



## Nexus MAT Board of Directors Meeting Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023 5 pm - 7.30 pm Via Nexus HQ

<b>Attendees:</b>		
Rachel Potts	Director/Vice Chair of Trust Board of Directors - Chair	RP
Gillian Askew	Director – via Teams	GA
Steve Booth	Director	SB
Peter Castleton	Director	PC
Mark Greenwood	Director – via Teams (from 5.55 pm)	MG
Ray Palmer	Director	RPa
Naveen Judah	Director	NJ
<b>Also Present:</b>		
Warren Carratt	Chief Executive Officer	CEO
Joel Hardwick	Assistant CEO – Strategy & Partnerships	JH
Vicky Hawksley	Governance Clerk	VH
Karen Smith	Chief Finance Officer	KS
Jacky Tattershall	Assistant CEO – Quality Assurance & Improvement	JT
<b>Apologies:</b>		
Andrew Child	Director/Member & Chair of Trust Board of Directors	AC
Sue Shelley	Director	SS

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	ACTIONS
1.1 Welcome & receive apologies for absence  Apologies were received for AC and SS.	
1.2 To accept apologies for absence  Apologies were accepted for AC and SS.	
2. ITEMS OF AOB	
<p>Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The CEO invited three Directors to volunteer to take part in two panel hearings – one is scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> March at 2.30 pm and can take place via Teams. RP, SB and NJ volunteered and the CEO will send them a formal invitation.</li> <li>The second hearing is on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> March and relate to six flexible working appeals. The process is expected to take most of the day and can be held via Teams. The hearings will be held from 9am – 12 noon and then from 1pm – 4pm. Volunteers were PC, RP and NV – CEO to send invitations.</li> <li>Stage 3 Complaint – JH will be seeking availability from Directors to consider this complaint within the next 3-4 weeks. JH to suggest date and advise Directors accordingly.</li> <li>BBC Documentary regarding Special Schools – the CEO updated Directors on a recent documentary by the BBC which focussed on the special schools’ sector and the current difficulties this sector is facing. The main focus of the report was around the absence of investment in this sector and concern about the current state of special schools because of this. Reporters from the BBC visited Hilltop School and were shown around by the Headteacher.</li> </ul> <p>Since the documentary aired, we have not received any enquiries about issues at Hilltop and we have been notified that the LA are now accelerating discussions about allocating the Rowan Centre for use by Hilltop. The CEO explained that this is a national issue and feels that the timing of this documentary has been helpful as we are expecting the SEND Implementation Plan to be published later this week and this has presented an opportunity to highlight the issues this sector is facing and the investment that it needs. The CEO has been invited onto BBC Breakfast tomorrow morning to talk about this issue.</p> <p><b>Do any senior staff in the Trust have any media training to deal with this type of enquiry?</b> The CEO has received training in this area and explained that we do not expect other staff to have to deal with media enquiries.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CEO</b> <b>14/03/23</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>CEO</b> <b>09/03/23</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>JH</b> <b>March 2023</b></p>
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
3.1. Individual Directors to declare any personal, business/governance interests on any item on the agenda.  None raised.	

<p><b>4. TRUST BOARD OF DIRECTORS MINUTES</b></p>	
<p>a. To approve the minutes of the following meetings:</p> <p>The minutes of the Trust Board meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2023 were reviewed and agreed.</p>	
<p>b. Review of Action Tracker</p> <p>The outstanding actions on the tracker were reviewed and updated.</p>	
<p>c. Matters arising from the Minutes.</p> <p>None raised.</p>	
<p><b>5. Strategic Business Plan Update – to receive and scrutinise</b></p>	
<p>The CEO had circulated this plan in advance and explained that Directors will have an opportunity to discuss this in more detail during the session scheduled for May.</p> <p>The main points to note are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There has been a lot of change in a short time; the capacity of the Central Team has increased but demand has increased as well. The CEO is aware that a number of other schools have expressed an interest in joining the Trust and this would impact further on staffing.</li> <li>• CEO explained that we have been invited by Doncaster Council to work with Macauley High School on developing an integrated resource.</li> <li>• CEO explained that there are two pupils at Bader Academy whom the Local Authority was refusing to provide funding for. One child is visually impaired and has been working with a one-to-one worker. As Bader Academy is not a specialist visually impaired school the pupil should have bespoke funding. CEO explained that for another child a tribunal has taken place but Doncaster Council were still refusing to fund this place despite direction from Tribunal. The Trust wrote to the Director of Children’s Services asking for a review of these decisions but as yet we have not received a reply or acknowledgement to the letter. The Trust has therefore had no choice but to commission Stone King to issue a letter to the Council CEO asking them to review this, or else the issue would be referred to the Secretary of State for Education, under section 496 of the Education Act (1996). Subsequently, the council has responded to confirm they have agreed to provide funding for these pupils. CEO pointed out that one of these cases has taken 3 years to resolve.</li> </ul> <p><b>What is the situation with the child placed by Tribunal, now?</b> The child will be joining us on roll in due course. We are currently looking at transitional arrangements.</p> <p><b>What has been the impact on the child of the delays and lack of funding for their education?</b> CEO explained that the child will likely either have been out</p>	

