

Dove House School Board of Trustees
Minutes of Meeting Tuesday 12th January 2021

Present:	Category:
Juliet Annesley-Gamester (JAG)	Parent Trustee
Kevin Barwick (KB)	Community Trustee
Andrea Francis (AF)	Community Trustee
Lisa Goodall (LG) (Chair)	Parent Trustee
Ollie Killinger (OK)	Community Trustee
Emma Layzell (EL)	Co-opted Trustee
Kate Need (KN)	Co-opted Trustee
Neil Plant (NP)	Co-opted Trustee
Chris Toner (CT)	Interim Headteacher
Apologies:	
Sian Butler (SB)	Community Trustee
Debbie McLatch (DM)	Community Trustee
In Attendance:	
Jenny Burns (JB) Items 1-3	Finance & Resources Director
Jayne Humphrey (JH)	Governance Lead
Brigid Ryan (BR)	Interim Head of School

1. Welcome & Apologies.

The Chair welcomed trustees to the meeting and introduced the Interim Headteacher, Chris Toner and Interim Head of School, Brigid Ryan. Apologies were received and accepted from Sian Butler and Debbie McLatch.

The meeting was quorate. It was noted that agenda item papers had been provided in advance of the meeting.

2. Pecuniary Interests

No interests were declared in the agenda items.

Trustees confirmed that they did not have any new declarations to make.

3. IT Procurement Proposal

The Finance & Resources Director reported that the academy needs to contract with a new Hosted IT Service because the current provider, Hampshire County Council, are decommissioning the DHSA site at the beginning of April 2021 and pulling out of the market. The proposal outlined that:

- The academy applied the principles of best value to the process of Compare, Challenge, Compete and Consult.
- The academy drafted a specification document outlining their IT requirements which was ratified by Hampshire IT as being a clear outline of their specific needs.
- The academy obtained written quotes from four school IT companies in response to their detailed IT requirements.
- The procurement process enabled the academy to achieve efficiencies and value for money by ensuring that the level of service quoted for by each supplier meets the needs of the academy and is not over or under stated.
- The academy has ensured that the cost quoted for the annual IT service provision by each company is comparable to or less than the cost currently paid to Hampshire IT, without impacting on the quality or level of service.
- The academy compared the different quotes received and challenged the companies to clarify their provision and refine their quotes.
- The academy requested references from each company and also independently consulted other schools, independent IT experts and other school business professionals to determine their experiences of the companies that quoted.

The academy obtained 4 written quotes from Agile, SchoolCare, Medhurst and Harrap and undertook a written evaluation of them, against the detail in their specification to determine their proposed methodology/delivery model (the agenda paper entitled IT Requirements provides full details).

The results were:

Aspect Company	Agile	SchoolCare	Medhurst	Harrap
Price	3	4	2	1
Proposed Methodology	3	2	4	1
Past performance/customer feedback/	2	1	4	3
Understanding of requirements	2	1	4	3
TOTAL	10	8	14	8

The Finance & Resources Director highlighted that due to the short timescales involved in securing an alternative supplier it had not been possible to run a full tender process as required for services valued over £25,000.

The Finance & Resources Director advised the trustees that future procurement would be undertaken in accordance with the tendering policy. The Chair thanked the Finance & Resources Director for organising the proposal in such a short space of time and noted that the academy will follow the tendering policy for future procurement.

The Interim Headteacher provided her view of the competing companies:

- That she had previously found Medhurst to provide a good service and that following a negotiation they had reduced their quote considerably, with the proposal remaining the same.
- That Agile had provided a good service at a previous school, however had been difficult when the school chose to move provider.
- That she has no experience of Harrap, but is aware that many other schools use them.
- That she has no experience of SchoolCare.

The Interim Headteacher advised trustees that the timescale for delivery of the project is extremely tight and that the academy is already under pressure from Hampshire IT regarding the decommissioning of the service.

The Finance & Resources Director advised the trustees that she has confirmed with all potential suppliers that they can still meet the decommissioning date.

The Chair asked trustees for any questions for the Finance & Resources Director:

Q: It's good that you have confirmed that proposed suppliers can meet deadlines, but do we have a contingency plan in place or is there an option to extend the Hampshire IT deadline?

