



**Minutes of the Diverse Academies Trust Board Meeting held 06 October 2021 at 5.00pm  
at Diverse Education Centre, Old Hall Drive, Retford.**

<b>Trustee name</b>	<b>Initials</b>	A = absence
Mrs M Blore	MB	
Mr A Davies	AD	
Mr P Mabbott	PM	A
Mr M Quigley MBE (Chair)	MQ	
Mr J Rolph	JR	
Mr D Schwarz	DS	
Mr R Shearing	RS	
Mr I Storey	IS	

In attendance: [staff or other invited persons]

<b>Staff name</b>	<b>Initials</b>	<b>Role</b>	A = Absence
Mr D Cotton	DC	Chief Executive officer & Accounting Officer	
Mrs V Williams	VW		Until 17:21
Mrs J Harrison Hill	JHH	Company secretary & Clerk to Board of Trustees	

<b>Item No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Action/ by who/wh en</b>
Agenda item 1 <b>DAT/ 01/2122</b>	<b>Appoint Chair</b> Mr Quigley was nominated and appointed as Chair of the Board of Trustees.	
Agenda item 2 <b>DAT/02/2122</b>	<b>Appoint Vice Chair</b> Mr Storey was nominated and appointed as Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees.	
Agenda item 3 <b>DAT/03/2122</b>	<b>Introduction of new trustees</b> Mr Quigley welcomed Mr R Shearing and Mr A Davies to their first Trust Board meeting.	
Agenda item 4 <b>DAT/04/2122</b>	<b>Apologies for absence</b> Apologies for absence were received and agreed from Mr P Mabbott.	
Agenda item 5 <b>DAT/05/2122</b>	<b>Presentation of Rebrand</b> Document: <i>Diverse Academies Trust visual identity brand guidelines</i> was distributed to the board during the meeting. Mrs Williams presented the proposed branding, discussing the work which had been carried out on the visual identity of the Trust, created alongside the vision mission and values to ensure it reflected the Trust ethos and future progression.	

	<p>Roll out of the branding was discussed following, with print-based resources to be replaced through natural cycle, signage based on priority and needs as resources allow, and digital being swift.</p> <p><b>Trustees commented</b> that they considered the branding to be modern and very appropriate.</p> <p><b>Trustees agreed</b> that the branding which had been demonstrated on the strategic plan enabled the document to be a very engaging way of reading the plan, with the balance between colours, photos, and font. It was also observed that the branding represented the different approach and step change of the Trust and its trajectory.</p> <p><b>Trustees agreed and approved</b> the proposed branding for the trust.</p> <p>Mrs Williams left the meeting at 17:21</p>	
<p>Agenda item 6 <b>DAT/06/2122</b></p> <p><b>DAT/07/2122</b></p>	<p><b>Review and approve conflicts of interest published</b> Document: <i>DAT Website information September 2021</i> <b>Trustees reviewed and agreed</b> the declarations of Interest.</p> <p><b>Declaration of interest and any changes to be advised</b> 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.</p>	
<p>Agenda item 7 <b>DAT/08/2122</b></p>	<p><b>Minutes of the meeting dated 14 July 2021</b> The minutes of the meeting, having previously been received were agreed and signed by the chair.</p>	
<p>Agenda item 8 <b>DAT/09/2122</b></p>	<p><b>Matters arising</b></p> <p><b>DAT/128/2021 Finance and Resources Committee Update CONFIDENTIAL item LGPS Discretionary request</b> <b>Action:</b> <i>Company Secretary to draft a letter from Chair and seek legal guidance on the response prior to distribution.</i> This item is now complete.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> <i>Mr Quigley to contact applicant to inform of the decision prior to a formal letter being sent by the Chair.</i> This item is now complete.</p> <p><b>DAT/129/2021 Governance and Partnership Update</b> <b>Action:</b> <i>Company Secretary to source prices for External Review of Board Governance.</i> Mr Quigley informed the Board that discussion regarding the External Review responses had taken place at the Governance and Partnership Committee meeting, the committee were recommending carrying out a self-evaluation and review an external review next year. <b>Trustees agreed</b> to carry out self-evaluation. Following a <b>trustee asking</b> the question regarding the previous external review it was confirmed that all items from the review had been completed.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> <i>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.</i> This item is now complete.</p>	

