



Northern Arch

LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

Board of Directors' Meeting

Thursday 10th April 2025 at 5.00 pm
at Mowden Junior School, Conyers Avenue, Darlington, DL3 9DE

MINUTES

Directors present:	Iain Clyde (Chair), Tim Fisher (CEO), Geoff Liddle, Tarryn Lloyd Payne and Graham Wynn.
In attendance	Glen Hart: Chief Financial Officer Nikki Wade: Strategic Development Officer Jon Tait: Executive Director of Education Laura Hawksby: Trust Governance and Policy Officer

Item	Description of discussion	Action
	PART A: Procedural items	
1.	<u>Welcome, Introductions and confirmation quorum present</u> The Chair welcomed everybody to the meeting. It was confirmed that a quorum was present.	
2.	<u>Apologies for absence and their acceptance</u> Apologies for absence were received from Directors Zoe Beach, Emma Chawner and Mavis Lord.	
3.	<u>Notification of items of urgent other business</u> None	
4.	<u>Declaration of Personal and Pecuniary Interests</u> None	
5.	<u>Approval of minutes/review of actions/matters arising – Board of Directors 18th December 2024 and Special Board of Directors 5th February 2025</u> Draft Minutes of the Board of Directors from the 18 th December 2024 and Special meeting of the Board of Directors 5 th February 2025 had been shared with Directors prior to the meeting, a copy of which is held on file. All actions had been completed or included for this meeting of the Committee as requested by Directors.	

Registered office address
Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College, Vane Terrace, Darlington, DL3 7AU:
Company Registration Number 07533271
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denotes support and challenge provided by Governors

	Governors RESOLVED that the Minutes of the 18 th December 2024 and Special meeting of the Board of Directors of the 5 th February 2025 were confirmed as an accurate record and should be signed by the Chair.	Chair/ Governance & Policy Officer
6.	<p><u>To Note:</u></p> <p>a) <u>Pay & Review Committee Minutes – 22nd January 2025</u></p> <p>Further to Minutes 23 and 24 (18th December 2024) the Pay & Review Committee Minutes of the 22nd of January 2025 were noted for information by the Board. Directors sought confirmation that all financial implications had been considered by the Pay & Review Committee and the Chief Executive Officer confirmed that this was correct with a financial paper having been submitted to the Committee for their considerations prior to approval.</p> <p>b) <u>National Joint Council (NJC) Support Staff Pay Agreement 2024/25 for support staff at QE - approved by Directors</u></p> <p>It was noted that The National Joint Council (NJC) Support Staff Pay Agreement 2024/25 for Support Staff at QE was approved out of Committee by Directors in April 2025.</p>	
PART B: Business Items for Discussion		
7.	<p><u>Chair's Report</u></p> <p>No new updates to report.</p>	
8.	<p><u>Membership Document</u></p> <p>The Governance and Policy Officer provided an update report regarding the governance membership in the Partnership.</p> <p>The current vacancy on the Board of Directors was noted, including on the Finance, Resources & Audit Committee and Pay & Review Committee. A Skills and Diversity Audit for Directors and the Local Governing Bodies will be undertaken in the next half term, which will aid in supporting future recruitment planning and training.</p> <p>Governor development & induction would be developed further during the next Summer/Autumn terms. Terms of Reference for Local Governing Bodies would also be reviewed and lines of governance defined further.</p> <p>Directors requested that individual Directors be linked to each Local Governing Body as it helps to contextualise what the Board is doing. Directors requested that a report be brought back to the next meeting of the Board in the Summer Term with suggested links and scope of what this will involve, for example the number of meetings to attend.</p>	<p>SDO/ Governance & Policy Officer</p> <p>SDO/ Governance & Policy Officer</p>

