

Minutes

Monday 13th December 2021

Via Microsoft Teams at 2.00pm

Present:

James Kempton (JK)	Director and Chair	Richard Lynch (RL)	Director
Jane Acklam (JA)	Director and Vice-Chair	Councillor Shaid Mushtaq (SM)	Director
Helen Arya (HA)	Director	Anne Redmond (AR)	Director
Mary Garvey (MG)	Director	Helen Rowland (HR)	Director
Rob Higgins (RH)	Director	Nicola Underdown (NU)	Director DfE
Gerard Jones (GJ)	Director	Ian Walsh (IW)	Director
Tony Shepherd (TS)	Oldham Council	Jo Kelly (JoK)	DfE

Absent:

Sally Robson (SR)	Programme Director Oldham OA	Jackie Deffley (JD)	DfE
Gillian Kay (GK)	Director	Martyn King (MK)	DfE
Vicky Beer (VB)	Regional Schools Commissioner	Sara Zagorski	DfE

1. Welcome, Declarations of Interest and Minutes

JK welcomed all to the meeting

RH declared his conflict of interest in Item 6, Paper 2. It was agreed he would leave and rejoin the meeting upon discussion of this paper.

AR declared conflict of interest with elements in the same item as there is reference to one of the programmes at Kingfisher and she would step out if felt she needed to. (This did not happen as no direct conflict occurred in that discussion.)

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

2. Decision and Action Log

Peer Review (Minute 3):

HR confirmed she was working to promote more school take up. Secondary schools have expressed an interest in training in the new year and one partnership of 6 schools is already getting on board. MG confirmed the training is up and running, they are part of this already and have done one full cycle and their school improvement champion is supporting other schools. MG has already promoted the course to all the Catholic Heads. HR shared that the Oasis Primaries are involved but the secondaries haven't yet. Nobody has firmly signed up so it would be good to promote this with them.

TS shared that he had been in touch with Angela Leech by HR recommendation, and she is going to be doing some backfill work for the team, she will have oversight of this programme.

HR shared that the provider EDT are very happy to roll over training into 22/23 if take up is below the funded amount in the current year.

Action: Board members to continue to promote the training to schools. HR and MG

Action: Review the EDT contract and recommend to the Board either rolling forward training into 22/23 or clawing back funding for other spending priorities in 21/22. SR

Support to secondaries (Minute 4)

JA has a good response from secondary heads about sharing their self-evaluations and she has arranged to be released for w/c 24th January to meet individuals. There are 8 booked in so far. She has invited 2 members of secondary heads group to be part of the Quality of Education sub-committee and mentioned that RH has volunteered. Sarah North from North Chadderton has also volunteered. JA will convene the Quality of Education sub-committee following her meetings with secondaries.

Update on Communications Group (Minute 6) – NU shared that Rob Caudwell from Oasis Limeside has agreed to be part of this group. NU asked the board for further nominations of people who can look over content that will be going out as comms to ensure they are the correct messages, the right terminology being used so checking it before it goes out to the sector. The ask would be to look over material possibly once a fortnight ½ hour. JK reiterated the point that comms is vital and that we can only get the tone right with involvement from the sector.

Action: Consider colleagues to be part of the group. ALL

3. Verbal Update on Education Recovery Strategy: Initiating reporting

RL reported on further development work on the plan. Raising attendance remains a key priority. We are tracking above the national average of attendance but still below pre-pandemic levels. The LA are also focused on the take up of 2–4-year-olds with target to get this back to ¾ by the end of next term.

RL proposed, and the Board agreed, to take on monitoring and reviewing the impact of the plan in the role of critical friend. He would come back with clarity over the exact remit. It was noted that the Board's lack of significant early years expertise which was one of the key strands of the strategy.