<p>Agenda item 9 <b>DAT/10/2122</b></p>	<p><b>Action:</b> Scheme of Delegation to be distributed by Company Secretary. This item is now complete.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Trustees to review and make comments/provide approval in principle via email. This item is now complete.</p> <p><b>DAT Strategic Plan</b> Document: DN2096 Diverse Academies Strategic Plan was previously received by the Board. Mr Cotton gave a summary of the document, explaining that small changes had been made regarding the objectives final wording. <b>Trustees agreed</b> the strategic plan.</p>	
<p>Agenda item 10 <b>DAT/11/2122</b></p> <p><b>DAT/12/2122</b></p>	<p><b>Chief Executive Officers Report</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Including objective review</b></li> </ul> <p>Document: <i>CEO Board report October 2021</i> was previously received by the Board.</p> <p>Mr Cotton discussed the CEO report highlighting that a rapid increase in Covid cases being seen is escalating and additional controls have been implemented such as no staff meetings, no whole school assemblies, face coverings for all until October half term.</p> <p>The schools are working with Public Health England and Department for Education on the escalating numbers of Covid cases.</p> <p>Following <b>trustees asking</b> if the reported low uptake of vaccinations is still an issue, Mr Cotton informed the Board that the uptake varies between schools for example Retford Oaks Academy uptake is 35% whilst Tuxford Academy is 60%. Mr Cotton shared that, following discussions with CEO's in other trusts, it varies between 30% and 50%, some of this reluctance is considered to be due to some parents losing confidence in the vaccination programme, a lot of children are catching covid resulting in parents then having the view of no longer any point in vaccinating/</p> <p><b>Trustees queried</b> the vaccination programme and Mr Cotton explained that it is being scheduled over an 8-week window, with only short notice being given to deter anti vaccination protests and disruption to schools.</p> <p>Mr Cotton drew the trustees attention to item 3 of the CEO report, Educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, further clarifying that a great deal of support is going into supporting academies but there are impacts on education due to Covid, giving examples such as in Primaries some of the Early Years children are not at the point would expect them to be due to being off school, expanding that they are catching up quickly, and recovery is in place for them.</p> <p><b>Trustees questioned</b> if there is greater challenge around deprived areas and young people not being as far on the journey of recovery and Mr Cotton responded that there is some greater challenge in part due to constraints on support at home, but schools are working with children in school to support.</p> <p>Mr Cotton responded to the <b>trustees querying</b> Yeomans Park educational performance being projected to be worse than its Ofsted rating and were assured that Yeomans Park joined the Trust some years ago with an historic Ofsted rating of outstanding, however, at the time of joining it was no longer performing at that level; Progress has been made since entering the Trust but it is not yet operating at outstanding.</p>	

