to meet the needs of the academies and pupils. The EP noted that in addition to local authority Educational Psychologist time, the WRAT had also bought in support from Nuffield.

ii. Governance

The Interim Chair reported that the previous Clerk to the Board had updated the governance development plan and asked Alice Ryan to check the current version number and ensure that the most up to date version is in the SharePoint folder.

Action: Alice Ryan to check that the most up to date governance development plan is uploaded to the SharePoint folder

The Interim Chair highlighted that changes in governance would be needed to move the strategy forward, however this would require review once the investigative reports were received and so was on hold currently.

b. UTC Update

The CEO outlined the reasons for exploring the University Technical College (UTC) joining the WRAT which were:

- Further development for the Trust as the UTC would provide post-16 provision for the secondary academies in the Trust

- Once a Trust reaches five schools, this opens access to a significant amount of capital funding – circa £650,000, which could have been spent on building issues across the WRAT academies.

Alongside these reasons, the Trust had wanted to engage proactively as the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) had encouraged the WRAT to sponsor the UTC.

The CEO reported that through the due diligence process it had become clear that during the seven years that the UTC had been open, there had been no investment in equipment. The rationale for UTCs was that they offer students the opportunity to access 21st century training and so equipment needs to be of the latest standards. However, the UTC had never met its target student numbers and so equipment had not been updated.

The WRAT had worked with the UTC and confirmed that there would need to be spending of circa £800,000 to bring equipment up to standard. Additionally, the UTC was only at 65% student capacity and research from the Baker Dearing Trust had shown that the UTC would need to be at least 80% capacity to cover all fixed costs.

The UTC was therefore a financial risk to the Trust unless a significant financial package was secured. The CEO reported that in July 2021 the WRAT were in a position where it was believed that £1.4million in funding had been secured from the ESFA to support the Trust in sponsoring the UTC and this had been ready to bring to the WRAT Board for approval.

However, prior to the WRAT Board scheduled to take place in July 2021, management at the ESFA had changed and negotiations were taken back to the beginning, where it became clear that funding of only £0.5million would be available to the WRAT. The CEO outlined that currently WRAT has reserves of circa £1million and so to continue with the proposed sponsorship of the UTC would have had significant financial implications for the Trust and reserves would have been depleted to zero within 18 months.

During this time the CEO had been making the case to the RSC that the WRAT could not progress the sponsorship of UTC under these circumstances, and she had agreed to meet with the ESFA regarding additional funding.

At the same time and unknown to the WRAT, the UTC were thinking of withdrawing from the decision to join WRAT, although the CEO had spoken to the Chair of the UTC board who had reassured him that they were keen to join the Trust. In February 2022, the UTC made the decision to pause the decision and gave the reason that they were preparing for Ofsted as the UTC were in the window for inspection and that the time taken to prepare for the upcoming sponsorship was impacting on this time.

The WRAT had prepared a report on the due diligence undertaken and shared this with UTC and the RSC with the conclusion being that the WRAT would not be moving forward with the proposed sponsorship of the UTC. The RSC was supportive of this decision.

The CEO invited questions from Board members. A Board member commented that they could understand the strategic importance of the UTC for the WRAT but questioned why this had been of strategic importance to the LEG? The CEO responded that there was no clear response from the LEG and shared his thoughts on some possible reasons.

Board members were satisfied with the reasons for the decision by the WRAT to step away from the proposed sponsorship of UTC and highlighted that the focus of the Board should be what is right for the Trust. However, the significant time and resources put into this process by the WRAT were acknowledged.

c. Policies

The following policies had been circulated in advance of the meeting for review and approval:

- ATP RSE Policy April 2022
- WRAT Positive Handling Policy April 2022
- WRAT Complaints Policy

A Board member had submitted a number of questions regarding the policies, one being around how policies came to the Board and which stakeholders had been consulted in the drawing up of a policy. There had also been a question relating to accessibility of the complaints policy. In response to the latter, the EP outlined that a clause would be added to the Complaints policy to state that if a complainant has difficulty in writing to complaint that they should contact the Trust for support.

It was agreed that the questions raised should be answered outside of the meeting.

Resolved:

- That all policies be approved in principle
- That Annie McMaster be delegated to work with the Executive Principal to complete amendments as discussed
- That final approved policies be circulated to all Board members

Action: Annie McMaster to work with the EP to make amendments to policies as required.

EXECUTIVE, OPERATIONAL AND COMMUNICATION UPDATES

21/22.46 a. Executive Principals Report

The EP's report had been circulated in advance of the meeting and questions were invited.

Board members asked for the current context of WRAT academies in relation to achieving the new ambitions set out in the government 'opportunity for all' white paper of 90% of children to leave primary school at the Expected Standard (EXS) in Reading, Writing and Maths and secondary school pupils achieving an average of Grade 5 at GCSE English Language and Maths to understand how achievable this was for the WRAT academies.

