

Dove House School Board of Trustees

Minutes of Meeting Tuesday 20th of July 2021

Present:	Category:
Juliet Annesley-Gamester (JAG)	Parent Trustee
Kevin Barwick (KB)	Community Trustee
Sian Butler (SB)	Community Trustee
Andrea Francis (AF)	Community Trustee
Lisa Goodall (LG) (Chair)	Parent Trustee
Ollie Killinger (OK) Items 3-4	Community Trustee
Emma Layzell (EL)	Co-opted Trustee
Kate Need (KN)	Co-opted Trustee
Apologies:	
Chris Toner (CT)	Interim Headteacher
In Attendance:	
Jenny Burns (JB) Items 1-3	Finance & Resources Director
Jayne Humphrey (JH)	Governance Lead
Maria-Brigid Ryan (MBR) Items 1-3	Interim Head of School

1. Welcome & Apologies.

The Chair welcomed trustees to the meeting. Apologies were received and accepted from Chris Toner.

The meeting was quorate. It was noted that the agenda and 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. Cleaning Tender Proposal

The Finance & Resources Director advised that Dove House School Academy, via Tenet Education Services, conducted a Request for Quotation (RFQ) procedure for a Building Cleaning Services contract in Autumn 2020. Four suppliers were invited to participate, two companies attended site visits and only one company

submitted a tender response by the stipulated date and time. However, under the terms of the school's Tendering Policy, four formal tenders are required and Trustees requested that the process was re-run.

A second Request for Quotation procedure was undertaken and eight companies were invited to tender with four companies submitting their tender responses by the stipulated date and time.

The following companies submitted a bid:

- Brayborne Facilities Services
- Busy Bee Cleaning Services
- Dru Can Do Cleaning Services
- Glen Cleaning Co Ltd

The tender responses were evaluated by Tenet using the published award criterion and weighting (contained within the document pack)

Name of Tenderer	Score	Rank
Glen Cleaning Co Ltd	90.25	1
Brayborne Facilities	86.87	2
Busy Bee Cleaning Services	81.37	3
Dru Can Do Cleaning Services	28.50	4

The Finance & Resources Director highlighted Tenet Education Services' recommendation is to award the contract to Glen Cleaning Co Ltd as they have been identified as the most economically advantageous tenderer using the published award criterion, achieving a total overall score of 90.25%.

Tenet summarise the Glen Cleaning Co Ltd tender response as follows:

'This is a very good tender submission that addresses nearly all aspects of the tender and demonstrates Glen Cleaning Co Ltd.'s knowledge of the sector'.

The Finance & Resources Director invited questions:

Q: Do all of the companies have good reputations, particularly Glen Cleaning Co Ltd who have been recommended?

A: Yes, they do. With regards to Glen Cleaning Co Ltd I have received a positive reference from the Facilities Manager at West Berkshire Council which notes they have no concerns at all with their supervisory skills, levels of service and absence management capability.

Ollie Killinger joined the meeting at 5.05 pm.

Q: Did they all visit the school?

A: All companies were offered the opportunity to have a site visit but only two companies took that up; Brayborne Facilities and BusyBee Cleaning Services.

Q: Can I clarify that as a requirement of the tender, the companies will transfer our existing DHSA employees across, via TUPE, so there are no redundancies?

A: Yes, that's correct. I sought guidance from our HR advisors regarding one employee who was on a fixed term contract and they advised that as we would have renewed her contract then she should be treated as an employee and also transferred to the new provider. I have confirmed this with Glen Cleaning Co Ltd. There will be pension costs which can be confirmed once the tender is approved (covered in the briefing paper)

Q: We weren't given the amount of each contract, were they broadly similar?

A: No, they were quite different. In the first year the costs are:

- Brayborne Facilities Services £73k
- Busy Bee Cleaning Services £70k
- Dru Can Do Cleaning Services £96k
- Glen Cleaning Co Ltd £54k

Over the contract term the full cost is approximately:

- Brayborne Facilities Services £220k
- Busy Bee Cleaning Services £210k
- Dru Can Do Cleaning Services £300k
- Glen Cleaning Co Ltd £169k

I have included a £60k provision in the 2021-22 budget for the cleaning contract.

Q: Do we have any protection against a price increase should Glen Cleaning Co Ltd come on site and say that there is more work expected?

A: They were provided with a whole site plan, scheme of work to be undertaken and the entire tender document so wouldn't have any recourse to change the price.

Q: On the overall evaluation and summary it is noted by Tenet that Glen Cleaning Co Ltd addresses nearly all aspects of the tender and demonstrate good knowledge of the sector and goes on to say there was further clarification provided

A: We did clarify how they would manage supervision of the cleaners as this wasn't clear initially. We are confident that there will be a supervisor, within their structure, who will manage on-site.

Q: The price quoted by the companies has a wide variance and as Glen Cleaning Co Ltd are the cheapest are you confident that the service offered will be as good?

A: The Glen Cleaning Co Ltd price is in line with a previous quote and similar to what we are paying now. We will manage the quality of service through the use of KPIs. I have taken references and they are favourable.