A: (CT) There isn't any option to extend the deadline with Hampshire IT as they are stopping the service altogether. In my previous experience, Medhurst who was the supplier, managed to complete the same process effectively with only a 2-hour downtime in service. I am confident that the timings can be met.

(JB) We have scheduled the change for the beginning of the Easter holidays as we have been advised that the task will take several days, so there is plenty of time to address any issues. Hampshire IT have confirmed that they are comfortable with any provider and will work with them to ensure that everything is done in a timely way.

Q: Are the Year 2 & 3 costings dependant on the current number of laptops, tablets and PCs we have? Would it change?

A: No, it's based more on the level of service we need. We have tried to match the service we require as closely as possible to what we have now, but it isn't an exact comparison. Therefore, those costs are indicative as we move forward. We may be able to reduce costs in future as our IT Manager is keen to undertake training to develop her knowledge, so we may be able to bring some areas in-house.

There are other costs that we will need to consider such as our Microsoft Licensing in June 2021, Broadband and Anti-Virus which HCC will provide until December 2022.

Q: Have you established whether the costs were included in the budget or otherwise?

A: The provision of the ongoing IT service was included in the budget, but I don't believe that the installation cost was included. I would not expect the school to have had any idea of cost at the time the budget was produced. Moving forward there will be a cost saving.

Q: In terms of the method statement scoring breakdown by company, there was quite a wide variance within the scores given for certain criteria, for example iPad management. Who were the two reviewers and were the variances explored?

A: (JB) The two reviewers were me and our IT Manager. We did have a brief discussion about the variance in scores. The IT Manager approached the task with a regard to the importance of the criteria to her role.

Q: You graded past performance and we've heard about Chris's experience; did you contact other schools?

A: Yes both our IT Manager and I contacted other schools to obtain feedback. Hampshire IT also provided feedback in their dealings with the companies in how they managed the transfer.

Q: Did you and the IT Manager both agree with the scoring and the preferred supplier.

A: Yes we both agreed that Medhurst was the preferred supplier and also sought guidance and advice from other professionals to come to a view.

Q: Does that show within the method statement scoring?

A: The method statement scoring was a factual statement of facts and then feedback came into other sections.

Q: Is there any scope for negotiating any further cost reductions to the proposals?

A: No, we have refined the requirements as much as possible and negotiated to reduce the cost as far as we can.

The Chair outlined the recommendation of Medhurst being the academy's preferred supplier for the future provision of IT requirements. She asked trustees to vote to approve the recommendation.

The trustees unanimously agreed to appoint Medhurst as the academy's new supplier for IT.

4. Headteacher's Report: School Re-Opening

The Interim Headteacher provided a brief verbal report on the school reopening, which included:

- That the school was closed on the 4th & 5th of January following the recent government announcement and the subsequent Section 44 forms which were handed in. The Interim Headteacher explained that the H&S Act Section 44 provides employees with the 'right' to withdraw from and to refuse to return to a workplace that is unsafe.
- That the Interim Headteacher and Interim Head of School reviewed the School Reopening risk assessment with all staff, noting that it was important that everybody had the opportunity to raise concerns and make suggestions for improvements. Staff valued the opportunity for input.
- The school has reduced the number of pupils within pods to pods to 6.
- Measures have been put in place to address H&S concerns and will be detailed separately in the next agenda item.
- That a school site risk assessment has been completed and some issues have been identified, including one serious one of window glass that needs to be filmed. The Interim Headteacher assured trustees that it is in hand already with a potential cost of between £5-£6k.
- Safeguarding has been reviewed and the Interim Headteacher can offer an assurance to trustees that transport arrangements for pupils have been reviewed and robust procedures put in place, which meet best practice. The safeguarding policy has been updated and shared with staff.

