

DRAFT MINUTES
GREAT HEIGHTS ACADEMY TRUST (GHAT)
MAT BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING

Monday 18th July 2022 (6.00 p.m.) – hybrid meeting at Riverside Mills

Present: C Midgley, Chair A Bennett OBE (CEO)
 J Nellis K Inwood
 J Midgley – **by zoom** J Fryer – **by zoom**
 N Oliver (Governance professional)

In attendance: J Firth (COO), A Rawson (CFO), D Worthington (Director of SI)

Graham Newton was in attendance prior to the meeting, to mark his retirement from long service as a Greetland Governor (including as Vice Chair), Chair of Greetland LGB and as a Trustee & Member of GHAT; and before this as part of the PTA FOGS.

1. Apologies – apologies were received from J Power, E Brooke, A Birt and I Jaffar.
2. Declaration of Interests
C Midgley (Chair of Trustees) and J Midgley (Chair of Finance and Premises) reiterated their family relation and to A Midgley (RA / Director of Leadership and Governance).

3. Opening remarks and governance update
The Chair of Trustees responded verbally to the Trust Board Leadership review, June 2022 (summarised on Trello) in particular the suggestions for improvement:
 - Communication and decisions between meetings
 - Succession management
 - Other possible roles for different Trust membersTrustees noted that a written response including proposals for future working would be circulated within the next day. This would also embrace the outcomes of the self-review evaluation framework (Part 2).

It was also agreed that, for succession management, anyone now aspiring to be Chair or Vice Chair in future years should make themselves known to the Governance Professional and would be assured of support and mentoring in the intervening period (see Item 8). A request for a one-off Annual Meeting of all Trustees was also accepted, following two years of disconnection due to Covid.

The Chair confirmed that the final part of the Trust Board self-review - an external review would be undertaken in 2023.

4. Minutes of 23rd May 2022
5. Matters Arising
The draft minutes were agreed for publication. H&S and Digital Technologies Policies and CIF bids had been followed up by emails from the COO (J Firth) as agreed (24.5.22).
6. Correspondence, including ESFA
The COO updated Trustees re. ongoing correspondence with the ICO.
Correspondence re Greetland KS1 pupil entrance (COO email, 7.6.22) and a Kirklees SEND consultation (N Foulkes/PA email, 24.6.22) were noted for the record.

J Nellis
3-10-22

7.1 MAT reporting – CEO (A Bennett)

The CEO Report and linked documents had been received in advance - accompanied by a written commentary on the Pre-Meeting Briefing. The CEO provided Trustees with highlights as follows:

- PA: despite a ‘spike’ across the Trust, Ofsted are satisfied with the systems and processes in all the Trust’s schools recently inspected and the CEO is confident that the issue will subside. The Chair confirmed that this is a national concern and reassured Trustees that collectively everything possible is being done. The Chair of Standards added that all the schools were above national, some consistently so, and the issue reflects current conditions post-Covid
- CQI & QA: target areas for each school (in red) noted. Carlinghow Ofsted report discussed – strong good and no longer to be seen as inadequate. Significant prior support for West Vale’s recent inspection from all the Trust’s schools noted, alongside strengthening of the LGB with two Trustees – all key benefits of the GHAT approach
- Notable SI risks: PA and behaviour
- Data / Year 6 SATS results: as expected
BG & GA all above National
CA realistic in view of not being long in the Trust and prior ‘Special Measures’; above National in writing reflects well on the Research School focus (audited)
RA below National in writing reflects confidence post-Covid
WV all below / in-line with National; felt to be accurate, but a strengthened team already confirmed to be in place from Autumn Term
- Current School SEF grades: now accurate (in light of the schools recently inspected)
- SDP target areas (RAG for progress): all Green (significant progress to date against expected outcomes), except Raynville PA = Amber (progressing as expected)
- Ofsted: BG & RA now well prepared
- Designation updates:
SCITT – accreditation bid submitted 4.2.22 with sign-off from the SCITT Board; resubmission 24.6.22 with Consultant support, outcome awaited
Research School – reapplication approved until 2026
- MAT growth developments: newsletters, Directors update and Leaders Event agenda (12th/13th July) all circulated; to note that the consultation website has a rolling update
- LGB Points (Director of Leadership and Governance): noted

The CEO and Director of School Improvement (D Worthington) left the meeting at this point to join an MFG event.

7.2 MAT reporting – CFO & COO

Financial reporting – CFO

Management Accounts were annotated as usual and accompanied by a CFO Report for further context, with all items discussed in full prior to the Board meeting at Finance and Premises Committee. The Chair of Finance and Premises (J Midgley) had also reviewed the finances in detail prior to both meetings, along with the Chair of Trustees; the reporting of all items had been found to be as comprehensive as ever, with a “reasonable set of assumptions” and nothing out of the ordinary.

Comparison to the revised budget presented at the May Board meeting was provided and also to the original 2021/22 budget (July 2021), as per the requirements of the Academy

JAVell
3-10-22

Trust Handbook. **The overall revenue balance at 31.8.22 is forecast to be £1,627,961;** this is 15.9% of income (an ESFA focus area nationally; >20% triggers further scrutiny).

The 21/22 overall GHAT in-year deficit of £569,399 is a changed position to the April reported figure, largely due to costs relating to MFG. This is fully covered by existing reserves and represents the Trust's investment for growth.

