David Ross Education Trust
Broadening Horizons

# MINUTES OF THE TRUST BOARD MEETING

**Thursday 18 June 2026, 1.00 pm – 4.00 pm**
**Nevill Holt/Microsoft Teams**

**Attendance:** David Ross (Chair), Tracey Maloney, David Hall, Mick Elliott, Nigel Langstaff, Andrew Read, Richard Emerton (Via MS Teams), Keith Cochrane, Louise Jackson, Jonny Boddington

**Invited Officers**: Simon Rose (Chief Executive Officer), Aron Whiles (Director of Secondary Education), Kimberley Lawton (Director of Primary Education), Jane Spencer (Chief Finance Officer), Maria Maltby (Director of Governance), Jonathan French (Director of Operations), Rachel Ridgill (Director of HR)

**Apologies:** None

## 1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1. The Chair welcomed attendees and in particular, Louise Jackson to her first meeting.

## 2. Declarations of Business Interests in relation to the agenda

2.1. Attendees were reminded of the need to declare any interests in relation to the agenda. No declarations were made.

## 3. Minutes (Accuracy and Matters Arising) and Actions of the Previous Trust Board Meeting

3.1. The minutes of the Trust Board meetings held on 14 May 2026 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting. There were no matters arising. Progress with actions was noted.

## 4. Recent Committee Meetings

4.1. **Finance and Resources Committee:** Trustees received a verbal update from the Co-Chairs of the Finance and Resources Committee held on 11 June 2026.

4.2. **Committee Effectiveness Review:** The Committee received the results of the recent effectiveness review. Members noted feedback that Board reporting is often perceived as overly lengthy and detailed. The importance of providing concise and focused reports while maintaining appropriate levels of assurance was recognised.

4.3. **Workforce Restructure and Consultation Update :** An update was provided on the ongoing consultation process. Members were advised that the initial proposal, which could have resulted in approximately 45 compulsory redundancies, had reduced to around 14 through a combination of voluntary redundancy, redeployment and staff resignations. It was noted that the Trust had successfully avoided industrial action from trade unions during the process, although a ballot relating to BMA had taken place the previous day.

4.4. The Committee supported a proposal to the Board to increase the level of redundancy pay. The financial impact of the proposal was expected to be negligible.

4.5. Members sought assurance regarding redundancy costs, noting that the reduction in compulsory redundancies from 45 to 14 had not resulted in a proportional reduction in projected costs. In response, it was explained that the original £600k figure had been an estimate and that the current £450k forecast remained indicative. The final cost remained uncertain due to factors including

voluntary redundancy arrangements and pension strain costs, which could not be fully determined at the outset. It was anticipated that overall costs would reduce further by the end of the financial year.

4.6. **Staff Retention :** The Committee discussed employee turnover within the first year of employment at the Trust. Members noted that improving retention formed a key strand of the Trust's strategy for people management, learning and support. It was agreed that further analysis was required to better understand the reasons why colleagues leave within their first 12 months of employment and to identify any emerging themes or trends.

4.7. **Recruitment Platform:** Members received an update on the implementation of the Trust's new recruitment platform, which had replaced the use of TES. The transition was reported to be progressing well, with the new platform delivering lower costs and improved candidate management functionality.

4.8. **Health and Safety:** The Committee noted that Health and Safety audits were currently underway across the Trust. The target had been increased to ensure that every academy achieves a minimum compliance score of 90%. Of the academies audited to date, all but one had exceeded this threshold. Members were advised that the academy below target, Charles Read Academy, was implementing actions to address identified areas for improvement.

4.9. **Catering Contract:** An update on the catering contract was received. Members noted the positive outcome achieved and that the matter would be considered later on the meeting agenda.

4.10. **Eresby School:** The Committee received an update on incidents at Eresby School. Whilst the number of incidents had not yet reduced, members were assured that leadership changes and additional support had been put in place to strengthen the school culture and secure sustained improvement over time.