<p>Agenda item 11 <b>DAT/13/2122</b></p>	<p><b>Draft Strategic Objective 2021/2022</b> Document: <i>Strategic Plan (Objectives) appendix 1</i> <i>Strategic Plan (Objectives) appendix 2</i> The above documents were previously received by the Board.</p> <p>Mr Cotton discussed the documents explaining that appendix 1 focuses on the three objectives of the strategic plan and looking at the key works for the strategic plan.</p> <p>Mr Cotton informed the Board that the appendix 1 plan was deliberately sparse in detail in order to avoid predetermined outcomes of workstreams before the process of research and exploration had been completed.</p> <p>Objectives have been assigned to Board and Committees, which will then report back to the Board.</p> <p>Following <b>trustees' questions</b> Mr Cotton confirmed that the Strategic Plan is a five-year plan, with the appendices strategic objective plans being a one-year plan, with the aim to capture key developments across the Trust through exploring the planning cycle to enable some to be more flexible and agile with delivering the priorities. The committees will agree the workstreams and detail.</p> <p>Mr Cotton explained that appendix 2 is the top-level overview of individual academies, each academy will have its own detailed objective plan.</p> <p><b>Trustees agreed</b> the strategic objectives.</p>	
<p>Agenda item 12 <b>DAT/14/2122</b></p> <p><b>DAT/15/2122</b></p>	<p><b>Committee Meeting Update from Chairs and Annual report</b> Document: <i>Committees Annual Reports to the Board</i> was previously received by the Board.</p> <p>Trustees <b>noted</b> the Committees Annual reports to the Board.</p> <p>12.1 Standards and Outcomes Committee Annual Report &amp; committee update (15/09/2021)</p> <p>Mr Schwarz, Chair of Standards and Outcomes Committee updated the Board on work carried out by the committee and matters discussed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of Diverse Association for Professional Learning of which the committee are very supportive, commend to members of Board to follow evolution over time.</li> <li>• Update on Oracy Programme- Potential impact on financial resources in future for interventions requiring specialists not in our organisation currently. Needs to be reflected into budgeting process.</li> <li>• Concern of SEND in academies risk register across all academies and potential for mental health issues emerging.</li> <li>• Some academies significantly affected by in year transfers in and out of pupils, and potential challenges to those academies.</li> <li>• Positives outcomes from teacher assessed gradings in the summer.</li> <li>• Threats of legal action to principals re vaccination- standard letters being sent.</li> <li>• Pleased results for GCSE and A level reflects on staff, presume thanks have been expressed and know that trustees recognise the achievement.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b> Mr Cotton to ensure staff are aware that Trustees recognise their achievement in the results.</p> <p>12.2 Finance and Resources Committee Annual Report &amp; committee update (22/09/2021)</p> <p>Mr Rolph, Chair of Finance and Resources Committee updated the Board on work carried out by the committee and matters discussed:</p>	<p><b>DC</b></p>

- Management Accounts June and July have been reviewed in detail with a small surplus to budget.
- Mr Rolph advised that a small surplus will show on reserves but do not yet know non-cash items movements in pension funds, due to actuaries' report not yet received.
- Reviewed cashflows- one circulated end of June showed cash tight at end of financial year 2022/21, however there was an underlying error in the way it was constructed, one for end of July is corrected and cash flow is good.
- Formal approval from EFSA for write of £52k for National Church of England Academy Trust has been received (FRC/33/2021 Finance and Resources Committee 25/11/2020)
- CONFIDENTIAL: This item was deemed confidential and was recorded in the confidential minutes
- The committee have reviewed and agreed the Trade Union Facilities Time report.
- Streamlined Energy and Carbon reporting is now part of the year end accounts reporting and data is being gathered to produce this report.

**DAT/16/2122**

12.3 Governance and Partnership Committee Annual Report and committee update (29/09/2021)

Mr Quigley, Chair of Governance and Partnership Committee updated the Board on work carried out by the committee and matters discussed:

- Discussed trustees undertaking compulsory training for GDPR and Safeguarding with the new training provider The National College, certificates to be passed onto the Clerk.
- The committee reviewed the Confederation of School Trust Trustees training programme.

The Board then discussed the programme and agreed the internal and external training currently accessible was suitable for their needs.

- Scheme of Delegation was reviewed by the committee and recommended to the Board for approval.

**Trustees ratified approval** of the Scheme of Delegation.

- External Review and Self Evaluation was discussed with self-evaluation being recommended to the Board to be completed by committees. (see agenda item 8 DAT/129/2021)

**DAT/17/2122**

**Policies approved at committees:**

**Online Safety policy**

**Exclusion Policy**

**Pay and Reward Policy**

**Whistleblowing policy**

**Staff Grievance Policy**

**Debt Recovery Policy**

**Safeguarding policy** (by email to be included in minutes retrospectively)

**Induction Policy for Early Career Teachers** (by email to be included in minutes retrospectively)

Trustees **noted** to above policies.

**Trustees raised concerns** that policies in general are very long and complex suggesting requirement to look at policies to differentiate between policy and operational procedures. Potential to divide policy up to have policy at top then operational details in the next section.