<p>a) Appointments</p> <p>Consideration was given and approval was sought for the following appointments:</p> <p><u>Director Vacancy on the Finance, Resources and Audit Committee and Pay & Review Committee</u></p> <p>After careful consideration, Directors RESOLVED to appoint Director Tarryn Lloyd Payne who had consented to fill the vacancy on the Finance, Resources and Audit Committee and Pay & Review Committee.</p> <p><u>Approval to the Appointment of Iyabo Omolara Akindunbi (Parent Governor QE Local Governing Body appointed in accordance with Article 54 and 54A)</u></p> <p>After careful consideration, Directors RESOLVED to appoint Iyabo Omolara Akindunbi as a Parent Governor QE Local Governing Body.</p> <p><u>Approval to the Appointment of Peter Snowden (General Governor Hurworth Local Governing Body)</u></p> <p>After careful consideration, Directors RESOLVED to appoint Peter Snowden as a General Governor Hurworth Local Governing Body.</p> <p><u>Ratify the Appointment of the Vice Chair of Longfield Local Governing Body – Governor Tanya Singh</u></p> <p>After careful consideration, Directors RESOLVED to ratify the appointment of the Vice Chair of Longfield Local Governing Body Governor Tanya Singh.</p> <p>b) To note</p> <p><u>Appointments</u></p> <p>Directors noted the appointments as previously approved by Directors during the Spring Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eddy Gnaglo and Joanne Keane (General Governors Rydal Local Governing Body) as of the 3rd March 2025.• Samantha McGuire (Teaching Staff Governor Hurworth School) as of the 3rd March 2025.• Julie Taylor (Parent Governor QE Local Governing Body appointed in accordance with Article 54 and 54AA, 54A) as of the 3rd March 2025. <p><u>Resignations</u></p> <p>Directors noted the following resignations of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Michael Garmston as a Director as of the 1st March 2025.• General Governor Kelly Nicholson (General Governor Rydal LGB) as of the 2nd March 2025.• General Governor Laura Snowdon (General governor Longfield LGB) as of the 15th March 2025	<p>Governance & Policy Officer</p> <p>Governance & Policy Officer</p> <p>Governance & Policy Officer</p> <p>Governance & Policy Officer</p>
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9.	<p><u>CEO's Report</u></p> <p>The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) presented his April 2025 report. Directors noted the smooth transition of Mowden joining the Trust as of the 1st March 2025, bringing the total number of academies in the Partnership to six. <i>Directors welcomed the collaborative opportunities that the new primary partners bring to the Partnership.</i></p> <p>The appointment of a new Head Teacher at Mowden was noted by Directors.</p> <p>The new Executive Director of Education was introduced to Directors. <i>Directors requested that the Executive Director of Education provides an outline the work he has and will be doing at the Summer Board meeting.</i></p> <p>Progress was noted and the Trust is looking to find more efficiencies in management costs. The Trust will be producing an accommodation strategy and there will be further investment in IT and buildings.</p> <p>Directors noted the new Ofsted framework/Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2024-25 and possible implications for the Partnership. Succession planning is in place regarding future changes to the Trust Executive Team.</p> <p>Partnership Network Groups, coordinated by the Head Teacher at Rydal, continue to be very active and are currently a key driver for collaboration across the Partnership</p> <p>Student numbers and associated impact on funding remains a significant risk for the Partnership as indicated by academy level and Partnership level Risk Registers. The Strategic Plan has been amended to clarify this key objective and colleagues across the Partnership are working to support this aspect of intent. <i>Directors questioned how the key challenges are being address and the CEO advised that a full-time position for marketing and admissions will be advertised in the next half term and will be an internal process.</i></p> <p>Director Graham Wynn advised that he will provide further information on the University's marketing and student recruitment processes.</p>	EDOE Director/ SDO
10.	<p>ADEMSS Reports:</p> <p><u>Aims</u></p> <p><i>Directors were pleased to note that the priorities listed in the Aims section of the ADEMSS report had now been RAG rated, as requested by Directors.</i> Directors noted, as previously advised in the CEO's report above, that good progress has been made against several of the Partnership's aims including on the 1st March Mowden Schools joining the Partnership. This brought significant funding benefits in terms of annual capital funding grants for the Partnership to utilise across all its academies, as</p>	

well as increasing resources, collaboration opportunities and leadership capacity. The appointment of the Executive Director of Education will help the Partnership meet the challenge of introducing standards practice that is developmental, evidence based and drives improvement across all academies.

Environment

Directors noted that this report had been reviewed and considered by the Finance, Resources and Audit Committee and focused upon high level decisions or issues in relation to Estates, Capital Works, IT, Procurement and Health & Safety. Directors questioned in relation to IT if the Partnership were moving to one network. The (Chief Financial Officer) CFO advised that eventually this might be the case but that at present QE and Mowden are to remain separate.

Directors questioned what the Partnership's policy is in relation to pen drives? The CFO advised that he would report back to Directors.

Directors requested further information regarding the fire doors at QE. This information would be shared back to the Board.

Directors advised of the importance of an AI statement, which they requested should be developed for the Partnership.