Q: What do we have in place for the cleaning now?

A: We have 3 in-house cleaners on payroll and they cover Blocks A and B whilst a contract cleaner covers Block C and the Sports Hall.

Q: If this contract goes well, are there any other services the school would wish to outsource to them?

A: I had already asked for quotes for window cleaning for the school and the quote received from Glen Cleaning Co Ltd was the cheapest. I may consider deep cleaning of carpets too.

Q: Cleaning has been critical during the Covid pandemic. If we needed to expand the amount of time we need, do they have flexibility to offer additional resources.

A: We are retaining our Covid cleaner until the 31st of December and could extend this if necessary. Glen Cleaning Co Ltd do have other schools nearby and part of their absence management strategy is utilising other cleaners that work nearby.

The trustees voted and unanimously approved the appointment of Glen Cleaning Co Ltd as the school's cleaning provider.

Jenny Burns and Maria-Brigid Ryan left the meeting at 5.14 pm

4. Board Self Evaluation Exercise

The trustees had been provided with a collated self-evaluation matrix and anonymised comments.

The Chair advised that Kate Need had recently undertaken training about the self-evaluation exercise as part of her 'Leading Governance' programme and would run the session.

KN suggested that trustees focus attention on questions 5,11,12 as they had been scored as a 3 (requires improvement) and question 15 because although it had been scored as a 2 (good) there were differing individual scores.

Trustees decided to discuss questions 5 and 12 and questions 14 and 15 together because of the overlapping nature of the questions.

Question 5 & Question 12

Our board keeps stakeholders (particularly parents / carers) informed about the school and we use the views of stakeholders to inform the improvement planning process.

Our board has effective relationships with all stakeholders and demonstrates accountability for delivery of the school's strategic plan.

A discussion was held which included collated comments (written and verbal)

- ❖ The tension between staff and trustees and the lack of real engagement with parents and the external community (with the board, not the school) means this is a real area of opportunity.
- ❖ Culture audit currently in process.
- ❖ Rated as a 3, due to specific concerns about ineffective relationships with staff/SLT and how this has become a barrier to improvement.
- ❖ Greater interaction between trustees and stakeholders may be an area to focus upon and also the transparency of challenge.
- ❖ A period without a substantive headteacher, Covid disruption and several new trustees has meant consolidation rather than continuous improvement.
- ❖ I'm aware of the school previously using surveys but I'm not sure the board has engaged with Parents etc actively since I joined over a year ago
- ❖ My rating is based on the fact that we do not appear to be able to have a positive impact on school culture due to perception of the trustees and their motives by the staff rather than lack of skills or experience. This seems to stem from communication issues.
- ❖ Parent surveys haven't been presented to Board for a while. The last one was in 2019 from the Ofsted. There has been a specific questionnaire about Remote Learning.
- ❖ Staff do not think the Board is transparent.
- ❖ There aren't regular surveys, so stakeholder opinion does not inform planning, particularly from parents and students.
- ❖ The school needs a regular mechanism in place to obtain stakeholder views, so that the information can be considered for the School Improvement Plan.
- ❖ Be mindful about the difference between what the Board need to inform stakeholders about, which isn't much, and the school obtaining stakeholder views which can be used to inform improvement planning.
- ❖ How the Board can collect the views of stakeholders.
- ❖ How Board decisions have been communicated back to staff, without explanation.
- ❖ That the Senior Leader is the conduit for communication between the Board and the school and there needs to be consistency of messaging.

- ❖ That the Board model the behaviour that is required.
- ❖ Whether an executive summary with the key messages from meetings would be useful.
- ❖ That the Board need to be secure that the quality of information about stakeholder views is robust and reflects 'all of the groups'
- ❖ That the Chair could send an end of term message to staff.
- ❖ That trustees could have a news section in the school newsletter.
- ❖ Might it be helpful to have staff come to the Board to present areas of expertise.
- ❖ It would be useful to include a trustee visit to meet the school council.
- ❖ Using informal opportunities to obtain indirect feedback from pupils so that the Board are engaging more with pupils.

Question 11

Our board can demonstrate the school has an effective and efficient performance management process in place for all staff.

Collated comments (written and verbal)

- ❖ I think this has more recently landed and has been key to embed over the previous year. My understanding is this is still a work in progress
- ❖ We still need to make sure PM process is followed with objectives and interims set in a timely manner. Difficult conversations training and ensuring CPD is recorded and staff complete feedback.
- ❖ A PM Trustee visit would be beneficial to schedule as a priority in the Autumn term prior to next P&P Committee meeting.
- ❖ TLRs – an internal audit to be scheduled for academic year 2021/22 would be beneficial for last year's and current TLRs.
- ❖ The process has moved forward but still needs work to ensure consistency of objectives set.

The Governance Lead reported that the HR Officer had provided some feedback for the Board. She advised that:

- Adherence to deadlines could be further improved as the interim reviews were completed in May rather than February.
- Training in moderation would lead to better consistency in objective setting.
- New staff need to have their objectives put in place more quickly.