4.11. **Finance:** The Committee received an update on the Trust's financial position. Members were advised that the principal change within the 2026/27 financial outlook relates to the ongoing rightsizing programme, with significant progress having been made against planned objectives. The Committee welcomed the positive progress reported.

4.12. Members reviewed the Trust's three-year financial projections alongside DfE forecasting requirements. It was noted that a detailed paper on the longer-term financial position would be introduced later in the meeting to support further scrutiny and discussion.

4.13. The Committee also reviewed the Banking and Investment Policy and noted that the item was included elsewhere on the agenda for detailed consideration.

4.14. **Risk and Audit Committee:** Trustees received a verbal update from the Chair of the Risk and Audit Committee held on 11 June 2026. Keith Cochrane (KC) had attended as an observer. Trustees were advised that the meeting had not been quorate, however Andrew Read (AR) had provided written support for decision items following the meeting.

4.15. **Cyber Security:** The Committee received an update on cyber security arrangements, specifically discussed was the risk relating to security monitoring outside normal working hours. It was reported that a proposal would be developed and brought forward to the Executive Team for consideration.

4.16. **Internal Audit Progress:** Members received an update from Crowe on internal audit activity. A new internal audit report on Estates Management had been completed and received a Substantial Assurance rating. The auditors highlighted the strength of the Estates Team and commended the work being undertaken under Jon French's (JF) leadership.

4.17. **Internal Audit Plan 2026/27:** The Committee reviewed and approved the proposed internal audit plan for the year ahead. Members discussed potential areas for future review, including Purchasing and Creditors. It was noted that this area had previously received a Partial Assurance opinion and that, following advice from the CFO, a further review would be most beneficial once additional improvement work had been embedded.

4.18. **Committee Effectiveness:** The Committee considered feedback arising from the Committee Effectiveness Review, including concerns regarding meeting quoracy. Members acknowledged the issue and noted that Trustee recruitment activity was underway.

## 5. Draft 5-Year Strategic Plan Presentation

5.1. Simon Rose (SR) presented the draft Five-Year Strategic Plan, emphasising that the document remained work in progress and would continue to be refined following feedback from Trustees and Executive Leaders. Members noted that this was the most detailed strategic plan the Trust had developed to date. Trustees were invited to provide comments ahead of the summer break, with further discussion planned through the Education Committee and Board meetings in the autumn term.

5.2. The Committee received a summary of the proposed vision, mission and strategic priorities. It was noted that whilst the Trust's mission and values remained unchanged, the strategy reflected a renewed level of ambition, pace and focus. It was noted that a number of systemic issues had been inherited, including a culture that had not always encouraged open discussion of challenges. Improving GCSE outcomes and strengthening provision across Years 7-9 were identified as key priorities.

5.3. Trustees heard that the current school improvement model would be redesigned, including the removal of the Executive Principal structure, stronger accountability for outcomes and an increased focus on performance management. Significant investment is being made in teaching quality and professional development, drawing on learning from high-performing trusts. An additional £150,000 has been allocated to accelerate secondary improvement.

5.4. SR stated that a significant shift in professional development was planned, informed by learning from high-performing trusts including STAR, Ark and Outwood Grange. An additional £150k had been invested to accelerate improvements in secondary teaching and learning. It was noted that sustainable improvement will be achieved through greater precision in classroom practice, with the aim of improving pupil attendance and creating more engaging, energised classrooms.

5.5. SR added that a Future Readiness Framework was being developed to better prepare pupils for life beyond school. Future readiness and careers education would be embedded within the curriculum from Key Stage 3 onwards. A cross-phase approach to improvement would also be adopted, with expertise shared across the Trust to address common challenges, such as literacy. This would include drawing on successful primary practice to support improvements in secondary schools.