**Action:** Mr Cotton to feedback to Executives the need to review policies.

Policies noted by trustees.

**DC**

<p><b>DAT/18/2122</b></p>	<p><b><u>Policy for Approval at Board:</u></b>  <b><u>Admissions Policy</u></b>  Document: <i>Final draft 2023 24 Admission Policy</i>  <i>Board supporting information to the proposal Trust Admissions Policy</i></p> <p>The above documents were previously received by the committee.  <b>Trustees agreed</b> the proposal of a Trust Admission Policy.</p> <p><b><u>Discretionary Leave Policy</u></b>  Documents: <i>Discretionary Leave Policy September 2021</i> was previously received by the committee.  <b>Trustees queried</b> section 2.1 the use of the term entitlement suggesting that this should be eligibility.  <b>Trustees questioned</b> if bereavement leave should be entitlement rather than discretionary.  <b>Trustees declined</b> to approve the policy until further clarification and review of the policy has been undertaken.  <b>Trustees allocated</b> the Policy to Finance and Resources Committee.  <b>Action:</b> Clerk send back to policy lead with comment noted above and informing them that this has not been approved.</p>	<p><b>JHH</b></p>
<p>Agenda item 13  <b>DAT/19/2122</b></p>	<p><b>Statutory Updates, Changes to legal documents and Companies House filing</b>  No updates to report.</p>	
<p>Agenda item 14  <b>DAT/20/2122</b></p>	<p><b>Trust Management Accounts –</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review financial viability</li> <li>• Review variances between budget and actual income and expenditure</li> <li>• Review KPI's</li> </ul> <p>Documents: <i>June 2021 Management Accounts – Board level</i>  <i>July 2021 Management Accounts – Board level</i>  <i>Trustees Board level Management Account Questions</i></p> <p>Trustees confirmed receipt of the Board level management accounts for June and July which had previously been received. Questions which had been raised by trustees via email prior to the meeting were recorded in <i>Trustees Board level Management Account Questions</i> and distributed for all Board Trustees to see responses.</p> <p>Mr Rolph assured the Board that the Finance and Resources Committee were confident that the Trust remains financially viable and have received the variances and Key Performance Indicators, reporting that there were no issues to be concerned about.</p>	
<p>Agenda item 15  <b>DAT/21/2122</b></p> <p><b>DAT/22/2122</b>  <b>DAT/23/2122</b></p> <p><b>DAT/24/2122</b></p> <p><b>DAT/25/2122</b></p>	<p><b>Annual Requirements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tax Computations agreed by chair and confirmed for filing by accountants for year ended 31 August 2020 (for filing by 31 August 2021)</li> <li>• Code of conduct – all Trustees have completed for 2021/2022</li> <li>• Declaration of interest – one trustee declaration is outstanding for 2021/22</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b> to be Declaration of Interest to be completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KCSIE – 3 trustees yet to sign to confirm read for 2021.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b> KCSIE declaration to be completed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding and GDPR – 3 yet to complete for 2021</li> </ul> <p><b>Action:</b> Safeguarding and GDPR training to be completed</p>	<p><b>Trustee</b></p> <p><b>Trustees</b></p> <p><b>Trustees</b></p>

