

**Hope Learning Trust Board of Trustees**  
 Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020 at 6.00pm  
 Via Zoom

**Present:** Tony Myers (Chair of Trustees) David Judson  
 Philippa Gowland [from 6.10pm] Ian Thomson [absent from 7.45pm to 8.00pm]  
 John Kesterton Julie McGonigle  
 Karen Osborne Olivia Seymour  
 Andrew Simpkin [absent from 7.35pm to 7.45pm]

**In Attendance:** Helen Winn (CEO Designate, Hope Learning Trust)  
 Brian Crosby (CEO, Hope Learning Trust)  
 Wendy Munro (COO, Hope Learning Trust)  
 Simon Bryan-Smith (Finance Director, Hope Learning Trust) [to 8.00pm]  
 Allyson Buckton (Headteacher, Forest of Galtres Anglican Methodist Primary School) [to 8.00pm]  
 Helen Dowds (Executive Principal, Graham & George Pindar Schools) [to 8.00pm]  
 Jess Swarbrick (Governance Advisor & Clerk)

		<b>Action</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b><u>Welcome &amp; Opening Prayer</u></b> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, which opened with a prayer led by Brian Crosby.	
<b>2.</b>	<b><u>Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest</u></b> There were no apologies for absence. In relation to discussions regarding City of York Council (CYC), Philippa Gowland declared an interest as a CYC employee. In relation to discussions regarding the Diocese of York, Olivia Seymour declared an interest as an employee.	
<b>3.</b>	<b><u>Minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020, Action Plan and Matters Arising</u></b> Previously distributed. The minutes were agreed to be a true and accurate record.  It was noted that all actions from the previous meeting related to Local Governing Committee arrangements, and an update would be provided on these under item 6.1.  There were no other matters arising.	
<b>4.</b>	<b><u>Resources – Start Budget 2020/21</u></b> A summary presentation had been previously distributed, along with the minutes of the Resources Committee meeting held on 29 <sup>th</sup> June 2020. Ian Thomson, Chair of the Resources Committee, reported that Trustees on the Resources Committee had reviewed and scrutinised the start budgets and were recommending them for approval by the Board of Trustees.  Ian reported that projections showed a positive in-year surplus for the coming year, and overall headteachers had done a good job of bringing in a favourable budget for their schools. It was noted that detail of the scrutiny by the Resources Committee was included in the minutes from 29 <sup>th</sup> June for information.  [Philippa Gowland joined the meeting at 6.10pm]  <b>APPROVED: The Board of Trustees approved the start budget for 2020/21.</b>	

#### **4.1 Designated Reserves**

A paper on designated reserves had been circulated with the agenda for approval. Ian advised that one of the proposals being put forward was to allocate specific reserves to investment in ICT across the Trust. He noted that what had emerged from the last six months had been the importance of connecting with students whether in school or at home through technology, providing educational support. Trustees were asked to approve this as a priority piece of work, noting that more detailed work would need to go into identifying the level of need and investment for each school to bring an equal standard across the Trust in terms of the provision and educational experience for all children.

Helen Winn advised that an initial investigation about how the strategy would work indicated that a total of around £400,000 would be needed to support this. She advised that a designated fund of around this amount would allow the development of a good value, cost effective proposal.

**Trustees asked about central government funding for ICT equipment for vulnerable children and whether this had been accessed. A question was also raised about whether there were any other resources or charities which could be accessed to support this project.** Helen advised that there had been an allocation of laptops for vulnerable and disadvantaged Year 10 students from central government which had now been received, though this had taken some time. In addition, Local Authorities (LAs) had been allocated some funding for vulnerable students. Helen advised that she would ensure that any other avenues or ways to raise funds for this would be explored as well.

For clarification, it was noted that Trustees were being asked to agree a designation of funds for specific projects, with an initial amount being allocated to these. This decision was required before the end of the financial year in order for the auditors to accept this, however, adjustments to the amount could be made in November when the final accounts had been produced.

