



**Minutes of the Diverse Academies Trust Board Meeting held 14 July 2021
at 5.00pm via Microsoft teams.**

Trustee name	Initials	A = absence
Mr M Quigley MBE (Chair)	MQ	
Mr J Rolph	JR	
Mrs M Blore	MB	
Mr I Storey	IS	
Mr P Mabbott	PM	
Mr D Schwarz	DS	
Miss C Burn BEM	CB	A

In attendance: [staff or other invited persons]

Staff name	Initials	Role	A = Absence
Mr D Cotton	DC	Chief Executive officer & Accounting Officer	
Mrs J Harrison Hill	JHH	Company secretary & Clerk to Board of Trustees	

Item No	Item	Action/ by who/when
Agenda item 1 DAT/121/2021	Apologies for absence Apologies for absence were received and agreed from Miss C Burns	
Agenda item 2 DAT/122/2021	Declaration of interest and any changes to be advised There were no declarations of interest, either direct or indirect, for any items of business on the agenda. The chair asked if anyone had any declarations to update. Trustees confirmed that the declarations given at the beginning of the academic year were correct.	
Agenda item 3 DAT/123/2021	Minutes of the meeting dated 9 June 2021 The minutes of the meeting, having previously been received were agreed by the chair.	
Agenda item 4 DAT/124/2021	Matters Arising from Trust Board Meeting 09 June 2021: DAT/78/2021 CONFIDENTIAL: NCEAT Update Action: <i>This item was deemed confidential and was recorded in the confidential minutes.</i> DAT/104/2021 Chief Executive Officers Report Action: <i>Mr Cotton to clarify reason for Hillocks Primary Academy not participating in Nuffield Speech and Language Intervention (NELI). Mr Cotton confirmed that Hillocks Primary participation in NELI was</i>	

	<p>due to timing of joining the trust and will be brought into the programme going forward. This item is now complete.</p> <p>DAT/105/2021 Draft DAT Strategic Plan Action: The final Strategic Plan document will be brought to the board in September. Agenda item for Autumn term Board Meeting.</p> <p>DAT/107/2021 Audit and Risk Committee Update Action: Mr Storey to communicate safeguarding actions from audit to Mrs Blore. Mr Storey informed the Board that to ensure cross over of information these reports are now shared with M Blore. Mrs Blore confirmed that this enables a total coverage of Safeguarding issues in her role as link safeguarding trustee. This item is now complete.</p> <p>DAT/116/2021 Media Enquiry Action: Mr Quigley asked Mr Cotton to submit his request re Teachers Pension Scheme alternative to the Finance and Resources Committee. Mr Cotton has had initial an initial discussion with the chair of finance and resources committee and will submit a request to the remuneration panel once more details are known. This item is now complete.</p> <p>DAT/117/2021 Board Management Accounts Action: Mr Cotton to follow up April Management Accounts for the Board. Trustees received the April Management accounts. This item is now complete.</p>	Agenda
<p>Agenda item 5 DAT/125/2021</p>	<p>Chief Executive Officers Report Document: <i>CEO Board Report July 2021</i> was previously received by the Board. Mr Cotton confirmed all trustees had received the report and highlighted that planning is underway for September following the new advice and guidance for Covid to ensure procedures are in place. The board were informed that the trust is currently seeing significant increases in positive covid cases over the last few weeks. Mr Cotton apprised the board that work is underway on the school improvement model, with integration of governance and other operational matters, to have one model that covers all areas based on the Education Endowment Foundations four stage model of Explore, Prepare, Deliver, Sustain (EPDS). Further work will be carried out with leaders, governors, and trustees to ensure the appropriate balance to deliver school improvement. Further progress on development of the school improvement model will be brought back to the board in the Autumn term.</p> <p>Discussion was held regarding refinement of the strategic objectives from four to three, with a broader organisational objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 1: Strengthening organisational growth, development and performance. • Objective 2: Developing greater financial agility and stability. • Objective 3: Improving educational performance. 	DC