5.6. SR reported plans to strengthen inclusion through greater in-house specialist capacity and university partnerships. The draft strategy was built around five key priorities aimed at establishing DRET as a sector-leading trust, while continuing to build on its strengths in community engagement and innovation. Trustees were invited to provide feedback ahead of the summer break. It was confirmed that the Trust's mission and values would remain unchanged, with the strategy focused on increasing ambition, pace and delivery.

5.7. **Strategic Context :** Trustees noted that DRET's primary academies were amongst the highest performing in the country, ranking sixth nationally amongst comparable trusts. The aspiration was to become the highest-performing trust nationally whilst maintaining the Trust's commitment to serving disadvantaged communities. In contrast, Trustees heard that performance across secondary academies was not yet where it needed to be. It was acknowledged that outcomes remained below national averages across key measures and that the Trust was vulnerable under the forthcoming MAT inspection framework. The strategy therefore placed significant emphasis on accelerating secondary improvement whilst sustaining excellence in primary provision.

5.8. **Consultation and Development Process:** SR reported that the strategy had been informed by extensive consultation with Trustees, governors and employees. Feedback from staff had identified three key priorities: Improving educational outcomes; greater consistency across the Trust; and increased investment in staff development and support.

5.9. **Secondary School Improvement:** Trustees received a detailed presentation from Aron Whiles (AW) on the challenges and opportunities within the secondary phase. AW reported that historic approaches to school improvement had not secured the required impact and that significant changes to the current model would be implemented. Trustees heard that: the Executive Principal structure would be removed; accountability arrangements would be strengthened and clarified; Regional Directors and Principals would be held directly accountable for educational outcomes; School improvement activity would become more focused, forensic and outcomes-driven; and that significant investment had already been allocated to strengthen teaching quality and professional development.

5.10. AW reported that secondary performance remained below expectations, with outcomes currently below the national average across key measures. The proposed strategy focused on Years 1 and 2 bringing schools closer to national benchmarks, with accelerated improvement planned in Years 3 to 5. Trustees noted the urgency of improving outcomes for over 6,700 secondary pupils.

5.11. Discussion highlighted the need to improve both progress and attainment, alongside strengthening attendance and reducing suspensions. AW advised that the current central school improvement model had focused on the wrong priorities and would be recalibrated.

5.12. Trustees discussed ambitions for growth and the challenges of maintaining high performance while serving disadvantaged communities and incorporating underperforming schools into the Trust. It was agreed that performance measures should reflect individual school contexts alongside overall Trust ambitions.

5.13. AW and DR outlined plans to strengthen teaching and learning through an Excellence Framework, improved professional development, greater leadership ownership of curriculum, and increased professional agency for teachers. It was noted that curriculum leadership had become fragmented, and subject leaders would be given greater responsibility for driving improvement.

5.14. Trustees discussed the importance of identifying and sharing excellent practice, addressing barriers to effective teaching, and ensuring staff received appropriate support and challenge. Members noted that teaching standards, attendance and reading would be key priorities, with a particular focus on improving consistency of practice across secondary schools.

5.15. In response to questions on post-16 provision, AW advised that further work was required to develop a detailed sixth-form strategy.

5.16. **Primary Strategy:** Kimberley Lawton (KM) reported that DRET primary schools were performing strongly, achieving outcomes approximately 10% above national averages and ranking sixth nationally among comparable trusts. While there was an ambition to become the highest-performing trust, trustees noted that success must continue to be measured against the Trust's wider mission of transforming lives, not solely academic outcomes.

5.17. Trustees heard that improving the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving greater depth remained a key challenge. Greater focus would be placed on developing curiosity, oracy and communication skills from the early years onwards.

5.18. A revised school improvement model would replace Regional Director-led improvement with cluster-based collaboration, enabling groups of schools to work together to strengthen community, innovation and autonomy. Inclusion, community engagement and the DRET Advantage would be further prioritised, including proposals for expanded nursery provision, wraparound care and increased family support.