In addition to the £400,000 for ICT provision and strategy, the Resources Committee had also approved a request from Poppleton Ousebank Primary to spend £115,000 of their reserves on a number of projects in school. Details of these projects were included in the minutes from the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> July which had been circulated with the agenda. The Finance Director noted that this designation was not currently included in the school's budget, and adjustments would need to be made to this to ensure that total remaining reserves at year end were not misrepresented.

**APPROVED: The Board of Trustees approved the designation of funds as discussed up to £400,000 for ICT provision across the Trust. It was further agreed that details of how this would be allocated would be dependent on the development of a trust-wide strategy, and subject to adjustments in the final accounts in November as required.**

With reference to the request for expenditure of reserves from Poppleton Ousebank, Ian advised that Trustees on the Resources Committee had approved this but had made clear that proposed investment in ICT must align with the Board's strategy to ensure consistency across the Trust. Helen advised that she would work with the COO and Principal at Poppleton Ousebank to ensure that any expenditure would align with this strategy, and no purchases would be signed off until it was clear that this was the case. The COO added that there was central oversight of all ICT systems now in place, and she was working closely with Helen and the Principal of Poppleton Ousebank on the purchase of the ICT equipment (Chromebooks) from the Trust's provider, Vital.

Trustees asked whether there was confidence that the requests for expenditure of reserves from Poppleton Ousebank were for projects which aligned with the Trust's priorities. The COO

	<p>confirmed that in the majority they were. In addition, she advised that she was working closely with the Principal to ensure that best value was achieved in all cases, and central sign-off on projects would be required. The COO also noted that the Resources Committee had advised the Principal of the need to ensure that part of the school's budget moving forward was allocated to support external work to improve and maintain the fabric of the building.</p> <p><b>Trustees agreed that work was needed to progress previous discussions on the pooling of GAG funding and the centralising of reserves across the Trust. It was agreed that the proposed merger with Sentamu Academy Learning Trust (SALT) would bring this further into focus, as both trusts currently had very different approaches. Trustees noted that having a centralised budget would not mean that schools would not have access to funds for their setting, but that there could be a much more focused approach to prioritise key issues across the Trust.</b></p> <p>The COO advised that she would be working with Helen on a strategy for this moving forward and agreed that it was essential that the Trust arrive at a position where there was more central control over the allocation of funds to the schools which were most in need.</p>	
5.	<p><b><u>CEO Update</u></b> Previously distributed. Helen presented her report, noting thanks to Brian for his support during the handover period.</p> <p><b>GCSE GRADES</b> Helen advised that it was anticipated that nationally many students would be disappointed with their results this year, and it was expected that many Centre Assessed Grades (CAG) would be downgraded. Helen advised that it was likely that there would be many students who would want to know their CAG as well as official grade, and she proposed a formal request procedure to enable this information to be shared. Helen outlined a number of options for how to facilitate this, noting that advice had been published through ASCL to support the process.</p> <p>Helen proposed a system where students wanting to know their CAG would request a meeting, which could be conducted by phone if necessary, and then complete a request form for the information to be released. She noted that for GDPR purposes it was important that the request came directly from the student, and not from a parent or carer. Trustees supported this approach.</p> <p><b>PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT</b> Helen advised that as the performance management cycle was only halfway through at the point of school closures in March, assessing staff against objectives would be challenging, particularly as there was no national outcome data and minimal internal data to measure against. She proposed that to have a fair process, assessment against objectives should be done as far as possible up to March 2020, but that unless there had been any formal concerns raised about a member of staff, all should pass through their performance management for this year.</p> <p>For 2020/21, Helen proposed two centralised objectives for all staff focused around the recovery plan for schools as a priority, along with a focus on Google training to increase efficiency and effectiveness. Trustees supported this approach. <b><i>It was further agreed that future objectives should have clear success criteria, and should be impact rather than completion driven as far as possible.</i></b></p> <p><b>ASSESSMENT IN SEPTEMBER</b> Helen advised that it was important to have a set of standardised assessments in place across the Trust for all year groups, particularly given the lack of national outcome data for this year. She proposed using GL Assessments for Maths and English for pupils in Year 2 to Year 8, with GCSE grading being used for Year 9 to Year 11. Alongside this, she proposed moderation of writing</p>	