	<p>Mr Cotton proposed allocating objective 1 to the main board, objective 2 to Finance & Resources Committee and objective 3 to Standards & Outcomes Committee.</p> <p>Trustees commented the broadening of objective 1 encompasses future growth ensuring all schools are in a sustained place.</p> <p>Trustees remarked the delegated responsibilities of board committees was appropriate and agreed that they were working efficiently.</p> <p>Following trustees raising an incident where Retford Oaks Academy had to implement a lockdown situation due to an intruder coming onto site, trustees questioned if there were any lessons to be taken from the incident, positive or negative, and Mr Cotton assured trustees that responses were swift and effective. Following any such incident a review is undertaken. Police praised the school on the fast and efficient response to the situation.</p>	
<p>Agenda item 6 DAT/126/2021</p>	<p>Committee Meeting Update from Chairs</p> <p><u>6.1 Audit and Risk Committee update (12/07/2021)</u></p> <p>Mr Storey gave the board members an update of the Audit and Risk Committee work carried out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of new internal auditors Cooper Parry following a tender process. • Internal audit plan 2021/2022 approved. • Review of the audit of risk management in academies, actions from low assurance ratings to be reviewed in October committee meeting. • Strategic corporate risks have been assessed and produced a corporate risk component to risk register which will be drawn together to be included into risk register in October. • Covid report received and discussed. • Main compliance risk contact, Karen Bonser will move to a consultancy basis following her resignation. 	
<p>DAT/127/2021</p>	<p><u>6.2 Standards and Outcomes Committee update (07/07/2021)</u></p> <p>Mr Schwarz gave the board members an update of the Standards and Outcomes Committee work carried out:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update was received regarding primary accountability, indication of implications of not having assessments in early stages of primary, affecting cohorts of children for 7 yrs. • Teaching hub – changes following successful bid for joint teaching hub, the chair suggested it would be useful to have an update from Mr Cotton in Autumn term on progress. • Teacher assessed grades have been submitted. • Academies risk report showed risks of all academy’s ratings, the chair suggested that this report might be circulated more widely but had left this with the CEO and CEo’s to consider. • Funding for Senior Mental Health Leads in academies is being released from the DfE. 	
<p>DAT/128/2021</p>	<p><u>6.3 Finance and Resources Committee update (30/06/2021)</u></p> <p>Mr Rolph gave the board members an update of the Finance and Resource Committee work carried out:</p>	

- External Auditors, Smith Cooper attended the committee to discuss the audit plan for production of trustee reports and accounts.
- The trustee report is being organised by Mrs Harrison Hill
- The Finance and Resources Committee meeting on the 24 November will present the accounts, all trustees will be invited.
- Budget was reviewed in detail and the forecast for 2021/22 looks good with a small surplus. Some costs have been brought into the current year to enable projects through the holidays to be undertaken. **Recommend** approval of budget to the Board. **Trustees approved** the budget for 2021/22.
- Capital budgets have been reviewed and **recommend** approval to the board with a schedule of priorities Mr Rolph highlighted proposal for new school Yeoman Park Academy where a provision for £250k set aside for provision of items outside of DfE new build finding such as outdoor play areas. **Trustees approved** the Capital expenditure budgets.

Mr Cotton updated the board that a meeting had confirmed that Yeoman Park will be a new build and further details are being discussed with the DfE regarding what is included in the cost.

CONFIDENTIAL: This item of discussion was deemed confidential and was recorded in the confidential minutes.

- External governance reviews were raised as part of the changes to year end trustee report, the committee referred to the board to consider when the next external review will be carried out and status of previous recommendations.
- **CONFIDENTIAL:** Documents: *LGPS Discretionary Policy, Application for LGPS Discretionary Payment, and Confidential Medical Letter* - This item was deemed confidential and was recorded in the confidential minutes.

6.4 Governance and Partnership Committee update (05/07/2021)

Mr Quigley gave the board members an update of the Governance and Partnership Committee work carried out:

- Chair of Academy Committees have all been contacted by the Chair of the Board regarding their 360-degree feedback.
- Retford Post 16 centre agreement remains at the previous amount of 80k per year based on historical figures of pupils at post 16.
- The Academies Trust Handbook and Governance Handbook requires an annual self-evaluation and recommend an external review every 3 to 5 years. A discussion took place with trustees debating the method for self-evaluation, **trustees agreed** to seek prices for an external review. **Trustees agreed** to feedback comments on the suggested self-evaluation template ready for discussion in Autumn term.

Action: Company Secretary to source prices for External Review of Board Governance.

Action: Company Secretary to add additional column of suggested board committees by each area of self-evaluation review, to be discussed at next board meeting on 6 October 2021.