5.19. Trustees discussed sustainability challenges facing some smaller schools, including falling rolls, SEND pressures and financial viability. A small schools strategy was being developed to address these risks, alongside marketing initiatives and consideration of longer-term options where required.

5.20. Trustees emphasised the importance of making proactive decisions to maintain educational standards and ensure the long-term sustainability of the Trust's provision.

5.21. **Wider Strategy:** SR outlined the ambition for DRET to be at the heart of its communities, supported by five key priorities. This included strengthening regional leadership to bring together local stakeholders to address community challenges and improve outcomes for young people.

5.22. Trustees heard that developing stronger employer partnerships and expanding commercial and lettings opportunities would increase community engagement, enhance the Trust's reputation and support pupil recruitment. Each Principal would be required to develop a community outreach plan.

5.23. Trustees also discussed vocational education and recognised the importance of ensuring a broad range of pathways for pupils, noting that vocational provision currently included qualifications such as BTECs in areas including sport, drama, dance and technology, particularly in the context of future growth opportunities. Collaboration with further education colleges and local employers was identified as a key opportunity.

5.24. Trustees noted that the enrichment strategy would continue to expand opportunities in music, sport, outdoor learning, drama and visual arts. Key initiatives included the development of the DRET 20 programme, providing a set of core experiences for all pupils, a strengthened Year 7 transition offer, increased participation in sport, and the launch of a Trust-wide visual arts programme across secondary schools.

5.25. Trustees noted the ambition to develop further sporting opportunities, including proposals linked to Loughborough Sport, which would be considered further in the autumn term.

**5.26. Actions:**

**5.27. Strategic plan to return to the Trust Board for further consideration at the first meeting of the new academic year. (SR)**

**5.28. Education Committee to consider the draft strategy in July and provide feedback to inform its further development. (SR)**

**5.29. Education Committee to consider sixth-form provision and future strategy development. (SR/AW)**

## 6. Chief Executive's Report

6.1. **MAA Restructure and Industrial Action:** Trustees received an update on proposals specifically affecting MAA, including two planned redundancies and the potential for industrial action following an NEU ballot. Leaders reported that contingency plans were in place to minimise disruption and ensure pupils could continue to access education.

6.2. It was noted that the Trust had maintained open communication with union representatives and remained of the view that the proposed response was disproportionate to the scale of the staffing changes. SR advised that engagement with staff had been challenging and that the proposals remained necessary to support the long-term interests of pupils.

6.3. It was agreed that the Trust should write to the Secretary of State to highlight that anticipated additional teacher capacity had not materialised, and to explain the impact this was having on schools and discussions with unions.

6.4. Trustees discussed redundancy compensation arrangements and considered a proposal, which had previously been supported by the Finance and Resources Committee, to enhance payments to 1.5 times the statutory entitlement. It was noted that this approach was consistent with previous practice, had been requested by unions, and was considered proportionate when balanced against the potential costs of disruption, management time and industrial relations issues.

6.5. Trustees acknowledged concerns regarding consistency between voluntary and compulsory redundancy arrangements and agreed that the redundancy policy should be reviewed to provide greater clarity for future exercises.

6.6. Following discussion, trustees approved the enhanced redundancy payments. While DR expressed reservations regarding the use of public funds and the departure from the existing policy, it was recognised that the proposal represented a pragmatic approach to reducing the risk of wider industrial action and disruption

6.7. **Growth:** Trustees discussed the Trust's growth ambitions and the potential impact on capacity while significant improvement work was underway. Trustees agreed that a clearer framework for assessing and prioritising growth opportunities would be beneficial.

6.8. SR advised that a regional growth plan and initial assessment framework were already in place and that a more detailed set of criteria would be developed. Early discussions were also planned with Horncastle Trust to understand its financial position and assess potential opportunities.

6.9. Trustees emphasised that improving existing schools must remain the Trust's primary focus. AW acknowledged that, while growth opportunities should continue to be explored, the immediate priority was delivering improvement across current academies and understanding the effectiveness of the new strategy through clear performance indicators.