	<p>through comparative judgement, allowing assessment in non-core subjects. Helen explained that standardised assessments would allow comparison across the Trust, and support benchmarking on the levels of progress in each school. She advised that the total expected cost of the GL Assessments would be £46,800.</p> <p><b>Trustees supported this proposal, but raised concerns about the pressure on pupils returning to school after a long period of absence.</b> Helen advised that the intention was not to start testing pupils immediately on their return to school in September. She was very clear that the priority was to get children back into school and settled, then to start identifying where there were gaps in learning and to work to address these. Helen advised that the plan would be to run the assessments around the end of September / beginning of October, with further tests being run at the start of the summer term 2021.</p> <p><b>Trustees asked how schools had responded to the proposal for standardised testing.</b> Helen advised that she had discussed this with school leaders, and although there was some frustration in places from schools who already had systems in place, the feedback had been generally positive. She emphasised the benefits of standardised testing to identify where practice was strong, and where it could be shared in other areas to support all pupils in the Trust.</p> <p><b>PRIMARY EXECUTIVE LEAD</b></p> <p>Helen advised that in order to progress the primary strategy which had been paused since March 2020, she would like to appoint a temporary Executive Lead for Primary for two terms on a part time basis. She advised that this would strengthen leadership and add capacity to support the implementation of the new strategy.</p> <p>Trustees noted that this appointment had been agreed as part of the primary strategy originally, and was included in the 2020/21 budget. Trustees agreed they were happy for this to progress, noting that there would be Trustee involvement in the interview and appointment process.</p>	
	<p><b>5.1 Outline of Future Planning</b></p> <p>Information relating to risk assessments and planning checklists for the welcoming back of all pupils in September had been circulated with the agenda. Helen reported that building on from the robust procedures which had been put in place for the wider opening of schools in June, the same process would be followed for September, taking government guidance and using the risk assessments from City of York Council (CYC) and North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) and the ASCL checklists. Helen highlighted the tireless work of school leaders in ensuring that all possible measures were in place to ensure schools were as safe as they could be for staff and pupils. Trustees agreed that colleagues across the Trust had done an incredible job at a very difficult time, and fully recognised their commitment and efforts.</p> <p>As with the wider opening in June, Helen proposed that completed risk assessments were reviewed and signed off by herself, the COO and LGC Chair for each school. These discussions would be recorded and made available to Trustees along with the risk assessments, to enable any questions to be raised as required.</p> <p><b>APPROVED: In line with the process agreed for the wider opening of schools in June, Trustees agreed the risk assessment parameters for schools, and gave authority to the CEO, COO and LGC Chair of each school to sign off the completed documents. It was further agreed that this was subject to any concerns or questions being raised by Trustees on review of the risk assessments.</b></p> <p>Helen highlighted two points around wider opening for Trustees' information, the first relating to face coverings. She advised that unions had raised concerns around staff not being allowed to wear face coverings, though guidance was that these would not be required in school. Helen</p>	

