Meeting	Seaford Learning Trustees
Date	Wednesday 12th June 2024
Time	5pm – 7pm
Venue	Board Room, Seaford Head School, Arundel Road site
Trustees	Jacky Cross Bob Ellis James Hollingsworth Chris Mercer Margaret Rooms Sarah Speedie
Members	Dawn Baker Sue Silvester Gordon Sims Andrew Wright
In attendance	Jane Branson (Guest) Sally Laidlaw (Chief Finance Officer) Gaynor Newnham (Clerk)
Apologies	Jon Dilley
Absent	

Minutes

Item	Item Outline
1.	**Welcome & Apologies for Absence** **SS opened the meeting, as Vice Chair.** Jon Dilley, and James Hollingsworth had sent apologies for absence. No members attended this meeting.
2.	**Disclosure of Personal and Pecuniary Interests in Proceedings** There were no changes to the previous declarations.
3.	**Minutes of the Previous Meeting, 15th May 2024** The minutes had been circulated with the agenda. **Trustees approved the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting, subject to some minor amendments.** Trustees reviewed the summary of actions, and all were noted to be complete, in hand, or on the agenda. **Trustees reviewed the summary of actions.** **Trustees agreed to bring the draft Induction Pack to the September meeting and circulate the LA model and the version supplied by JB, as soon as possible.** The Trustee leading on safeguarding has met with the school safeguarding leads and a further meeting is planned. SS will present the draft Trust safeguarding action plan at the awayday. The new Trust Logo has not yet been shared, and will come to the awayday ***Action:*** • ***Circulate the LA model and the version supplied by JB, as soon as possible***.

4.	**CEO Verbal Update** The CEO reported that: • Support for Seaford Primary includes preparing Y6 for secondary, and RT supporting with leadership 1 day a week. The CEO has met the Chair of Governors to discuss support into next year. • Trustees have received the review of Governance which will be discussed at the Away Day • The proposed consultation to reduce PAN at Chyngton has been followed up on with the LA and must take place between October and January. Consulting in December would allow it to happen after the first round of primary applications. • Staffing is strong at both schools – CS will be mindful that there are ECT's to be supported; SHS recruitment has been straightforward. • BE will continue to review capacity so that middle leaders can support the trust. • A feasibility study found that another 6th form in Eastbourne is not a good idea, which may lead to collaboration between current providers. • There was a recent Sustainability fair at Steyne Road, which celebrated the community. The event was successful, but timing will be reviewed for next year, as it took place on the Saturday at the end of half term and linking with the primaries was tricky. Being at the end of the holiday meant that it was harder to ensure children attended. SL reported, in response to a question, that the event was run by Sharing Skills Seaford. It was well managed and amicable; the site team was involved. It was well attended. SS suggested themes for future events, such as mental health. The Trust food lead attended, the musicians and farm were involved. BE recorded thanks to the Site Team and Dave Faulkner. **SLT Priorities for 2024 – 25** This year's performance has been reviewed by the senior executive team and the RAG-rated plan was circulated for the last meeting. There is now work on the plan for next year which will link to the trust vision, which is currently in stage 1. That has been outreach work with the Seaford primary schools, which is paving the way for sharing best practise but is not dependent on those schools joining the trust. Alfriston primary has joined the cluster, and work with Denton primary may be pursued. Work with Chyngton links to the 'beyond Seaford' stage. The better the Trust becomes the more advantages there will be for the future. Links may be made with other like-minded trusts/ schools, possibly out of area. The urgency may be impacted by a change of government though the local authority does not have the capacity to support schools well. The main driver is for any outreach to be positive, and not just related to trust development. The priorities are actions to inform the vision. These include: • ongoing work with Seaford Primary. • The proposed special facility and nursery at Chyngton • Sports facility at Arundel Road, which would end children walking between sites. Other possible priorities were suggested at the meeting and included food, related to eating well, social and the dining environment, energy and sustainability, and Health and Wellbeing.