The EP highlighted that the Trust would always have ambition to meet these targets and that high expectations are set for students. However, in context, he stated that the current target for Year 6 pupils at ATP was 52% to achieve EXS, although he added that the LAB have ambitions to exceed the current target. The current national average for pupils achieving EXS in Reading, Writing and Maths was reported to be 65%.

In terms of the secondary academies, the average GCSE grade is approximately marginally lower than the current national average of 4.5, but the EP highlighted that the WRAT of course want students to meet the higher national standard of an average Grade 5.

The CEO provided Board members with the information that a social mobility 'tzar' has been appointed by the government. This person runs several schools in the most deprived areas of London, which she has turned around. She also works with many schools across the country in disadvantaged areas and has commented that the targets in the white paper, particularly the Primary school target are unrealistic unless significant targeted funding is increased.

A Board member questioned what the main challenges from the white paper would be for the WRAT.

The EP responded that the main challenge across all academies in the Trust was around attendance and highlighted the need to continue to focus on this. He noted the research from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) had shown that no one intervention had been shown to impact on improving attendance. He added that this had been confirmed during LA register checks, with the LA attendance team stating that the Trust is already doing everything recommended to improve attendance. He highlighted that those pupils from WRAT academies with good attendance make good progress and achieve. He noted that greater robustness in the national reporting of attendance would bring the greatest challenge to the Trust. A further challenge would be the minimum number of academies required to be in a Trust and that LAs could now form multi-academy trusts (MATs).

A Board member noted the issues around attendance and questioned whether investment could be made in research on attendance across the Trust.

The EP responded that the EEF are currently looking for schools to take part in a pilot project around attendance and the incoming EP would be taking this forward. The AIP had also done some work around this; however, the recommendations were things the Trust were already doing without the desired impact and so the incoming EP would take this forward with the EEF.

A board member commented that she was pleased to see news that Ofsted powers to inspect unregistered schools had been increased as she had seen some poor practice in unregistered schools in Leeds.

The Interim Chair noted that there had been a large drop in attendance reported in the EP's report, particularly at LWA and asked for the reasons for this. The EP responded that this had been mainly due to student Covid absence, but that attendance was now on the upturn.

Board members were assured that WRAT attendance was broadly in line with national averages, however recognised that this still required a focus to improve as students do well at the academies when they attend.

A Board member questioned the higher percentage of authorised absence at LWA – 7% as opposed to 4% at the other WRAT academies and asked for the reasons for this. She also asked if Board members could be provided with an understanding of punctuality across the Trust.

The EP outlined that the higher rate of authorised absence directly correlated with the higher rate of absence at LWA – absence was authorised as parents had given a reason for the absence, for example illness.

The incoming EP highlighted that attendance would continue to be a high focus area and noted that parental support was critical. The WRAT is determined to improve attendance.

Action: Focus on punctuality to be included in the next EP report

A Board member challenged on the increase in behaviour incidents across the WRAT and asked for the reasons for this. The EP responded that data in this report was compared to the previous year during Covid when pupils were not in school. The WRAT have compared the rate of exclusion to national and are broadly in line.

He added that previously the academies had always had exceptionally high levels of exclusion, but that due to work undertaken by the WRAT this had reduced to be in line with or below national average pre-pandemic. He added that another factor in high exclusion levels was the higher-than-average number of students on roll when comparing to

national, however the WRAT were still working to decrease levels of exclusion.

A Board member noted the detail within the SEN green paper relating to the graduated approach to alternative provision and asked that this be an item for discussion at a future meeting.

Action: Graduated approach to alternative provision to be added to a future Board agenda.

A Board member questioned whether the Trust would be continuing to use the Southway alternative provision which had a current Ofsted judgement of Requires Improvement. The EP responded that Southway was due for inspection and that WRAT quality assurance processes have shown that the Trust is satisfied with the improvements made to the provision.

The EP requested approval of a whole-staff training day to take place on 4 July 2022.

Resolved: that Board members approve a whole-staff training day for 4 July 2022

b. Academy Improvement Partner (AIP) Reports

AIP reports had been circulated in advance of the meeting and questions were invited.

A governor questioned if there were any surprises for the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) around the quality of provision? The EP responded that there had been no elements that had surprised SLT. He informed Board members that he would take back this question to academy Principals for a direct response.

Action: EP to ask academy Principals for response to the question 'were there any surprises for leaders in the AIP reports?'

Annie McMaster, in her role as Chair of ATP noted that there had been no surprises in the AIP report and ATP were already moving forward on actions contained in the report.