	<p>advised that the proposal was to allow staff to use their own discretion in the wearing of face covering, recognising that this would provide reassurance to some about their return to work. Some concern was raised from Trustees around inconsistency and the message to parents if some staff wore face coverings and others did not. It was recognised, however, that allowing face coverings could ease the anxiety of individuals, and not permitting this could potentially result in a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) claim.</p> <p>Helen advised that the second point to note was around peripatetic and external staff coming into school, for example music teachers and extra-curricular activities. She advised that as long as there was a robust risk assessment in place, and all external staff also agreed to the school's risk assessment, this would be allowed to go ahead. It was noted that DfE guidance encouraged the continuation of extra-curricular activities where possible. In addition, it was noted that certain subjects such as GCSE Music required access to external provision for students as part of their curriculum specification.</p> <p>In response to a question about insurance, Helen confirmed that as long as there was adherence to the stringent measures in place through the risk assessment, this would comply with insurance requirements. She noted that it was important to balance the need to minimise risk as much as possible with the availability of opportunities for pupils' learning and development. The COO advised that the Trust were following both central government and LA health and safety guidance, which was even more robust.</p> <p>A question was raised regarding members of the Central Team visiting schools, as they also worked in a peripatetic way. Helen advised that in addition to schools' risk assessments, one would be produced and signed off for Central Services, which would take this into account and include protocols for staff to follow.</p> <p><b>Trustees noted that it would not just be staff but some pupils who may be anxious about a return to school in September, and asked how this would be supported.</b> Helen advised that as with the academic approach to children's learning, the aim was to get pupils back into school and to respond to any concerns or issues through support where these were identified. She noted that this may need to be both on an individual pupil basis or intervention on a wider scale.</p> <p><b>Trustees asked whether any further amendments were needed to the behaviour and attendance policies before September.</b> Helen advised that she would review these in line with the guidance and flag up any additional changes if required. She noted that there was some concern about attendance for September, recognising that there would be families who were still very anxious about sending their children back. Helen advised that the starting point for schools would be to work closely with these families to build confidence.</p> <p><b>Trustees expressed their thanks to all staff, school leaders and members of the Central Team who had worked to plan for the safe wider opening of schools. Trustees encouraged all staff to ensure that they had a break over the summer before the start of the autumn term.</b></p>	
	<p><b>5.2 Trust and Academy Development Plans 2020/21 (including recovery phase)</b></p> <p>The draft Trust Strategic Development Plan for 2020/21 had been circulated with the agenda, and highlighted four key priorities as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* To implement a recovery and response plan from September 2020</li> <li>* To merge SALT and HLTY</li> <li>* To ensure equality of opportunity for pupils and staff through parity of provision and fair and equitable structures</li> <li>* To develop the primary leadership model</li> </ul>	

	<p>It was agreed that these significant pieces of work needed to be the focus of the coming year. Trustees also recognised, however, that developments and further work over the autumn term would likely result in a review of key priorities in the coming months.</p> <p><b>Trustees asked how the Trust Strategic Plan linked into individual schools' development plans, and how schools would be supported in re-prioritising governor meetings to focus on key issues. A question was also raised about whether adjustments were needed to the LGC assurance model to equip governors to focus on key priorities from September.</b> Helen advised that leading from the Trust Strategic Plan, schools would produce their own development plans, with a priority focus for September on safe wider opening and teaching and learning. She advised that a model recovery plan would be provided to all schools to ensure this was being applied consistently and strategically in all settings in the Trust.</p>	
6.	<p><b><u>Local Governing Committee Updates</u></b></p>	
	<p><b>6.1 Burton Green / Skelton Primary Joint LGC</b></p> <p>Further to agreement at the last meeting to merge the LGCs of Burton Green and Skelton Primary Schools, Trustees reviewed the proposed constitution and governor appointments for the new LGC, which had been previously distributed.</p> <p>It was noted that whilst the Heads of School would not be members of the LGC, they would be encouraged to attend governors' meetings as required as part of their professional development.</p> <p><b>APPROVED: Trustees approved the proposed new constitution and governor appointments for Burton Green-Skelton LGC.</b></p>	
	<p><b>6.2 George Pindar / Graham School Joint LGC</b></p> <p>Trustees were asked to approve the proposed changes to the George Pindar-Graham LGC constitution, which had been previously distributed. The changes included the removal of the CEO and Executive Principal from the LGC, and the implementation of a model in line with other LGC constitutions within the Trust.</p> <p><b>APPROVED: Trustees approved the proposed new constitution and governor appointments for George Pindar-Graham LGC.</b></p> <p>Helen reported that the LGC Chair Malcolm Dawson had advised that he would be stepping down at the end of the academic year. Noting that approval had been given to appoint a paid Chair to the LGC for a further year, Helen advised that interviews would be held for this position and it was hoped that an appointment would be made before September.</p> <p>Trustees agreed they were happy for this process to continue, dependent on ensuring that the correct procedures were followed in terms of recruitment.</p>	
	<p><b>6.3 Baldersby St James Primary LGC</b></p> <p>Helen advised that following on from agreement at the last meeting, a paid Chair was also being sought for the LGC at Baldersby St James. She further advised that there were further implications around this and other governance issues at the school, and she would bring a paper for discussion and approval to Trustees about how to proceed on this matter. It was noted that this may need to be circulated before the next meeting, in recognition of continued concerns about vulnerability of governance leadership.</p> <p><b>ACTION: Helen agreed to produce a paper outlining options on how to proceed with governance at Baldersby St James and circulate to Trustees for feedback over the summer.</b></p>	HW