of education or home educated. We will be seeking to meet the child's needs as much as we can now that we have the funding available.

**Page 3 of the report relates to the Executive Head of Becton and Kenwood.**

**What is the current situation?** CEO explained that the current Executive Head was responsible for Becton and Kenwood but since the schools have become separate the decision was made for R Hadfield and M Sault would become co-Heads at Kenwood after Easter. The current Executive Head will remain at Becton and is in the process of establishing a satellite centre at Silverdale as well.

**Page 4 refers to the Executive Director giving coaching to another local Head. What does this mean?**

CEO explained that the Trust has taken this role on to continue to support a school in need.

**Page 2 refers to a visit by the DfE to Discovery Academy. What was the outcome of this visit?**

CEO explained that this visit took place today and feedback has been very positive. The Education Expert was impressed with the Trust's support and they received good feedback from staff on network groups.

**Page 8 refers to resetting of school budgets, is this reflected in the P4 or P5?**

CEO explained that we have not reset projections but have worked with Headteachers to review and reset spending commitments. We hope to see current school deficits decreasing this year.

**Page 3 refers to the departure of the Executive Head and Assistant Head at Bader - are these connected?**

CEO explained that they are not connected. The Executive Head left Bader in the summer and the Assistant Head will leave at Easter.

**Pages 4 and 5 refer to a joint application between Sheffield and Barnsley for a special free school – what is this?**

JH explained that this is a joint application and bids have been submitted to the DfE

**There are a number of enquiries listed in this report – where have these come from?**

CEO explained that some of these are around the profile and reputation of Nexus– mainly due to connections being made from new executive appointments. The Trust is starting to build relationships in a way that we have not previously been able to.

**It is a positive step to see that we have mainstream primary schools showing an interest in joining the Trust. Should we as a Board consider what impact this would have on the Trust Board and the Trust itself in terms of whether this would change the dynamics of the Trust?**

CEO will share with Directors his thinking around what the Central Trust structure will look like in September, at the April meeting as he does every year. If we increase the number of primary schools in the Trust we will need more mainstream primary capacity in the central Trust team.

Discussions will take place with Directors in due course. Directors felt that the geographical map of Nexus will change if all these schools join the Trust and it would be helpful to have a map of where all these schools are located.

**All these initiatives are positive, but should the Trust have a period of consolidation? What is the timeline for this?** CEO explained that we do not expect any more applications for schools to convert during this academic year. We are expecting a number of Ofsted inspections at various schools over the next few months and this will be the focus of the Trust for the rest of this year.

**Which schools are in the Ofsted window and what support is being given to them?** North Ridge, Pennine View, Craggs, Heatherwood, Kelford, Abbey, Coppice, Beech and Becton. Bespoke support is being given to each school and all have had an external review and have been given 'Ofsted readiness' support. This is reported in more detail to the Standards Committee.

**Directors noted that conversations with Rotherham Council appear to be progressing better than expected relating to the Rowan Centre.** CEO explained that our relationship with Rotherham Council appears to have improved, and they are engaging well with us now.

The CEO wished to record his thanks to the Assistant Chief Executive Officers for their contributions to this report and expressed that it has been a privilege to work with Senior Leaders and Headteachers in such a positive way.