- The Scheme of Delegation has been reviewed with minor changes having been made, a copy will be distributed to the

DAT/129/2021

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<p>DAT/130/2021</p>	<p>board post meeting for comments and feedback for approval in principle.</p> <p>Action: Scheme of Delegation to be distributed by Company Secretary</p> <p>Action: trustees to review and make comments/provide approval in principle via email.</p> <p>At this point the meeting moved to agenda item 9 to allow for discussion prior to the Chair having to leave the meeting. Having discussed agenda item 9 the meeting returned to this item in the agenda.</p> <p>Policies approved at committees:</p> <p>A&R: Policy Approval policy Educational Visits Policy Online Safety Policy Premises Management policy Single Equality Policy Covid 19 appendix to Safeguarding Policy</p> <p>S&O: Behaviour Policy Anti-Bullying Policy Relationships and Sex Education Policy</p> <p>G&P Data Breach Policy FOI policy GDPR Policy Member/Trustee/Governor Privacy Notice Parent/Carer Privacy Notice Student Privacy Notice Subject Access Request form Concerns and Complaints Policy Unreasonable Complaints and Vexatious Communication Policy Code of Conduct Trustee/Members/Governors</p> <p>The approved policies were noted by the board.</p>	<p>JHH</p> <p>Trustees</p>
<p>Agenda item 7 DAT/131/2021</p>	<p>Statutory Updates, Changes to legal documents and Companies House filing Annual Confirmation Statement filed at Companies house filed on 15/06/2021</p>	
<p>Agenda item 8 DAT/132/2021</p>	<p>Annual Requirements None.</p>	
<p>Agenda item 9 DAT/133/2021</p>	<p>Trustee items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trustee Recruitment update: The chair informed the board that following a recruitment process, involving advertisement, shortlisting and interview panel made up of the Governance and Partnership Committee members two appointments are being recommended to the board. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mr Robert James Shearing ○ Mr Andrew Paul Davies <p>The Chair explained that both candidates had come via the Academy Ambassadors route which provides a vetting and recommendation service to align candidates with the requirement of the trust.</p>	

<p>DAT/134/2021</p> <p>DAT/135/2021</p>	<p>Trustees who were appointed under Article 50: Mr J Rolph, Mrs M Blore, Mr P Mabbott and Mr I Storey all agreed the recommendation to appoint Mr Robert Shearing and Mr Andrew Davies under Articles 58 as a co-opted trustee of Diverse Academies Trust with effect from 14/7/2021. A discussion on the process of appointment led to agreement that all future recruitment will be directed via Academy Ambassadors who provide support for the process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C Burns resignation: Trustees noted the appreciation for all the support and challenge provided as a trustee and as previously a chair of governor, her experience and knowledge were an asset to the trust and the board wished her every success in her new venture. <p>Chair Correspondence since last meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter from Baroness Berridge to Academy Trust 10 June 2021 • April Management Accounts report • May Management Accounts report • Engagement Letter for Certificate of Expenditure for the School Improvement and Teaching School Programme Activity for the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 <p>Trustees having previously received the above documents noted the correspondence received by the chair since the last meeting.</p> <p>Mr Quigley left the meeting at 18:30 Mr Storey took over as Vice Chair, the meeting returned to agenda item 6.</p>	
<p>Agenda Item 10 DAT/136/2021</p>	<p>Determination of confidentiality of business Equality Act consideration Nolan Principles</p> <p>Trustees considered whether anything discussed during the meeting should be deemed as confidential. It was resolved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An Item discussed within agenda item 4 DAT/124/2021 (DAT/78/2021) should remain confidential to attendees and Board Trustees. - An Item discussed within agenda item 6 DAT/128/2021 should remain confidential to attendees and Board Trustees. - An additional Item discussed and associated documents within agenda item 6 DAT/128/2021 should remain confidential to attendees and Board Trustees. - There had been no Equality Act implications - Attendees were content that all decisions made adhere to the seven Nolan principles. - Consider if any items need to be reported to Charities commission. 	
<p>Agenda item 11 DAT/137/2021</p>	<p>Date and time of next meeting: Wednesday 6 October 2021, 5.00pm at Diverse Education Centre, Retford.</p>	
	<p>The meeting closed at 18:39</p> <p>Signed.....(chair) Date.....</p>	