	<p>It was noted that consideration would also be needed about responsibility for sign-off of the risk assessment for September, in the absence of an LGC Chair. Helen agreed to ensure this was taken into account and that there was governor representation in the process.</p>	
7.	<p><b><u>Safeguarding Update</u></b> Trustees noted the update which had been circulated with the agenda for information.</p>	
	<p><b><u>7.1 Appointment of Safeguarding Trustee</u></b> Following the resignation of Dee Cooley from the Board of Trustees, it was noted that a new safeguarding trustee was required. The Chair agreed to take on the role on a temporary basis up to the point of merger with SALT. He advised that he hoped the current safeguarding Trustee for SALT would be willing and able to take on the role from the point of merger with SALT.</p> <p><i>[Andrew Simpkin left the meeting at 7.35pm]</i></p>	
8.	<p><b><u>Election of Chair of the Board of Trustees and Sub-Committee Chairs</u></b> Tony Myers was nominated as Chair of the Board of Trustees for 2020/21 and left the meeting whilst a vote was taken.</p> <p><b><i>APPROVED: Tony Myers was unanimously elected as Chair of the Board of Trustees for 2020/21 (Proposed – Karen Osborne, Seconded – Ian Thomson)</i></b></p> <p>Trustees also formally noted their thanks to Tony for his commitment and dedication to the role and to the Trust over the last year.</p> <p><i>[Tony Myers re-joined the meeting at 7.38pm]</i></p> <p>The following appointments were also agreed:  * Chair of Resources Committee – Ian Thomson  * Chair of Standards Committee – Karen Osborne  * Chair of Distinctiveness Committee – Philippa Gowland</p> <p>It was further agreed that the current model should continue, of committee chairs taking on a joint role as vice-chairs of the Board.</p> <p>Trustees noted that at the point of merger and creation of a new Board of Trustees, there would be an opportunity to review this structure.</p>	
9.	<p><b><u>Any Other Business</u></b> <b><u>9.1 Amendment to 2021 Admissions Policy for Manor CE Academy</u></b> A proposed amendment to the 2021 admissions policy for Manor CE Academy had been circulated on the day of the meeting. The Chair explained that this amendment had been requested by the Diocese of York and related to faith-based oversubscription criteria. As churches and other places of worship had been closed during the pandemic, reference to attendance at church had been updated to allow for alternative arrangements, so that students could continue to fulfil this eligibility criteria.</p> <p><b><i>APPROVED: Trustees approved the amendment to the policy unanimously.</i></b></p> <p>Brian Crosby noted that Reverend Tony Hand, who had been involved with Manor as Chaplain as well as a governor and trustee for HLTy over many years, had left to move to a new parish. It was agreed that the Chair and Brian would liaise outside of the meeting to write and thank him for his years of service and support.</p>	