Feedback from the recent Nexus Conference has been very positive and the CEO wished to record his thanks to everyone involved.

## 6. Budget Monitoring Report – Period 4 – to receive and scrutinise

Papers have been circulated to Directors in advance.

All Directors agreed that this new format is very useful and gives clear commentary and data. Directors wished to record their thanks to the CFO for this report.

**Directors noted that a number of schools are in deficit and asked what is being done to support these schools?** CEO replied that the Trust is aware of these schools and we expect that the deficits will reduce in the longer term, by August 2024. It was noted that some of these schools are in the Ofsted window so the Trust is keen to avoid destabilising them.

**Queries were raised on the Consolidated Management Report which shows a surplus deficit and variance with a minus figure. Should this be positive?**

The CFO explained that the negative figure is actually positive. A new finance system will be implemented from August this year which will make things much clearer for Directors to understand.

## 7. Significant Change Proposals – Abbey & Kenwood – to scrutinise

JH explained the background to these proposals which relate to conversations around growth and the partnerships we have with Barnsley council.

The recommendations are for two significant change processes as follows:

<p>1. Abbey School to add the Horizon hub as a long term satellite.</p> <p>2. Kenwood to incorporate the West Riding campus as a satellite.</p> <p>JH pointed out that this is not a formal process that requires a decision from Directors and is more about being aware of this position.</p>	<p><b>JH</b> <b>10/03/23</b></p>	
<p><b>8. Chair for June Academy Council Chairs Forum – to approve.</b></p>		
<p>CEO requested volunteers to chair this Forum which is meeting our commitment to meet with our Academy Chairs. The meeting will take place on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> June at 2 – 3.30 pm via Teams. RP is available to chair this meeting.</p>	<p><b>CEO/RP</b> <b>21/06/23</b></p>	
<p><b>9. Academies Policy Review Board Action Log – for information only.</b></p>		
<p>CEO explained that the Trust has moved policy approval away from LGBs and these are now approved by a Policy Approval Board consisting of the CEO, Assistant CEO and the Governance and Policy Lead at the Trust. This should be a standing item for future Director meetings so that approval of these policies can be minuted.</p> <p>Directors agreed that this process is becoming more streamlined and less bureaucratic.</p> <p>The report is likely to be updated at every half-term meeting and will be for information only.</p>		
<p><b>10. Any Other Urgent Business</b></p>		
<p>Already covered earlier in the meeting.</p> <p>Additional items were raised as follows:</p> <p>NJ explained that he had met a grandparent of a pupil who attends Abbey School. The feedback was that this has turned their granddaughter’s life around and she is now speaking for the first time. They wished to express the wonderful work being done by Abbey School.</p> <p>CEO reported that Ofsted have asked to talk to Trustees tomorrow at 2pm via Teams – this will be a 30-minute meeting relating to Bader Academy’s inspection. RP and MG are available to attend along with the CEO and JT. Directors will be provided with the SEF and SIP in advance along with the Academy Council and SPSB minutes for this school.</p>		<p><b>JT</b> <b>02/03/23</b></p>
<p><b>11. Review of Risk</b></p>		
<p>10.1 To consider any new risks identified during the meeting for referral to Trust Committees.</p> <p>The Risk Register will be reviewed at the next A&amp;R Committee. No issues were raised at this meeting.</p>		

<p><b>How has the Trust been affected by the recent strike action?</b> CEO explained that most schools remained open either partially or fully. Pennine View was closed. We expect the same arrangements for the next two strike days and anticipate that other unions will strike in due course.</p>	
<p><b>12. CONFIDENTIALITY</b></p>	
<p>12.1 To consider the confidentiality of any items discussed during the meeting.  None.</p>	
<p><b>13. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</b></p>	

Wednesday 29 <sup>th</sup> March 2023	17:00 – 19:30	<b>Via Teams</b>
Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> April 2023	17:00 – 19:30	Nexus HQ
Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> May 2023	17:00 – 19:30	<b>Via Teams</b>
Wednesday 28 <sup>th</sup> June 2023	17:00 – 19:30	Nexus HQ
Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> July 2023	17:00 – 19:30	<b>Via Teams</b>

**Minutes approved**

CHAIR	SIGNATURE	DATE