

## HADRIAN LEARNING TRUST

### Minutes for Meeting of Board of Trustees

6pm, Wednesday 20 October 2021

QEHS Conference room

**In attendance:** Graeme Atkins (GA, Exec Head), David Hartland (DH, Chair), Sarah Kemp (SKe, Vice Chair), Veryan Johnston (VJ), Barbara Hignett (BH), Kate Chaplin (KC), Tony Brown (TB), Johnathan Holmes (JH - via Teams), Patrick Ferguson (PF – via Teams).

**Also attending:** Neil Seaton (NS, HoS QE), Liam Watters (LW, HoS HMS)

#### Part 1 Classified Non-Confidential

##### 1) Apologies

None. Best wishes were passed on to Charlotte Gaines who was ill and isolating.

##### 2) Declaration of pecuniary, business or personal interests

None.

##### 3) Minutes of meetings

The Minutes of the following meeting, having been circulated to trustees, were adopted as a true record.

- Hadrian Learning Trust Board – 22 September 2021 – Part 1

##### 4) Matters arising

CG to circulate declaration of interest forms for the annual review. DH and GA have liaised over seeking a successor to Kim Cowie but no further progress to report. GA is liaising with committee chairs on dates of future meetings – to be circulated once established.

GA/CG

##### 5) Scheme of Delegation

GA advised that the Scheme was due for its annual review. One alteration to note was that the Academy Trust Handbook has replaced the Academies Financial Handbook. Trustees approved the updated version of the Scheme of Delegation, to be published on the schools' websites.

CG

##### 6) Executive Headteacher reports

GA referred to the circulated reports and invited comments and questions, ahead of each report's fuller consideration at the forthcoming monitoring committee meetings. VJ thanked GA for the comprehensive nature of the reports. KC referred to the operational priorities for the year ahead, and emphasised the importance of clear reporting on progress, particularly through the monitoring committees. SKe asked about the extra-curricular offer at QEHS. GA explained that this had been greatly reduced last year due to the pandemic but that an improved offer was taking shape in the new academic year. In relation to the staffing section, BH advised trustees that a member of support staff and former governor had recently retired.

## 7) Return to School update

LW reported that the half term had gone well at the middle school, with pupils into good routines having adapted well. Generally around school the learning environment has been calm and purposeful with support plans in place as needed for specific individuals. There is a lot going on beyond day-to-day teaching including parents' information evenings, welcome events, open evening, tours, etc – there has been good turnout by parents at these events. Various leadership positions for pupils are being filled, including head pupils, house captains, digital leaders, etc.

The action plan for disadvantaged pupils is being implemented, with each member of SLT along with the pastoral leaders having an aspect to lead on. One-to-one meetings are taking place with parents.

Regarding assessment, GL baseline and cognitive ability tests have been undertaken, along with lots of ongoing assessment in class. Comprehensive education recovery activity is in place with various support activities and interventions around literacy and numeracy. Quality of Education reviews will commence after the half-term break, with a sharp focus on disadvantaged and SEND pupils intended. The SEND team is conducting a full review of SEND across the year groups.

The extra-curricular programme at lunchtime and after school is up and running and looking very strong. The library is in operation, a breakfast club is planned and wellbeing initiatives for staff are in place. New pupils have been very positive and convey a real sense of belonging, and year 7&8 pupils are enjoying accessing the specialist high school facilities.

NS reported that students at QE had settled very well into new routines, with a calm atmosphere including at social times with spaces being well used. Sixth form students are well-settled in their surroundings, which will be enhanced when the café/servery and LRC get fully handed over. Welcome and open evenings and parent tours have been positive and well-attended, well-supported by sixth formers.

Developing the quality of teaching is a focus with senior and middle leaders liaising on subject development plans, training for staff, performance appraisal and preparations for the forthcoming quality of education reviews which take place next half term.

Departments across the school are offering drop in and study support sessions for students, maths and English intervention teachers are in place, literacy support for weak readers is happening and year 13 supervision is going well. UCAS early applications are in hand and mocks are scheduled for November.

Extra-curricular opportunities are taking shape across sport, music, drama and through a variety of clubs and societies. The delayed year 11 prom took place recently and was a success, as was freshers' fair.

There had been a slight uptick of covid cases among students in the early weeks of the half-term but this now appears to have settled. Vaccinations are scheduled for early November. An outbreak of covid amongst support staff led to some additional measures being implemented to reduce further transmission risk, on advice from public health advisers.

Trustees asked various questions in relation to the above and a discussion was had around the current situation with Covid 19, the associated measures and risk assessment, and the impact on learning and staffing.

## **8) New build**

GA provided an update to the Board on activity relating to the new buildings and facilities since the last meeting. For most of the half-term, the contractors have largely been reacting to issues arising each day, for example leakages, malfunctions, etc, therefore progress on full completion of phase 1 works has been slow. However, in recent days better progress has been made which we expect to see accelerate over the half-term break.

## **9) Policies**

GA informed trustees that a letter from the ESFA advising of a recent review of the complaints policy had identified that aspects relating to Part 7 of the Education Regulations needed to be included. DH took Chair's Action to approve the updating of the policy in line with the advice. Trustees' noted and retrospectively approved the changes. Trustees also approved the 2021 version of the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and noted that the HR&PM Committee had updated and circulated the 2021 pay and appraisal policies to staff.

## **10) Stakeholder engagement**

GA informed trustees that DH and two senior leaders had represented both schools at a recent community meeting about school transport and travel arrangements. Although our schools are mitigating risk through a high presence each morning and afternoon on both Whetstone Bridge Road and Allendale Road, there is general consensus that NCC Highways need to do more regarding the immediate transport infrastructure and pedestrian safety. Lobbying is taking place to this end.

PF advised that he, GA and SS were scheduled to meet in early November to review the risk register on behalf of the Finance and Audit Committee. NS and LW advised of their intention to continue with regular road safety guidance to pupils and students, and to give regular reminders to parents that we are discouraging drop off and pick up on Whetstone Bridge Road in the interests of children's safety. SKE asked if there was a possible bus solution for children travelling from the east of town, which might reduce car numbers.

GA advised that NS and LW had a meeting scheduled with the Hydro Neighbourhood Group the following day. Also, a meeting with parties interested in the woodland garden was pending. KC advised that Hexham Space for Nature had expressed interest in supporting landscaping on the site.

Disappointingly, the intended gathering with staff at lunchtime on the last day of term would have to be re-scheduled once things eased regarding covid.

DH commented on growing community use of the new sports facilities.

## **11) Urgent business with agreement of Chair**

Trustees noted the circulated management accounts for June and July.

### **Close and confirm date of next meeting**

Part 1 of the meeting was concluded.

The date of the next Part 1 meeting is 18 November 2021.

Trustees moved onto Part 2 of the agenda.