- The Interim Headteacher advised that she has set up a programme to update DBS checks for school staff who have been in post for 5 years and over. She recommended that when this has been completed, consideration is given to putting a programme in place to undertake a DBS check every 3 years.
- The provision for remote learning has been reviewed and changes are currently being made to improve the school's offering to pupils. The school will offer live contact with tutors by the end of this week. From next week the school will gradually increase the amount of video lessons in remote learning and live lessons offered to pupils. These will be supplemented by work packs, so there will be a blended learning. We have amended our remote learning policy and are in the process of amending user agreements.
- There are limitations with Microsoft Teams for remote learning as recorded content can only be a maximum of 15 minutes.
- Consideration will be given to staff workload, noting that online meetings can be more tiring and operating in COVID 19 makes things take longer, so monitoring well-being is important.
- Food parcels were set up for pupils as Hampshire Catering advised they would claim monies from the school for pupils, even if they weren't in school. They have since reversed this decision and only pupils that are attending will be charged for. From next week the school will revert to issuing food vouchers which is better for parents and saves the school time.
- Risk assessments have been completed, where necessary, for pupils who aren't attending school. The school is reporting the number of pupils attending school each day to the DfE.
- The school has supplied laptops and tablets for 21 pupils who did not have a device to use. These are being given out today with user loan agreements.
- The school has provided devices to some families to enable internet access at home.
- The Interim Headteacher advised that she is working on Safeguarding, Premises, Health & Safety, Performance Management and will later focus on Pupil Premium, Staffing and Continuing Professional Development.
- The Interim Head of School is overseeing Curriculum areas.
- The Interim Headteacher has found there is a collective family feel to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and notes that they are working towards a directive leadership where everybody takes responsibility for their actions.

A trustee commented that it was pleasing to hear that the school are increasing the amount of live lessons and contact for pupils to better match the DfE expectations.

The Interim Headteacher invited questions:

Q: Does the school risk assessment incorporate Post 16?

A: Post 16 have been incorporated into the whole school risk assessment. In terms of the remote learning for Post 16, the pupils' levels of learning are so broad that it makes it difficult to meet their needs. This is being investigated as the pupils have an entitlement to an education, remote or otherwise.

JAG advised trustees that she had attended a SCITT central training session and had been impressed with the way learning has been adapted for the trainees and also with the encouragement and support the trainees received to embrace the changes. She noted that there would have been a huge workload to amend the teaching and learning for trainees in this way and asked for thanks to be noted.

The Interim Headteacher advised trustees that all of the SLT had fully embraced the changes that were required to improve the school's online learning capability. She noted that Andrea Merritt had been very proactive in how this could be done, as she had experience in doing so from her SCITT role.

Q: Were all 36 pupil places taken up and if so were they all offered to key workers and vulnerable pupils?

A: Not all places were taken up initially, and we currently have a small amount of capacity.

Q: What are the numbers of staff who are self-isolating, unwell or have handed in S44 forms.

A: Many staff have handed in S44 forms as they have concerns and we are working with them to organise a "safe school" so they can work. For example, there aren't enough hand washing facilities in the school and having looked around the site, we haven't got suitable areas to install more sinks quickly. We are utilising buildings that have a better supply of hand washing facilities but of course we can't mix pupil pods between the different buildings.

Kevin Barwick left the meeting at 5.47 pm.

Q: How have pupils been since returning?

A: Initially it was probably more like a creche however pupils are now following their learning. Pupils in school perhaps have more opportunity to learn than their peers undertaking remote learning at home. Pupils also have the opportunity to take part in relaxed tasks.

Q: Are we able to engage with pupils?

A: We will be engaging with pupils as we will see them live on Microsoft Teams and we will use telephone calls for those pupils we don't see, to ensure their safeguarding and wellbeing. In terms of measuring engagement, the Interim Head of School and Deputy Headteacher will be conducting learning walks to review the quality of our provision, how pupils are interacting and the quality of the work they are producing. We can then offer support where required to pupils

and/or parents. It is important that we externally triangulate the quality of provision and engagement to ensure the curriculum for recovery is in place.

Kevin Barwick re-joined the meeting at 5.50 pm.

Q: Are there things that trustees can do to support the school?

A: Trustee involvement can continue through visits, but may have to be done differently to before because of Covid restrictions. The Governance Lead and I will work together to draft the visit schedule for the trustees, so that you are engaging with the school as this is very important.

Q: At a previous meeting we were advised through a staff stress survey that there is a problem with the school cleaning. Has this been addressed?

A: The school have an excellent Covid cleaner during the day for some areas and also staff clean down desks/chairs between lessons but this doesn't interfere with learning time.