CFO

COO

CEO

Money

Directors noted that this report had been reviewed and considered by the Finance, Resources & Audit Committee.

The budget position was noted to be in a surplus by the end of the year. The sixth form college Teaching/Support staff pay agreement has now been finalised (as noted at Minute 6 b. above) and had been included in the budget. Other pressures on the budget included a drop in pupil numbers, alternative education spending and SEN (Special Educational Needs) support provision. The budget does not yet include Mowden Schools' figures.

Standards

Directors carefully considered and noted this report, which had been considered by the Standards Committee. Arising from the Standards Committee, Directors on that Committee had requested a comparative high level data dashboard to be included in the future so that Directors were able to evidence information through the same metrics and focus on any necessary interventions.

Safeguarding

Directors carefully considered and noted this report, which had been considered by the Standards Committee. The Partnership is currently exploring the appointment of a



	trust wide safeguarding lead and working on oversight of safeguarding information at Partnership level. Directors noted that safeguarding was one of the key areas for focus by the Partnership's Local Governing Bodies and the Spring term Local Governing Body safeguarding updates were reported to Directors, along with safeguarding data and action plans.	
11.	<p><u>Feedback from Finance and Resources Committee 27th March 2025</u></p> <p>The Vice Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee provided feedback from the Finance & Resources Committee held on the 27th March 2025.</p> <p>Management Accounts as up to 31st January 2025 were considered by the Committee. The current Trust strategy included increasing the reserves position at all establishments. The full impact of National Insurance grant funding was not yet known at the time of the Committee. There is uncertainty over this allocation as funds will be distributed on a national basis and not on an individual school basis. Other pressures on the budget included drop in pupil numbers, alternative education spending and SEN support provision. There was currently a wider review of catering across the Trust being conducted to identify potential savings.</p> <p>Actions arising from the School Resource Management Advisor's Report were considered including the Partnership moving towards more investment in infrastructure and ensuring staffing cost savings, whilst maintaining a high level of outcomes for the pupils/students within the Trust.</p> <p>The Risk Registers are currently being reviewed to ensure they align across the Trust. The key risk currently identified across the Trust is the drop in pupil/student numbers.</p> <p>Directors at the Board meeting requested that that top level Central Team/Trust costs be added to the budget report.</p>	CFO
12.	<p><u>Feedback from Standards Committee 31st March 2025</u></p> <p>The CEO provided feedback from the Standards Committee held on the 27th March 2025.</p> <p>He advised that the Standards Committee discussed ways in which information could be shared most effectively with Directors and ways in which Directors can best drive developments and have a positive impact on standards.</p> <p>Future reports to the Standards Committee will include a comparative high level data dashboard with a clear infographic report, including national guidelines and benchmarks. Director Graham Wynn advised that he could help with looking at the development of this report format as this is something they use within the University.</p> <p>Directors suggested that there could be different focus at each Standards Committee e.g. attendance, progress etc.</p>	<p>CEO/SDO/ EDO/ Director GW</p> <p>CEO/SDO/ EDO</p>



13.	<p><u>Strategic Plan</u></p> <p>The CEO reported upon the Strategic Plan. He advised that whilst the guiding principles of the Partnership's intent remain the same, in the latest version of the Strategic Plan the language used to describe the Partnership's priorities has been refined to better clarify objectives.</p> <p>Directors advised that under the 'Intent' section reference to implementing the curriculum felt too school specific in the wording used and therefore requested that this be amended to reflect a broader remit.</p> <p>Directors also requested that a closing positive statement from the CEO would be good to add to the bottom of the Strategic Plan.</p>	<p>CEO/SDO</p> <p>CEO/SDO</p>
14.	<p><u>Scheme of Delegation – updated matrix and statutory policy schedule</u></p> <p>The Strategic Development Officer (SDO) advised that the Scheme of Delegation matrix had been updated to include separate references to each Committee of the Partnership and policy schedule detailing statutory and required policies for Trust Boards.</p> <p>Directors RESOLVED that the Scheme of Delegation be approved and placed on the website.</p>	<p>Governance & Policy Officer</p>
15.	<p><u>Trust Strategic & Operational Risk Register</u></p> <p>Directors noted that the Trust Strategic & Operational Risk Register had been to the Finance, Resources and Audit Committee where the Strategic Development Officer had provided a risk management update. The Trust is in the process of reviewing and aligning the format of the Academy Risk Registers, and also the Trust Risk Management policy.</p> <p>Directors requested that the Partnership's Risk Register be amended on the bottom 2 safeguarding risks on the register as the residual risks should be rated green and not amber.</p> <p>An executive summary cover page for the Risk Register report was also requested going forward so that any movement in risks was clearly identified and to identify the rationale for any changes</p> <p>Directors RESOLVED that the Strategic Plan be approved.</p>	<p>SDO</p> <p>SDO</p>
16.	<p><u>Policies</u></p> <p>The Strategic Development Officer (SDO) explained that a review has been undertaken of Trust/Academy policies and identified those that are statutory/required policies. These policies are now detailed in the Scheme of Delegation. Policies for which the Board has ultimate responsibility are to remain at Board level for approval,</p>	



