



**MINUTES OF THE REIGATE LEARNING ALLIANCE TRUST BOARD MEETING HELD
ON TUESDAY 08 MAY 2018**

Present: Mr Michael Jones - Chair
Ms Pat Frankland
Mr Stephen Hewes
Mr Chris Whelan - Chief Executive Officer
Mr Nick Clark - Principal

In attendance: Mr Jon Allen, Clerk to the Corporation
Ms Sarah Walters

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Richard Stephen.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Michael Jones declared his interest in being a Member of the Trust.

Dawn Hughes declared an interest in her capacity of continuing to be a member of the Coulsdon Corporation up to 31 July 2018 and also confirmed the same time period for her continuing membership of the RLA Trust. It was agreed that, as her membership of both bodies was just for a short period of time, any potential conflict of interest would be adequately managed.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the Trust Board meeting held 31 January 2018 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

The confidential minutes of the Trust Board meeting held 05 March 2018 were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

5. MATTERS ARISING

It was reported that the review of the draft of the Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation for the RLA Trust has nearly been completed and the updated documents will be agenda items at the next Trust Board meeting for formal approval.

A discussion took place as to the period of office for the parent governor on the Local Governing Body. It was agreed to avoid the scenario of having a parent governor who no longer has a child attending the College.

Therefore, the term of office for a parent governor is to be four years or for the duration of their daughter/son being a student of the College, whatever is the shortest duration of the two.

Strategic matters arising from the meeting held 05 March are covered under the agenda item '*Strategic Direction of the RLA Trust*'.

6. SAFEGUARDING/PREVENT TRAINING

Due to the illness of the member of staff, who was due to deliver the training, it was agreed to defer this agenda item to the next Trust Board meeting.

It was agreed to check as to whether Trustees can access on-line training for safeguarding/prevent and Sarah Walters agreed to investigate this further.

7. MEMBERSHIP REPORT OF THE RLA TRUST

The report from the Clerk was received.

It was reported with much sadness of the health issues facing Robert Hails. The Chair confirmed he has spoken to Robert's wife and passed on the best wishes of all Members of the Trust at this very difficult time.

It was reported that Ciaran McSharry has resigned from the Trust, with immediate effect, due to taking up employment overseas. The Trust Board placed on record sincere thanks to Ciaran for his invaluable contributions during his Trust membership and previous membership of the Reigate College Corporation.

Following the decision of Coulsdon Corporation to withdraw from the Federation with the RLA, both Del Attah and Sharmin Joarder have confirmed their resignations from the RLA Trust given both will continue to be governors at Coulsdon College. The Trust Board placed on record sincere thanks to them both for their invaluable contributions during their Trust membership and previous membership of the Reigate College Corporation.

It was agreed to conduct searches to recruit two to three new Trustees to join the RLA Trust. The required skills set includes financial expertise, public sector experience and education expertise. A range of suggestions was made as to who best to contact to seek expressions of interest for the vacancies and the Principal and CEO agreed to take these forward.

In terms of Members, it was agreed for the Clerk to make contact with Chris Wright to inform him that, due to his membership of Coulsdon Corporation, it would not be in the best interests of the Trust for him to continue being a Member of the Trust. In terms of his replacement, it was agreed to source a replacement from an individual within the local community who has knowledge of Reigate College. Suggestions were made to whom to approach and the Chair agreed to take this forward for actioning.

8 STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF THE RLA TRUST

Following the decision of Coulsdon Corporation to withdraw from the Federation as of 31 July 2018 and not to be a member of the Reigate Learning Alliance, it was agreed to use this meeting to have a broad discussion on the future strategic direction of the Trust.

In terms of Coulsdon College, it was acknowledged by the Trust Board that nothing further could have been offered to Coulsdon College in terms of additional financial support over and above that outlined in the proposal to be their strategic partner. To have offered any additional financial support would have put the Trust at risk.

In terms of strategic updates from the Trust Board meeting held 05 March, it was reported that the Working Titles/London Screen Academy will run their school themselves and, therefore, will not be joining the RLA Trust. The RLA will, however, continue to provide advice and support to the London Screen Academy.

It was reported at the last trust meeting that John Ruskin 6th Form College was in the process of conducting a Strategic Prospects Appraisal and the Principal of John Ruskin had invited the RLA to submit an Expression of Interest. It was agreed at the last Trust meeting to authorise the Executive to submit an Expression of Interest if they felt this was appropriate. Following a visit to John Ruskin, it was decided not to proceed any further due to a number of factors which included their quality issues, expected financial pressures arising from their reliance on apprenticeship funding, and that Reigate has no expertise or experience of their curriculum offer.

A progress update was received on the Maths School initiative from the Department of Education and it was agreed for this possible strategic development to be subject to further review and work.

A progress update was received on the DfE/Free School Group and it was agreed to keep all options open regarding free school opportunities and to continue being a member of this group.

A discussion took place as to whether existing partner schools could be brought into the MAT. It was felt that, as Reigate has no direct expertise of their curriculum offer, the only viable offer that could be made would be on shared services.

A discussion took place on the expected demographic upturn in student numbers expected from 2020 onwards, with potentially up to 300/400 extra students a year attending the College. The constraint in growing student numbers is the limitations for expansion on the current College site. Notwithstanding this, it was agreed to task the Executive to review the College's estate for property expansion.

A discussion took place on whether feeder schools could be used for extra capacity but this was deemed not to be a practicable way forward.

What was clear from the discussions was the need to have a focus on identifying potential partners. The RLA is a multi-academy trust and should, therefore, be maximising opportunities to be a multi-academy trust as against a single entity trust. Clearly, the decision taken by the Coulsdon Corporation was a setback and it has left the Trust vulnerable as to appearing rudderless and lacking in direction. By tasking the Executive to focus on identifying potential partners, and to review the College's estate to meet future demographic expansion, should enable a clearer strategic direction to be identified for the Trust.

9. GDPR PRESENTATION & TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

Trustee's received a paper outlining the actions taken to date to ensure full compliance against the new GDPR requirements, and assurances were given that the College is meeting the new GDPR requirements.

It was agreed to have a Trustee representative on the GDPR Data Protection Committee and Pat Frankland offered to be this Trustee.

It was noted that the Trust Board would receive an annual GDPR Report at its summer term meetings.

Clarification was sought as to whether there was any potential governor liability for any non-compliance. Sarah Walters agreed to seek further information on this from the DfE and 6th Form Colleges Association.

10. FINANCE

The January Management Accounts that were reviewed by the Finance Committee, and the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held 05 March 2018, were received and **NOTED** for information purposes.

The January Management Accounts forecast a year-end surplus of £342k, and it was reported the latest forecast is for a year-end surplus of £278k. Further positive movement is expected as the decision has been made to capitalise orders rather than actual purchases, as has been the accounting policy to date. The other accounting change is on depreciation where depreciation will no longer be three years but, instead, will be in line with the warranty of the item purchased. It was confirmed the College financial auditors fully support these changes to accounting policies.

Trustees received an early indication of the financial pressures being faced in the drafting of the Trust's budget for 2018-19. The Trust has to be prepared for a national pay award of 2% which, if implemented, would add an additional cost of £160k. In addition, there is expected to be an increase in employer's pension contributions. With increased inflationary costs, and income from government that is not increasing in line with inflation, there will be difficulty in setting a balanced budget for 2018-19.

11. REIGATE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY MINUTES

The minutes of the RLA Local Governing Body meeting held 27 March 2018 were received and **NOTED** for information purposes.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 09 July 2018 at 6pm.

The meeting closed at 19.35.

Signed: _____ Date: _____