6.10. Trustees considered the differing levels of risk associated with potential growth projects. It was noted that opportunities such as Garendon Park and Robert Bakewell Primary School could potentially be accommodated with limited additional capacity, while other opportunities would require further due diligence, including consideration of available DfE support and school improvement requirements.

**6.11. Actions:**

**6.12. Develop a more detailed growth assessment and prioritisation framework. (SR)**

**6.13. Evaluate how organisational growth will affect the A8 KPI measure and determine whether the metric needs to be refined or adjusted. (SR and AW)**

**6.14. Write to the Secretary of State regarding the absence of anticipated additional teacher capacity and the resulting impact on staffing and union discussions. (SR)**

**6.15. Decisions:**

**6.16. Trustees approved the increase of redundancy payments to 1.5 times the statutory requirement.**

## 7. Executive Director of Secondary Education Report

7.1. The report was received and noted. AW reported that since joining the Trust two weeks ago, he had been undertaken since taking up post, providing further insight into the challenges facing secondary schools.

7.2. Trustees discussed standards at Havelock Academy. While there was evidence of a positive culture, respectful behaviour and pride in the school environment, concerns remained regarding the quality of teaching, attendance, pupil outcomes and levels of aspiration. Members noted that, despite some areas of strength, current performance was not yet aligned with the Trust's ambitions and expectations.

7.3. SR advised that further changes to secondary leadership and accountability arrangements would be required to accelerate improvement. Trustees heard that a culture of consistently high expectations was not yet embedded across all secondary schools and that stronger accountability would be needed at all leadership levels.

7.4. Trustees discussed Ofsted readiness and the need for more accurate self-evaluation. AW reported that recent review activity, including learning from current inspections, had highlighted inconsistencies between school self-assessments and external evaluations. As a result, quality assurance processes were being strengthened to ensure schools had a more realistic understanding of their strengths and

areas for development. Trustees were reassured that future quality assurance arrangements, supported by Regional Directors, would provide earlier identification of concerns.

7.5. Trustees noted that sufficient resources were available to support leadership development and school improvement. Work was underway to identify skills and knowledge gaps across the secondary workforce and to distinguish between areas requiring training and those requiring stronger implementation and accountability.

7.6. Trustees emphasised the need for rapid improvement in secondary education, particularly in attendance, teaching quality and pupil outcomes. AW highlighted the importance of making difficult decisions where provision was not delivering strong outcomes and ensuring that Principals and school leaders were clear on the Board's expectations. These priorities would be reinforced at the Trust leadership conference in July, following the examination period.

## 8. Executive Director of Primary Education Report

8.1. The report was received and noted. KL informed trustees that external moderation of Year 6 writing outcomes had been undertaken across six primary schools, with all judgements validated. Particular recognition was given to outcomes at Briar Hill Primary Academy, where all pupils met the expected writing standard. It was also noted that work was underway to develop a Key Stage 3 English strategy to build on primary strengths.

8.2. An update was provided on recent Ofsted activity at Booth Wood. Early indications suggested strong outcomes across most areas, with the school achieving one of the strongest scorecards in the local area. Trustees discussed the operational impact of inspections, particularly in smaller schools, where inspection activity could significantly reduce teaching capacity. Concerns were raised regarding the proportionality of inspector allocations, and SR confirmed that these concerns had been raised directly with Ofsted.

8.3. Trustees received an update on the proposed Targeted Mainstream Provision (TMP) at Thomas Hinderwell Primary Academy. It was noted that the proposal would expand capacity to support additional pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), building on the school's strong reputation and expertise in SEND provision. Members welcomed the potential opportunity and noted the positive impact it could have on local provision.

8.4. The Board discussed future growth opportunities in the Scarborough area, highlighting the strategic importance of increasing the Trust’s presence and influence within the region.