<p>Agenda item 16 DAT/26/2122</p>	<p><b>Trustee items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Governance Strategy inc. Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference</b></li> </ul>	
<p>DAT/27/2122</p>	<p>This item was discussed under agenda item 12.3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CST Professional development training – The Essential trustee programme</b></li> </ul>	
<p>DAT/28/2122</p>	<p>Document: <i>CST Essential trustee Programme</i> was previously received by the Board. This item was discussed under agenda item 12.3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Statutory Training- Safeguarding and GDPR</b></li> </ul>	
<p>DAT/29/2122</p>	<p>Three trustees are yet to complete Safeguarding and GDPR training. <b>Action:</b> to complete Safeguarding and GDPR.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>NGA Model Articles of Association: 2021 changes summary</b></li> </ul>	Trustees
<p>DAT/30/2122</p>	<p>Document: <i>nga-model articles changes 20210708</i> was previously received by the committee. This document was shared for information, Trustees and Members now have separation with the increased number of Members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Academy Trust Handbook 2021: Key changes</b></li> </ul>	
<p>DAT/31/2122</p>	<p>Document: <i>Academy Trust Handbook 2021: Key changes</i> was previously received by the Board. The document highlights the changes for 2021 within the Academy Trust Handbook and the actions in place.</p> <p><b>Chairs correspondence since last meeting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>MoU for Yeomans park Academy from DfE</b></li> </ul>	
<p>DAT/32/2122</p>	<p>The Board were informed of the memorandum of understanding which has been drawn up by the EFSA for building works to be carried out at Yeomans Park Academy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Letter to Accounting Officer 14 July 2021</b></li> </ul>	
<p>DAT/33/2122</p>	<p>Document: <i>Letter to Accounting Officer 14 July 2021</i> was previously received by the Board for information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Academy Audit Planning Letter 9 August 2021</b></li> </ul>	
<p>DAT/34/2122</p>	<p>Document: <i>Academy Audit Planning Letter 9 August 2021</i> was previously received by the Board for information.</p> <p><b>Additional items</b></p> <p>Mr Quigley raised the requirement for appointing a SEND trustee following Miss Burns resignation, Mr Schwarz agreed to be SEND link trustee to compliment the role of Chair of Standards and Outcomes. <b>Action:</b> Clerk to send role description and joining details for next SEND session being for Governors and Trustee links.</p> <p>Mr Quigley then raised the requirement for a whistleblowing link trustee, Mr Storey agreed to be link trustee for whistleblowing to compliment the role of Chair of Audit and Risk.</p> <p>Another trustee is required for the Standards and Outcomes committee, Mr Shearing agreed to sit on the committee. It was also agreed that once Mr Shearing and Mr Davies had had the opportunity to attend the remaining committee meetings then they would advise which other committees they wished to join.</p>	JHH
<p>Agenda item 17 DAT/35/2122</p>	<p><b>Executive items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tuxford Primary Pupil Admission Number (PAN) reduction proposal 2023/2024</b></li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tuxford Primary increasing age range from 2-11 to 3-11 from 2023/2024</b></li> </ul> <p>Document: <i>Potential reduction of PAN at Tuxford Primary Academy</i> was previously received by the Board.</p> <p>Trustees discussed the reasons for the request to reduce the PAN from 45 to 30 and change of age range.</p> <p><b>Trustees questioned</b> if there is any impact on funding and were informed by Mr Cotton that funding would not be impacted by the reduction due to pupil numbers never reaching the current PAN. The reduction would make the school more cost effective and stabilise the numbers.</p> <p>Following <b>trustees asking</b> if the Local Authority (LA) or other stakeholders will have any objections to the reduction, and if there is provision elsewhere, they were informed that the LA would not object. And that there were no shortages of school places in the area.</p> <p>Mr Cotton responded to <b>trustees querying</b> the reason for the change in age range by explaining that it allows the trust to strengthen the offer and quality of provision with resources that are available.</p> <p><b>Trustees approved</b> the recommendation to reduce Tuxford Primary Academy PAN to 30 and change the age range to 3-11 years of age.</p>	
<p>Agenda Item 18 <b>DAT/36/2122</b></p>	<p><b>Determination of confidentiality of business</b> <b>Equality Act consideration</b> <b>Nolan Principles</b></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"> <li>- An Item discussed within agenda item 12 DAT/15/2122 should remain confidential to attendees and Board Trustees until published in financial year end accounts.</li> <li>- There had been no Equality Act implications</li> <li>- Attendees were content that all decisions made adhere to the seven Nolan principles.</li> <li>- Consider if any items need to be reported to Charities commission.</li> </ul>	
<p>Agenda item 19 <b>DAT/37/2122</b></p>	<p><b>Date and time of next meeting:</b> Wednesday 8 December at 5.00pm Diverse Education Centre, Retford, 5.00pm.</p>	
	<p>The meeting closed at 18.25</p> <p>Signed.....(chair) Date.....</p>	