	Trustees asked if Denton has been invited to join the cluster. This was discussed and **it was agreed that this should be raised with the chair of governors at Denton**. Many Denton pupils transfer to Seaford head. ***Action*** • ***CEO to talk the Denton chair of governors' possible support the Trust might provide*** A Trustee challenged the cost of the outreach work. The CFO explained that there is a contribution from Seaford Primary to recognise the support, and this can be adjusted for T1/2. SL has supported the school, which is then improving the relationship with Cradle Hill. Trustees noted the importance of soft partnerships which, if they show impact, will remove boundaries, but the arrangements need to be mutually beneficial. The CFO gave a strong example of collaboration across the town, which came about because of the current work with Seaford Primary and has enabled 4 weeks summer provision to be arranged across the town. The CEO explained that he will create an action plan to be shared at the away day.
5.	**Finance and operations:** **School Finance** Management reports were circulated, and the CFO explained that the system worked well. The CFO highlighted that: • Utilities remain a pressure, and the CFO is still chasing the Chyngton bills. One SHS meter is not recording. The figures are based on best guesses. The Eco Group talked to the CFO about energy charges, and SL explained that a simple fix would be turning off lights and computers. The heating has been on longer this year, as it was cold. Water costs are also based on averages due to changes of supplier. • Supply costs are challenging – there are cover supervisors in both schools, but sickness absence is unpredictable. Training costs need to be considered due to the impact on the budget and the supply cover cost. Trustees asked how supply costs compare to other schools, and it was explained that this would be hard to compare as schools work in different ways. SHS and CS use cover teachers, and supply can be sourced from agencies. Staff are prevented from losing non-contact time. It was confirmed, in response to a question, that sickness rates have risen since the pandemic. • Photocopying and printing contracts have been reviewed to give better value for money, and staff have been asked to minimise the amount of printing. Trustees asked about IT hardware and the CFO explained that the Trust has invested in areas that will allow movement with devices for the students. There needs to be work with the teachers to ensure technology is used. BE explained that he would like Technology across the Trust to be on the Trust Action Plan. The importance of balancing learning and technological advancement, while educating children and parents about health and wellbeing, was discussed.

Trustees asked if there is an AI (Artificial Intelligence) strategy, and it was explained that there is an expert, and the infrastructure is in place. The computing lead will work across SHS and CS on marking. SHS has been awarded a £60,000 grant for upgrading IT suites, with some match-funding requirement. This will also be applied for by CS.

The CFO reported that Central Schools Block Funding is expected, and all income should be received before the end of the academic year. There will be some additional staffing costs due to some teachers starting in July.

The outturn will be known in August, to be presented in September.

It was confirmed, in response to questions, that the budget deficit has reduced, which is positive.

Budget setting

The CFO reported that:

- The finance software estimates 2.75% pay award for teachers and likely increments.
- The CS budget will be adjusted due to an appointment.
- Support staff have been offered a £1290 increase for all, backdated to April, as shown as an allowance under 'other.' All the increases are unfunded, which will be a problem. Restructures may be needed if the increases are greater, and the CFO will resist filling vacancies that arise. The CFO explained, in response to a question, that a restructure of support staff could be needed within 12 months. Responding to subsequent questions about the views of local headteachers, the CEO explained that levels of need are increasing but TA support will be lost, due to issues with recruitment and retention, poor pay, etc. The way last year's support staff increases were administered led to many using income from benefits. The unions may be able to help find a solution.
  Trustees asked why supply agency teaching staff pay is zero, and CFO explained that would for any on payroll.
- IT and building improvement for SHS as coming from reserves, as agreed with the DfE, and are not shown in the report.
- SHS covers the cost of specialist teachers, PPA cover art, SLA for computers, legal fees, audit costs, marketing, etc., which supports CS.
- Income not yet received, for foreign students, Chartwells rebate, pool costs – these will be estimated this year.
- Banking interest is from investments.
- SHS premises costs reduced as the cleaners are not included. The staff will have the option of TUPE to the contractor and the cost of the contract relates to the number of staff and those in the pension scheme.
- CS pool costs have been removed, and the staffing costs will be adjusted following the appointment of an early career teacher to replace one on the upper pay spine.
- Services to Schools costs are not yet known.
- The CS headteacher has requested the budget is streamlined to align with the SDP.
- Carry forwards are estimated for both schools, and the balance uses reserves.
- It has been decided that the High Needs Block funding appointments will be permanent, which allowed the project to begin. It is hoped there will be more

funding in future, as it is now up and running. The worst-case option would be to redeploy the good appointments if the posts are no longer funded.

The CFO requested approval for the two budgets, which will be amalgamated into one, as this is a Trust. SL confirmed, in response to a question, that this is the final budget for approval.

The PAN of 150 students for the SH6 was challenged, and the CFO explained that this is based on predictions and can be reviewed, though this is lag-funding. Trustees suggested working with Eastbourne secondary schools, to attract students who do not wish to attend a large college, in light of the previously discussed feasibility study.

Trustees challenged the reported intake of 40 pupils to CS until 2027, and it was explained that this is because the consultation has not yet happened. Pupil numbers are being considered in scenario planning with AC. The system is limited as only staff costs are shown to increase in future years.

Trustees asked about the impact of LA decisions on funding for alternative provision, and the CEO explained that there is funding through the area group, and lots is done in house.

It was reported that the Russel Martin invoice has been received but should be paid by Area Group 1 – SL to action.

Trustees were informed, in response to a question, that the farm is in-house provision, and staffing costs are met from the staffing budget and there is a capitation budget for resources. Trustees asked if the farm could generate income for the school, and it was explained that this might be possible, in the future. The farm is used in place of LA farm or workplace provision, which would be costly to access. CS is keen to establish Forest School, and it may be better to encourage separate primary and secondary provision.