Action: Provide clarity to the next meeting around the expectation of the role the board are to play within this. RL

Action: Constitutional and Operational Working Group to consider the issue of EY expertise on the Board. JK/HA/RH

4. OA Funding grant reporting update

NU confirmed that the operations group had reviewed all OL's contracts and were happy that the spreadsheet provided an accurate picture of OL's financial commitments. Profiled spend is anticipated to be in the region of £454,000 (including three budgets – primary networks, CEO salary and SI tracker – where no commitments had yet been made amounting to c£47k) against the OA grant of £461,000. With a carry forward of c.£21k from last academic year, the uncommitted funding is £28,612.

NU asked the Board members to consider:

- If we want to pursue the Partnership proposal where should be reduced?
- Is the balance of activity right?
- Are there other pieces of work that should be brought forward as a priority and if so, where might savings be achieved?

HA asked about the resource allocated to subject networks. NU confirmed that exiting the networks were funded through LA funds of £17,000: the uncommitted budget was to expand the provision. HA thought this uncommitted amount could be used for other priorities. TS confirmed that the LA funding was for this year only due to changes in DfE grant funding.

RL was confident that given these comments the operations groups could bring forward proposals for funding the strategic partnering arrangement should the Board wish to adopt it.

Action: Noted

5. Oldham Council delegated functions and associated funding

RH noted that the primary SIP model for 21/22 had proved to be a contentious issue with schools. This had resulted in a model developed under the previous CEO (termed in the paper transition model with districts) that was £30k over-budget. An alternative graduated model was proposed that maintained support for District Leads but limited SIP visits in the Spring and Summer Terms to vulnerable schools only. The Board agreed that it was right to focus resource on vulnerable schools and agreed to adopt the graduated model. It noted that neither SIP model was likely to be financially sustainable going forward. This decision would however need careful communication to schools.

Action: provide lines for the board to share after Christmas. NU

RH left the meeting whilst the next agenda item on the Strategic Partnership Proposal: Cranmer Education Trust was discussed

6. Strategic Partnership Proposal: Cranmer Education Trust

Following the resignation of the CEO, Cranmer/Teaching School Hub had come forward with an offer to support OL. Due to DfE rules limiting the role of TSHs, this formal proposal had come from Cranmer, drawing on their legacy teaching school network and aligning with the TSH's wide partnership network. The Board thanked Cranmer and agreed that a strategic partnership of this sort would be a feasible and effective option for supporting OL in the current circumstances. A short term non-tendered contract that only ran for the rest of 21/22 would be acceptable given the urgency of putting more settled support arrangements in place.

A number of detailed comments were raised (including around communications, quality assurance of the current programme, commissioning of new provision, role of the OL Board) as well as the need for the operations group to do some due diligence assessment of the proposal. Bearing this in mind the Board agreed, in principle, to accept the proposal from Cranmer Education Trust and asked HA and HR supported by the operations group to meet Cranmer for detailed discussions.

Action: meet Cranmer to develop refine aspects of the proposal. HA/HR/operations group

Action: raise any specific detail Board Members wished to be part of these discussion. ALL

Action: keep the Board abreast of progress. HA/HRT/JK

RH re-joined the meeting

7. Next phase of OL: Constitutional refresh and Oldham Learning Board Member Job Description

The Board agreed the following recommendations in the report of the Constitutional and Operational Working Group:

Recommendation 1: That the Board agrees to extend the Foundation Board's tenure to 24 months to provide stability during a time of change.

Recommendation 2: That a permanent Board be recruited before the end of this academic year to take over in September 2022.

The Board welcomed the discussion paper on the role of the OL Board Member drafted by HA and RH. Given the time it was agreed to ask for written comments.

Action: produce communications lines to support Board members in explaining these decisions. NU

Action: provide feedback on the discussion paper on the role of the OL Board Member. ALL

IW reported that on the 24th & 25th March, the majority of schools from Oldham would be attending a leadership conference with high profile speakers including Alistair Campbell and Baroness Floella Benjamin. It would be a good opportunity to promote OL and to encourage people to think about joining the permanent Board.

Action: consider the opportunity for a Stand/leaflet/after dinner speaker. IW/NU/Coms group

8. AOB & Close

JK thanked everyone for their time and for stepping forward in the leadership of OL.

Action: set a date for the next meeting in the New Year. NU