Q: What has been done to ensure that staff have access to the right equipment at home to work effectively?

A: A staff survey has been sent out to establish what is needed. Some pupil laptops have already been converted by Hampshire IT so staff can use them and some staff will need to use their own laptops. We have purchased webcams with microphones as well as microphones for pupils to use in school. If we need any other equipment then we will organise that to ensure that staff and pupils all have the right equipment. We will follow up with a parental survey in February to see if anything further is needed.

5. Updated School Risk Assessment Review & Approval Request

The Interim Head of School advised trustees that:

- She has used the school's existing September risk assessment and updated it in accordance with the current guidelines and following the feedback received from staff, who are concerned as to how risk can be well managed on site.
- The risk assessment assumes that there is full occupancy in the school and at present this is not the case.
- That the Interim Head of School and Health & Safety Coordinator have worked together to create a specific document for the current care provision, so that the school can open and offer places to some pupils.
- The number of pupils in each pod has been reduced to 6. Each pod will be led by teaching staff and supported by LSAs and they will work a shared rotation.
- To increase pupil numbers will be a balancing act and the school will need to keep reviewing everything that is being done against the current and future guidance.
- That the Interim Headteacher is an experienced risk assessor and the Interim Head of School has been trained by the Institute of Leadership & Management through a voluntary role she has undertaken.

- The school will do everything possible to minimise infection control risks, through increased cleaning and more frequent and thorough handwashing.
- Chief concerns on site are access to hygiene facilities such as hand washing and passing places that will become problematic as more pupils return to school when numbers can be increased.
- To reduce the risk of cross infection full hygiene packs have been provided to each pod, in addition to their existing materials and the administration team are checking that each pod has sufficient stocks.
- Individual risk assessments have been undertaken for any pupils that are aspirators and could contaminate areas.
- To reduce risk, pupils are sent from the school buses to their pod and vice-versa which means they are not crossing through the school and mixing.

The Interim Head of School invited questions:

Q: How will things work if the R number increases to 1 and the H&S risk assessment sections turn from green to red?

A: We are in a situation where we must keep reviewing Health & Safety in the school against any updated guidance and our own local circumstances. If the infection rate rises then we will make adjustments, but we accept we can't control what will happen. We will be having daily conversations and trustees will be kept informed.

Q: Is the template that you've used a "usable" document and is there a way of it being online as a live document.

A: We have discussed this briefly and looked at what other schools are using. For example for the lateral flow testing we will use an NHS risk matrix document which is much more detailed and can be made specific to the site. (CT) The school risk assessments I have seen so far aren't always detailed enough and don't have an action plan, so there are improvements to be made. I will be working on this with the Interim Head of School.

The Interim Head of School provided an overview of the progress of the lateral flow testing project in school:

- The PALs building has been identified for use for lateral flow testing because it has entrances and exits, space to receive people, space to scan bar codes and people can move through it.
- The Health & Safety Coordinator has completed her training and the Deputy Headteacher and I have nearly finished the training.
- Staff will not have to test pupils.
- Pupils will need to be able to self-administer the tests but we would consider a volunteer who is medically trained doing it if a parent/carer wishes it.
- Special school heads have advised County that they will not personally undertake the tests for pupils.
- The risk assessment has been completed.

- We will be asking for at least 4 staff to volunteer so that the school can deliver the service, with just one desk open. There will be an impact on staffing.

Q: Where would the Post 16 staff and pupils undertake their tests?

A: They would need to come to the main site.

The trustees unanimously approved the updated risk assessment.

Kevin Barwick left the meeting at 6.30pm

6. Any Other Business

- The Chair advised that following the recent email to trustees from a member of the SLT she had also received a similar letter from the school's middle leaders. She has responded to both on behalf of the trustees.
- The Chair asked trustees to consider adding the Interim Headteacher as a member of the Finance, Resources & Audit committee and the Pay & Personnel committee. She noted that the Interim Headteacher must automatically be a member of the SCITT Executive Board because of its terms of reference. The request was **approved** and the Interim Headteacher will join the Finance, Resources & Audit committee and the Pay & Personnel committee.

The meeting closed at 6.31 pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....

The next Trust Board meeting will be on Tuesday 30th March at 5pm