The Chair noted that the Board can be assured that the Personnel & Pay committee monitor this closely and improvements have been made so the PM process is moving in the right direction.

JAG advised the Board that there are more 'difficult conversations' taking place regarding performance management and this needs to embed further.

It was agreed that a key action is ensuring that the Performance Management process continues to move forward as a priority.

Question 14 & Question 15

Our board has a culture of transparency where appropriate challenge is encouraged.

Our board fosters a culture where thinking is diverse and a variety of experiences and perspectives are welcomed.

Collated comments (written and verbal)

- ❖ I do believe transparency and challenge is encouraged but I don't always see the appropriate challenge. I'm not sure if it's down to the relationship the board has with the school or if we need to be more comfortable challenging each other.
- ❖ As we are a collective body, all discussions should happen within our meetings, so we are transparent. Emailing or discussing issues outside of our meetings is not transparent, excludes others and therefore offers no opportunity for change.
- ❖ I think it's welcomed but I think we could be more diverse and push ourselves out our comfort zone more.
- ❖ It would help if all trustees read the reports prior to meetings, including WGB training information
- ❖ Experiences and perspectives are not always welcomed; decisions may be made outside of the Board and ideas may be considered on tradition rather than change.
- ❖ Domination of one or two trustees at meetings is stifling the participation of those less confident – no 'I' in team.
- ❖ As a new trustee I have felt comfortable to put forward her views or ask questions during Board meetings and has felt very welcome.
- ❖ As the relationship with the school is quite tense, that perhaps the Board have been less challenging than they could have been.
- ❖ Challenging the status quo should be seen as positive as it moves the Board to the next level.
- ❖ The culture of the Board has changed since the Chair took up her post.
- ❖ Perhaps questions could be asked in advance to help those trustees who are reticent.
- ❖ That the Chair keeps trustees up to date through Chair's notes and the committee chairs offer an annual report.
- ❖ It would be helpful to better understand what the freedoms of being an academy are and how they can be used, particularly as current

Government thinking is currently that all school should be part of a multi academy trust.

- ❖ That better questions could be asked if trustees understood the progress data for students and how bespoke training could help.

The Chair noted that:

- The Board hasn't met in person for more than a year and this may have affected the dynamic of the group.
- That during meetings she offers everybody the opportunity to speak and ask questions.
- That she values the skills and experience of all trustees from inside and outside of education and that she would like trustees to know that all opinions are welcomed and valued.
- That it can be useful if trustees have differing opinions, so that robust discussions can be held which may lead to a better understanding and outcome.
- There will be a reset when the new Headteacher starts so that paperwork that is provided is appropriate, timely and fit for purpose so that trustees can discharge their responsibilities.

A brief discussion was held regarding Question 9 (Sustained financial health) which covered:

- How confident trustees are in understanding financial monitoring and budget setting if they are not part of the FRA committee.
- The quality of the Hampshire Governor Services training for Academy finance and whether a different offering would be helpful.

KB agreed to run a training session about Academy Finance in the Autumn term, for trustees who would find it helpful.

The trustees summed up their discussions and **agreed** that the following action points would be taken forward

1. Summarising any key actions at meetings that can be communicated to staff.
2. The Chair to write an all staff end of term email, outlining highlights.
3. Utilise a trustee section in the termly school newsletter.
4. Check with the new Headteacher that there are procedures in place for annual stakeholder surveys, so these can inform school improvement planning.
5. The Personnel & Pay Chair will have an 'early doors' meeting with the new Headteacher to bring him up to speed with the PM process.
6. Schedule a separate meeting in late Autumn or early Spring for trustees to discuss strategy for the school.
7. Organisation of a bespoke data training session so that trustees better understand how to monitor pupil progress.

8. Organisation of an informal training session covering Academy finance, to be led by Kevin Barwick.

The meeting closed at 7 pm.

Signed.....

Dated.....

The next meeting date will be confirmed

**Summary of Actions from:
Meeting of Tuesday 20th July 2021**

No	Action	Owner
Action 1 Item 4	Summarising any key actions at meetings that can be communicated to staff.	LG
Action 2 Item 4	The Chair to write an all staff end of term email, outlining highlights.	LG
Action 3 Item 4	Utilise a trustee section in the termly school newsletter.	JH/LG
Action 4 Item 4	Check with the new Headteacher that there are procedures in place for annual stakeholder surveys, so these can inform school improvement planning.	JH
Action 5 Item 4	The Personnel & Pay Chair will have an 'early doors' meeting with the new Headteacher to bring him up to speed with the PM process.	JAG
Action 6 Item 4	Schedule a separate meeting in late Autumn or early Spring for trustees to discuss strategy for the school.	JH
Action 7 Item 4	Organisation of a bespoke data training session so that trustees better understand how to monitor pupil progress	JH
Action 8 Item 4	Organisation of an informal training session covering Academy finance, to be led by Kevin Barwick.	KB