Trustees accepted the three year budget forecast 2022/23 to 2024/25, accompanied by the supporting paper 'Trust Budget planning assumptions July 22'. The prudent and conservative consolidated Trust position - as below - with projected growth in line with the Trust's vision, maintains in-year balances above break even.

| | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 |
|------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| B/fwd balance | £ 1,627,961 | £ 1,639,005 | £ 1,643,511 |
| Trust total inc | £ 10,674,147 | £ 10,254,109 | £ 10,487,327 |
| Trust total exp | £ 10,663,103 | £ 10,249,603 | £ 10,484,314 |
| In year balance | £ 11,044 | £ 4,506 | £ 3,013 |
| Carried fwd | £ 1,639,005 | £ 1,643,511 | £ 1,646,524 |

Trustees discussed the detailed pupil number information (including PAL, capacity, actual and estimated numbers) for each Trust school - which underpins the budget assumptions, and the likely impact of Ofsted outcomes (CA & WV) and strengthened leadership (WV).

KPI self-assessments as at 30.6.22 and 2022/23 forecast, with points to note (RAG rated) and next steps actions summarised were received; to be discussed with Principals at their next School Organisational Effectiveness meetings.

Approvals between meetings noted. Approvals required at Trust Board were documented in CFO items 5, 5a & 5b:

- **Central bank account proposal:** CFO item 5
 - **Credit Card limits proposals:** CFO item 5a
 - **Lightning conductor works:** 4 academies, £35,972 (updated costs - CFO item 5)
 - **English Hub Accelerator Fund (income):** £229,780.34, CFO item 5b
- => **Approved unanimously; recommended by the Chair of Finance and Premises**

Trustees also received a verbal report from the CFO re. GHAT bidding to deliver a trust improvement offer in two of the new DfE regions (Y&H, NW); £130k each region, to be finalised. To be reported back to Trust Board for final detailed approval.

Following initial AOB discussions at Finance and Premises Committee, the Trust Board also received a late additional item 'Gas Contract Renewal – BG, CA, GA & WV'. After detailed discussion of the updated situation, Board approval was given to progress with obtaining an 18 month fixed contract from 1st April 2023, current estimate £0.117/kwh.

Operational reporting – COO

COO headline items noted - as summarised on the Pre-Meeting Briefing, and discussed prior to the Board meeting at Finance and Premises Committee.

The main area of focus had been updating Risk Registers for all 7 sites and designations (uploaded to Trello) including a summary of the main areas across all entities – which

reflects key issues summarised in the CEO and CFO Reports. **MAT Board unanimously approved the Risk Registers**, which will continue to be updated on a rolling basis.

The following were also reported to the Board:

- **Cybersecurity**: correspondence from ICO; **confidential, due to data protection**
- **West Vale Hall**, COO item 4a: awaiting a third quote to address an ongoing issue (leak); Calderdale H&S notified and RPA insurance contacted (loss adjuster attended)
- **Sustainability and climate change strategy**: Trustees had received a separate report including a summary of the Trust's draft strategy (to be in place by 2025), alongside Trust initiatives already in place and future plans. This information had also been reviewed at the recent internal audit "*The Trust has a clear awareness and understanding of ESG. Many aspects of ESG are already embedded in the day to day running of the Trust with its Vision and Ethos*". Trustees commented that ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) reporting going forwards should also reflect cost of living and hardship issues across the Trust.

7.3 MAT reporting – Trust policies

Risk Registers approved – see Agenda item 7.2 (COO reporting).

8 Arrangements for the appointment of Chair and Vice Chair, 2022/23

The Governance Professional reminded the Board that "*Trustees shall each school year elect a chair and vice-chair from among their number. A Trustee who is employed by the Academy Trust shall not be eligible*" (Mem & Arts). Trustees accepted the 'usual' procedure i.e. self-nominations to the Clerk by Thursday 8th September, then a secret ballot to be held, if required. Further to discussions earlier in the meeting (Item 3) and in view of Trust growth plans, candidates for both roles were actively encouraged and, for succession management, anyone aspiring to be Chair or Vice Chair in future years should also make themselves known.

9 AOB - The Governance Professional updated Trustees that the Calderdale Local Plan has taken its final step forward with Cabinet (11.7.22) publishing the final changes ('main modifications') for final public consultation between 29 July and 19 September 2022; now with an expected 1,000 new houses in the vicinity of GA, WV, BG.

10 Standing Item - specific MAT Board decisions

- To approve (and publish) minutes of previous meeting 23.5.22 – **approved**
- Trust Management Accounts – **received and approved**
- 3 year budgets 2022-2025 – **received and approved**
- Financial approvals required (bank account, credit card, lightning conductors, EH income, DfE bidding and Gas Contract renewal) – **all approved, as presented**
- Risk Registers, all entities – **approved**

11 Future Meetings

Trustees were reminded that a proposed Calendar of meetings 2022-23 was circulated via the 23rd May Board meeting, but the Chair will revisit September/October arrangements re. Item 3 Opening Remarks.

12th December 2022 (Presentation of GHAT Annual Report & Accounts):

Members AGM (3pm), Finance and Premises Committee (3.30pm), MAT Board (5pm)

AJW
3-10-22