Trustees approved the 2024-2025 budget

Premises

The safeguarding wall proposal has been altered, so that work is completed on the front wall and the non-neighboured sections. The project will be re-tendered, and planning will be applied for. SL confirmed, in response to a question, that some work can begin as soon as quotes have been approved.

Policies

A proposal document had been circulated and the CFO fed back on a webinar with a National Leader of Governance and auditor, based on the new Academies Guidance, which will be shared with Trustees in a more usable form. All Trustees and local governors must read the document. The CFO explained that there are now seventeen statutory policies, for which models exist.

Trustees noted that policies and the Scheme of Delegation will need to be aligned.

There was a brief discussion about which policies should be approved by the Trust and the individual schools, and it was pointed out that it would be hard to have a useful overarching policy for areas that are run differently at each school.

The CEO explained that he would prefer to use model policies where possible, for efficiency, and that each policy will include a banner to explain its provenance. School policies will have school logo, and Trust ones will have the Trust logo, and they will be published on their respective websites. Many policies exist across both schools, and many are internal guidance documents with a longer timeframe that will go to SLT. If there is an issue and guidance is needed, it can be sourced. Once

	Trustees have agreed on the approval authority for each policy, the first one that is due for renewal at either school will come to both schools. **It was agreed that Trustees will look at the list of policies offline and approve delegating authority for each at the Away Day. The Scheme of Delegation will then be aligned – it was agreed that adding an additional column to the document that had been circulated would be useful, to show where policies are in the Scheme of Delegation.** The Safeguarding Trustee stated that they would also like attendance reporting across the Trust to be considered. A Trustee asked about non-statutory, but useful, polices that schools may have, and the CEO explained that these should be treated as guidance documents, normally based on LA models, and will be shared with the local boards. The CFO explained that the local boards are, in fact, academy committees. ***Action:*** • ***Circulate webinar to Trustees*** • ***Add 'Scheme of Delegation' column to policy list*** • ***Review list of statutory policies before the Away Day, to approve delegating authority at the Away Day.*** • ***Align Scheme of Delegation to reflect the policy approval document***
6.	**Governance** • **External Review of Governance** The report was circulated with the meeting papers and will be discussed at the Away Day. • **Finalise Away Day (26th June 2024)** BE shared draft agenda, which will be circulated.
7.	**Agenda items for next meeting:** • **Code of conduct** • **Academy Trust Handbook update** • **Appointments** • **Risk Register** • **Central Services offer** • **Trustee Induction**
8.	**Any other business** • The process for appointing parent governors was raised as an urgent issue, as there will be a vacancy at CS and a clear and transparent appointment process is needed, ideally across the Trust. The Clerk explained that the election process used in mainstream school can still be used, but it is not essential. **It was agreed to look at the model process for appointing parents and agree offline** – GN to circulate. • The Vice Chair reported that the 360-Review of the Chair will be completed this term. • **Trustees approved meeting dates for 2024 25** ***Action:***

	• ***Circulate model process for appointing parent governors in an academy trust.***
	Date of next meeting: 9th October The meeting closed at 19.19

	Summary of actions agreed		
No	Action	By	Notes
1.	Circulate the LA model and the version supplied by JB, as soon as possible.	Clerk	Complete
2.	CEO to talk the Denton chair of governors about possible support the Trust might provide	CEO	
3.	Circulate online seminar to Trustees	CFO	
4.	Add 'Scheme of Delegation' column to policy list	Clerk	
5.	Review list of statutory policies before the Away Day, to approve delegating authority at the Away Day.	Trustees	
6.	Align Scheme of Delegation to reflect the policy approval document	CFO	
7.	Circulate model process for appointing parent governors in an academy trust.	Clerk	

Seaford Learning Trust – draft meeting schedule for 2024 2025				
Term	**SHS LGB**	**Chyngton LGB**	**Trustees**	**AGM**
1	Tuesday 24 September 8-10am	Thursday 26 September 9-11am	Wednesday 09 October 5-7pm	
2	Tuesday 12 November 8-10am	Thursday 14 November 9-11am	Wednesday 4 December 5-6.30pm	Wednesday 4 December 6.30-7pm
3	Tuesday 14 January 8-10am	Thursday 16 January 9-11am	Wednesday 29 January 5-7pm	
4	Tuesday 4 March 8-10am	Thursday 6 March 9-11am	Wednesday 19 March 5-7pm	
5	Tuesday 29 April 8-10am	Thursday 8 May 9-11am	Wednesday 7 May 5-7pm	
6	Tuesday 24 June 8-10am	Thursday 10 July 9am-3pm	Wednesday 11 June 5-6.30pm	