The Interim Chair questioned whether there was a need to have separate AIPs for the primary and secondary provisions? The CEO responded that this was something to consider further when appointing a new AIP. He added that the current AIP had a broad range of experience as an Ofsted inspector of both primary and secondary schools.

The Interim Chair noted the need to consider foci for future AIP reports in addition to LABs and attendance. The CEO responded that Erica's previous work plans would be used to inform the scope of future AIP reports but final approval from the Board would be required before instructing a new AIP to implement the work.

TRUST BOARD, GROUP AND COMMITTEE'S GOVERNANCE RELATED MATTERS

21/22.47 a. Matters referred by LABs

Annie McMaster, ATP Chair queried what other LABs do to thank their governors for their work. It was agreed that this would be picked up with Caroline Gruen, LWA Chair outside of the meeting

Board members mentioned the excellent example of cross-academy work - a STEM Day which had been put together with Soroptimist's International and had partnered Year 10 and 11 girls on the Empower Programme with girls in Years 4 and 5 at ATP. Thanks were given to the delivery team.

b. Governor applications for approval

An application to become a governor had been received by ATP from Janey Jones, a staff member from LWA. The ATP Chair noted her background in community engagement which was required on the board.

The TBD clarified that there was a need to amend the standing orders around approval of LAB membership from colleagues from other WRAT academies. The standing orders were currently being amended and would be brought to the meeting of the WRAT Board in July 2022.

The CEO highlighted that there was nothing to preclude this member of staff from supporting ATP in their community engagement day as part of her role as SLT at LWA. It was agreed that this action be communicated, and a link set up with the member of staff.

Action: EP to set up link between ATP and Janey Jones in relation to community engagement day support

Board members noted the need, through the updating of standing orders, that it should be ensured business interests were declared and when to step back in meetings due to possible conflict of interest.

Action: The Interim Chair to give further consideration to the standing orders

c. Clerking contract approval

The TBD reported that he had engaged with Leeds Governor Support Service (GSS) in relation to providing clerking support for the Trust Board, committees and LABs. He had received a paper earlier in the day outlining two options and stated that he felt option 2 which included advice and support for the Board, committees and LABs would meet the requirements as an interim solution prior to the appointment of a Head of Governance later in the year.

A Board member questioned when the current interim solution of clerking only support provided by GSS would change to providing advice and support and the TBD responded that he would summarise

the options, circulate to the Board, and once agreed the provision would start immediately.

Action: TBD to circulate summary and recommendations for interim Clerking provision to the Board for review and approval

AUDIT, RISK AND FINANCE MATTERS

21/22.48 a. Financial Performance Report

The Financial Performance Report had been circulated in advance of the meeting and the TBD reported that he had met with David Strachan to review actions from the ARF committee.

In terms of the auditory position, it was reported that a small surplus predicted for ATP was now a small deficit. There were three significant factors in this:

- Circa £60,000 was a hangover from the restructure which had taken place in 2020/21, which instead of falling in the previous year's budget, had come out of this year's budget.
- Pupil Premium income had been over-estimated by circa £40,000
- There had been thorough reconciliation of the budget in terms of actual staffing which had accrued a variance, therefore adding to the first two issues.

The budget for ATP was being closely monitored. It was noted that ATP were new to WRAT budgetary procedures. All of the secondaries in the WRAT were on track to over-perform on their budgetary position.

The TBD noted the exceptional costs referenced in the Financial Performance Report as a risk in terms of unbudgeted expenditure related to fees for the Board-commissioned investigation.

Expenditure for the investigation had been estimated at £5-£6,000 in February 2022, however this was almost doubled for the February period and since then further fees of approximately £26,000 had been incurred with Browne Jacobson to date. It was noted that the day rate for the investigating officer would need to be added to the total and that the £98,000 predicted deficit in the WRAT budget did not include the investigation fees, however it was highlighted that this had been well targeted in terms of progressing matters.

A Board member commented that this was a difficult period for the finances of the Trust and requested that managers keep a close review on this, report to the ARF committee and utilise any opportunity to economise where this didn't impact on front-line delivery to improve the budget position and for budget planning.

The TBD reported on the need for procurement for the ITSS contract. The contract is currently provided by LEG, and this is continuing in the interim. It was noted that a 90-day notice period was required. If the contract continues with LEG this will be on a commercial bases and with the

understanding the ESFA are satisfied with the full tender process taking place.

The TBD outlined some staffing issues and reported that he would be meeting with the Director of IT for reassurances around these issues. He had written to the ESFA to explain the current position.

The Interim Chair noted the need for careful consideration of this contract and the difficult position until the investigative reports are received.

Christian Wilcocks, Sarah Carrie and Sam Bradley left the meeting at this point.

CONFIDENTIAL

Particular items were deemed to be confidential and these were recorded separately as confidential items.