	<p>either at a full Board meeting or a relevant committee, and all other policies are to be approved at executive level.</p> <p>Directors RESOLVED that following policies be approved subject to any further updates from Directors being forwarded to the Governance & Policy Officer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Pay Policy (Trust) b) Appraisal Policy (Trust) c) Staff Behaviour - Code of Conduct and Addendum (Trust) d) Disciplinary Policy & Procedures (Hurworth, Longfield & Rydal) e) Disciplinary Policy & Procedures (QE) f) Grievance Policy (Hurworth, Longfield & Rydal) g) Grievance Policy (QE) h) Premises Management Policy (Trust) i) GDPR Data Protection Policy (Trust) j) Data Retention & Destruction Policy (Trust) k) Privacy Notices (Trust) l) Complaints Policy (Trust) m) Code of Conduct for Members, Directors and Governors (Trust) <p>Directors noted that the following policies were approved, subject to amendments at the Finance, Resources & Audit Committee on 27th March 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Finance Policy b) Reserves Policy c) Investment Policy 	
	Part D: For Information	
17.	<p><u>Letter to Accounting Officer - 19th March 2025</u></p> <p>Directors noted that the Education and Skills Funding Agency will close on 31 March 2025 and its functions will transfer to the Department for Education on 1 April 2025.</p>	
18.	<p><u>Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2024-25</u></p> <p>The Strategic Development Officer reported upon the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, which is being introduced by the government to improve the safeguarding of children (such as in care institutions and schools) and to raise educational standards. It was noted that this has also been shared with all Local Governing Bodies this term.</p>	
	Part E: Concluding Items	
19.	<p><u>Approval of documents for inspection</u></p> <p>Directors RESOLVED that the agenda, approved minutes and supporting documents be made available for public inspection with the exception of information concerning identifiable pupils and/or teachers/staff.</p>	



20.	Date and time of future meetings	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full Board of Directors – Tuesday 1st July 2025 at 5.00 pm 	
	The meeting concluded at 7.05 pm	

Action Log

5	Minutes 18 th December and Special Meeting of the Board of Directors 5 th February to be signed by Chair.	Governance & Policy Officer/Chair
8	Governor Development & Induction to be developed further during the next Summer/Autumn Terms	Governance & Policy Officer/SDO
	Link Directors to LGB's – report to next meeting of the BOD	Governance & Policy Officer SDO
8 a.)	Governance appointments – action	Governance & Policy Officer
9	EDOE to report back at the next BOD on work in progress/future projects.	DOE
	Further information on the University's marketing experience	Director/ GW/ SDO
10	Advise back to Directors, policy regarding USB Drives	CFO
	Fire Doors – information to be shared back to the Board	COO
	Development of an AI Strategy	CEO
11	Top Level Central Team/Trust costs to be added to the budget report	CFO
12	Report Format Standards Committee – Infographics	CEO/SDO/EDO/Director GW
	Different focus to be considered at each Standards Committee	CEO/SDO/EDO
13	Strategic Plan – Intent section/implementing the Curriculum updated to reflect 'providing conditions to' rather than designing the Curriculum. Also add a positive closing statement from the CEO	CEO/SDO
14	Updated Scheme of Delegation – add to the website	Governance & Policy Officer
15	Trust Strategic & Operational Risk Register –	
	Bottom 2 safeguarding residual risks to be amended to green rather than amber	SDO
	Executive Summary to be included with future Risk Register reports setting out any movement in risks and rationale for change.	SDO

These minutes were approved by the Chair of the Board of Directors of Northern Arch Learning Partnership as follows:

on: 1 July 25 date

Signature: 

Print Name: J I C y d e

APPROVED