	<p><i>[Andrew Simpkin re-joined the meeting at 7.45pm; Ian Thomson left the meeting at 7.45pm]</i></p> <p><b>9.2 Brian Crosby</b> On behalf of the Board of Trustees, David Judson gave a speech thanking Brian Crosby on the occasion of his last meeting as CEO before his retirement. David highlighted Brian's achievements and the difference he had made to so many young people in his 18 years' at Manor CE Academy and with the Hope Learning Trust. Trustees also added their thanks and best wishes to Brian, noting that moving forward the trust would continue to develop on the foundations of what he had put in place.</p> <p><i>[Allyson Buckton, Helen Dowds and Simon Bryan-Smith left the meeting at 8.00pm; Ian Thomson re-joined the meeting at 8.00pm]</i></p>	
<b>10.</b>	<b><u>Confidential Items</u></b>	
	<p><b>10.1 Confidential minutes from the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020</b> Previously distributed. The minutes were agreed to be a true and accurate record.</p>	
	<p><b>10.2 Update on Hope Sentamu Learning Trust</b> Trustees noted the minutes of the Joint Oversight Committee meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July, which had been circulated with the agenda. The Chair provided a verbal update from the subsequent meeting of the Oversight Committee, held on 13<sup>th</sup> July, noting that the committee had reviewed and were happy with the 2020/21 budgets for both trusts.</p> <p>It was noted that in sharing information on budgets, it was clear that SALT had a very different way of dealing with their accounts than HLTy presently did, being much more ambitious where HLTy was cautious. Trustees had asked the Finance Directors of both trusts to work together to produce some modelling based on a common approach somewhere between the two. As discussed earlier in the meeting, it was noted that there was an opportunity here to move towards a centralised approach, pooling GAG funding and reserves centrally to support development which would benefit the whole trust as well as individual schools.</p> <p>It was also noted that Helen had attended the SALT Board of Trustees meeting earlier in the week, where a common and consistent approach to wider opening and recovery from September had been agreed.</p>	
	<p><b>10.3 Update on Project West</b> <i>The following discussion has been recorded as a separate, confidential minute.</i></p>	
	<p><b>10.4 Project North</b> <i>The following discussion has been recorded as a separate, confidential minute.</i></p>	
<b>10.</b>	<p><b><u>Dates and Times of Future Meetings</u></b> * Wednesday 16th September 2020 at 6pm * Wednesday 4th November 2020 at 6pm * Wednesday 9th December 2020 at 6pm (Approval of Accounts and Annual Report) * Wednesday 20th January 2021 at 6pm * Wednesday 17th March 2021 at 6pm * Wednesday 19th May 2021 at 6pm * Wednesday 21st July 2021 at 6pm</p>	

*The meeting closed at 8.15pm*



Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Tony Myers \_\_\_\_\_  
Tony Myers (Chair of the Trust Board)

Date: \_\_\_\_16<sup>th</sup> September 2020\_\_\_\_

**Action Points from the Hope Learning Trust Board meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

	<i>ACTION</i>	<i>AGENDA ITEM</i>	<i>WHO</i>	<i>WHEN</i>
1.	<i>Helen agreed to produce a paper outlining options on how to proceed with governance at Baldersby St James and circulate to Trustees for feedback over the summer.</i>	6.3	<i>Helen Winn</i>	<i>31/08/2020</i>

**Action Points from previous meetings to carry forward**

	<i>ACTION</i>	<i>MEETING REF</i>	<i>WHO</i>
1.	<i>Standards, Resources and Trust Board Chairs should discuss ways of developing governor understanding of the assurance model and move this forward</i>	<i>11/03/2020</i>	<i>Karen Osborne, Ian Thomson, Tony Myers</i>
2.	<i>Include development of staff wellbeing policy on next HDPD agenda</i>	<i>11/03/2020</i>	<i>Jess Swarbrick</i>

**Items for the next agenda:**

**Items for future agendas:**

- \* Update on training for LGCs on assurance model, roles and responsibilities
- \* Self-Review template for LGCs
- \* Trust Board Self-Review