8.5. An update was also provided on Eresby Special School following the departure of the Headteacher and staff absence challenges. Trustees were assured that additional support and resources had been deployed, including specialist-trained supply staff and senior Trust leaders. Work was ongoing to secure interim leadership arrangements from September, with experienced Trust SEND leaders being considered for secondment to provide stability and maintain the quality of provision for pupils.

## 9. Catering Contract Award

9.1. Trustees received an update on the catering procurement process and were advised that, following a robust and comprehensive evaluation, the panel unanimously recommended to Trust Board awarding the contract to Innovate Services. While the Trust had worked successfully with Caterlink for the previous six years and maintained a strong relationship, the evaluation panel concluded that Innovate offered a significantly stronger proposition for schools, particularly within the secondary sector.

9.2. Members scrutinised the financial assumptions underpinning the bid and sought assurance that the proposed nil cost to the Trust was sustainable. Jon French (JF) confirmed that Innovate had developed its model from the ground up using the Trust's staffing requirements and service specification rather than existing Caterlink arrangements. Innovate had provided assurances that any errors in its financial modelling would not create financial risk for the Trust. Trustees also noted that Innovate's pricing

proposal would maintain meal costs for parents at current levels rather than introducing anticipated increases.

9.3. Trustees discussed the quality of the proposed catering offer, including nutritional standards, menu development and ingredient quality. JF confirmed that menus would be independently reviewed by external dietetic and nutrition specialists prior to implementation and that recipes and nutritional standards would be contractually monitored. Trustees sought further clarification regarding specific elements of the offer, including the provision of freshly baked wholemeal bread.

9.4. Members explored the arrangements for contract management and quality assurance. It was confirmed that day-to-day oversight would be strengthened through local operational management within schools, supported by regular meetings to review uptake, sales, menus and service quality. Formal contract management meetings would also continue throughout the contract term. Trustees noted that agreed KPIs would be central to monitoring delivery of the Trust's healthy eating objectives.

9.5. The Board discussed how the new catering contract could support wider healthy lifestyles initiatives. Trustees recognised that whilst the Trust could not directly control the contents of packed lunches, there was an opportunity to influence parental choices through communication, education and affordability initiatives. It was noted that work was already underway to promote healthier and affordable lunch options and that this would align with the wider community engagement strategy.

9.6. Following discussion, trustees agreed to approve the contract award subject to completion of additional reference checks with existing trust clients and satisfactory due diligence. Authority to review and sign off the final reference information was delegated to members of the Risk and Audit Committee.

**9.7. Actions:**

**9.8. JF to confirm whether the provision of freshly baked wholemeal bread would be delivered on-site or supplied through alternative arrangements. (JF)**

**9.9. JF to provide Risk and Audit Committee with details from additional trust reference checks. (JF)**

**9.10. KM to develop a communications strategy to support healthy eating promotion and parental engagement alongside implementation of the new contract.**

**9.11. Decisions:**

**9.12. Trustees approved the award of the catering contract to Innovate Services Ltd for 34 of the Trust's 36 academies and authorised the issue of a Notice of Intention to Award. Catering services at the remaining two academies would continue to be delivered in-house.**

**9.13. The Board approved an initial three-year contract, with the option to extend for a further two one-year periods, giving a maximum contract term of five years and six days. Trustees noted that the contract would be delivered at nil cost to the Trust, with no implementation or mobilisation costs. A 50/50 profit-sharing arrangement would apply should any surplus be generated during the contract term.**

**9.14. Trustees also noted that the contract included a commitment from the provider to invest £211,200 over the initial three-year term, rising to £352,000 over five years, to support improvements to dining facilities across the Trust.**

## 10. Chief Finance Officer's Report

10.1. Jane Spencer (JS) presented the current financial position and the proposed Three-Year Financial Plan. Trustees noted that the Trust remained in a stable financial position, with a year-to-date surplus and no immediate cash flow concerns. Planned estate repairs of £350k would be completed over the summer, while a degree of uncertainty remained in relation to redundancy costs. Trustees heard that

the Trust was currently forecasting a positive year-end position unless further unforeseen pressures emerged.

10.2. Trustees discussed the Trust's cost base and benchmarking. It was noted that staff costs remained higher than some sector comparators, reflecting the Trust's secondary school profile. Trustees agreed that while continued focus on efficiency and value for money was important, there was no intention to reduce staffing levels simply to improve benchmarking metrics.

10.3. Trustees considered the Three-Year Financial Plan and the assumptions underpinning it. David Hall (DH) advised that the plan had been prepared using prudent and realistic assumptions, particularly regarding future pupil numbers. Whilst there was uncertainty in forecasting beyond one year, members were assured that no overly optimistic assumptions had been included. Trustees noted that the impact of declining pupil numbers would be partially mitigated by lagged funding, providing time for the Trust to adjust expenditure where necessary.

10.4. Trustees discussed the strategic approach taken in presenting the plan to the DfE. It was agreed that the Trust should demonstrate it was managing financial pressures responsibly and sustainably, with a target of achieving at least a break-even position across the planning period. Trustees noted that submitting a deficit budget could adversely affect future growth opportunities and would not accurately reflect the Trust's financial resilience.

10.5. Trustees acknowledged the importance of continued monitoring of pupil number trends and agreed that this would be a key area of focus during the next academic year. JS advised that a detailed pupil number analysis would be undertaken following the October census to inform future financial planning and any required interventions in schools experiencing falling rolls.

10.6. Trustees also discussed the need to secure greater value from existing resources and ensure that staffing, structures and investment were delivering improved outcomes. Trustees recognised that future financial pressures would be particularly challenging for some primary schools as funding levels changed and pupil numbers declined.

10.7. Following discussion, the Trustees approved the Three-Year Financial Plan.

10.8. **Treasury Management and Investment Policy:** Trustees considered the revised Treasury Management and Investment Policy and approved the recommendation to establish an account through the Insignis cash management platform. Members noted that the proposed approach remained low risk, aligned with DfE guidance and restricted investments to highly rated institutions. Trustees noted the differing legal status of the Trust's permanent endowment funds and strategic development funds and the requirement to manage these in accordance with charity law and relevant regulatory guidance. The policy was approved.

10.9. **Travel and Expenses Policy:** Trustees approved the revised Travel and Expenses Policy.

*10.10. DR left at 4.00 pm. TM chaired the remainder of the meeting.*

10.11. **Summer Contract Approvals:** Trustees discussed the need for timely decision-making during the summer period when several procurement and operational matters may require approval before the next scheduled Board meeting. Trustees recognised that delays in contract awards could impact service delivery, mobilisation arrangements and academy operations.

10.12. To ensure business continuity, the Board agreed to delegate authority to one or more nominated trustees to review and approve contract awards on behalf of the Board where decisions were required during the summer break. It was noted that this approach would provide appropriate oversight while enabling the Trust to progress urgent matters within required timescales.

10.13. Trustees emphasised that delegated decisions should be supported by appropriate due diligence and officer recommendations and that any decisions taken under delegated authority would be reported back to the Board for transparency and assurance.

10.14. Trustees approved the delegation of authority to nominated trustees, Jonny Boddington and Tracey Maloney (for CRA Transport) to consider and approve contract awards during the summer period, with decisions to be reported to the Board at the next meeting.

**10.15. Decisions:**

**10.16. Trustees:**

**10.17. Approved the Three-Year Financial Plan.**

**10.18. Approved the Treasury and Investments Policy.**

**10.19. Approved the Travel and Expenses Policy**

**10.20. Delegated trustees to review and approve contract awards during the summer period where required.**

## 11. Any Other Business

11.1. There was no additional business.

**The meeting ended at 4.04 pm.**