



**Nexus MAT Board of Directors Meeting**  
**Wednesday 24 April 2024**  
**5.00 pm – 7.30 pm at Nexus HQ**

<b>Present:</b>	<b>Role:</b>	<b>Initials:</b>
Andrew Child MBE	Director/Member & Chair of Trust Board of Directors	Chair
Rachel Potts	Director/Member & Vice Chair of Trust Board of Directors	RP
Gillian Askew	Director (via MS Teams)	GA
Steve Booth	Director	SB
Colin Bradley	Director (via MS Teams)	CB
Peter Castleton	Director	PC
Mark Greenwood	Director	MG
Tina Havenhand	Director	TH
Ray Palmer	Director	RPa
Sue Shelley	Director	SS
<b>Also Present:</b>		
Warren Carratt	Chief Executive Officer (via MS Teams)	CEO
Joel Hardwick	Assistant CEO – Corporate Affairs	JH
Renata Robins	Governance Clerk	Clerk
Karen Smith	Chief Finance Officer (via MS Teams)	KS
Jacky Tattershall	Assistant CEO – QA & Improvement	JT
<b>Apologies:</b>		
Naveen Judah	Director	NJ
Rosey Andrassy	Advisor	RA
Phil Bradley	Advisor	PB
Naomi Cooper	Advisor	NC
Victoria Morris	Advisor	VM

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	ACTIONS
<p>1.1 Welcome &amp; receive apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were received for NJ.</p>	
<p>1.2 To accept apologies for absence</p> <p>Apologies were accepted for NJ.</p>	
2. ITEMS FOR AOB	
<p>Chair to determine any items of urgent business to be considered</p> <p>2.1 Modern Slavery Policy Statement – to take a decision</p> <p>JH introduced this item. Officers have completed a web audit and as the Trust’s turnover has grown, there is now a requirement to have a statement confirming compliance with the Modern Slavery Act 2015 published on the website. Partner MATs policy statements were reviewed and the attached drafted for Directors to take a decision on. JH invited questions.</p> <p><b>PC- asked for clarification what was meant by the term ‘modern slavery’ as there was no description?</b></p> <p><b>Action:</b> JH stated that he would include a definition of the term ‘modern slavery’ in Section 1 before uploading any approved document on to the website.</p> <p><b>RPa – asked about training of this, what does this look like?</b></p> <p>JH responded that it had been included in previous training but, as part of the next steps, it would naturally go as part of a policy update to all staff.</p> <p>Robust discussion took place by the Directors around the words ‘policy’ and ‘statement’. CEO highlighted to Directors that he felt it was the right phrase as it needed to be in Nexus’s suite of policies aligning to other organisational policies and, as such, would be reviewed via the policy review schedule.</p> <p><b>All Directors unanimously voted to keep both words in the title and to adopt the Modern Slavery Policy Statement with the added definition above.</b></p>	<p><b>Action:</b> <b>JH</b> <b>24.04.2024</b></p>
<p>2.2 CEO requested, on behalf of NJ, that Directors find time to watch a programme called ‘The Assembly’ on BBC iPlayer. It was a programme where actor Michael Sheen was asked questions by young people with learning difficulties. NJ found it very heart warming and asked the CEO to bring it to Directors’ attention in his absence.</p>	
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS	
<p>3.1. Individual Directors to declare any personal, business/governance interests on any item on the agenda</p> <p>JH, JT, and KS had an interest for Item 15 on the agenda and would therefore leave the meeting for this item, immediately after Item 14.</p>	

<p><b>4. NEXUS MAT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MINUTES</b></p>	
<p>4.1 To approve the minutes of the following meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Trust Board Meeting held on Wednesday 27 March 2024.</li> </ul> <p>The minutes were approved as a true and accurate record.</p>	
<p>4.2 Review of Action Tracker</p> <p>Action Tracker was reviewed and updated as appropriate.</p>	
<p>4.3 Matters arising from the Minutes</p> <p>None raised.</p>	
<p><b>5. STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE REPORT – TO RECEIVE AND SCRUTINISE</b></p>	
<p>Document circulated in advance.</p> <p>The CEO explained that this document gave an update on the objectives achieved so far and new progress and activity undertaken, since the last report. Following an overview of the notable points, the CEO invited questions.</p> <p><b>RP – one of the executive assurance partners was also an Ofsted inspector and has been invited to receive training as a lead inspector, RP wondered what impact that would have on capacity of the individual’s role i.e. was there capacity in that individual’s role to take that on? RP recognised the benefits to the Trust but just wondered what the impact was.</b></p> <p>CEO highlighted Nexus MAT's current functional capacity, which has been established to accommodate up to 24 schools in the Trust. Leveraging income from Ofsted work, the Trust is poised to potentially expand further. Pending Director approval, Jonathan Sharp, who joined in January, is set to transition to full-time status from September. JS is the serving HMI who has been asked to be a lead inspector. With his HMI background, he brings invaluable expertise. Meanwhile, Joanne Cliff, another executive assurance partner who is undergoing Ofsted training after concluding her consultancy at Crags, brings added capacity. There is a significant amount of direct improvement work underway with schools. The Trust’s financial modelling for the upcoming year is rooted in these assumptions, supported by the quality assurance and improvement team, ready to accommodate growth of up to 23/24 schools. This readiness remains unchanged.</p> <p><b>RP – one area that stood out was the assessment system in the Transformation Board’s work and RP was interested in what that was?</b></p> <p>CEO stated that all Nexus schools have different assessment systems in which they record pupil progress. There was an initial expression from schools of interest in, and looking at, having a shared assessment system. A number of schools had subsequently pulled back on the basis that they felt their needs were better met by their current arrangements.</p> <p>JT added that schools were still very interested in a Trust-wide system. The Trust now has the tools to look at something from the earliest cognitive level straight</p>	

through to GCSEs. The Trust had also done a big piece of work around destination data and tracking that over two or three years, and were looking at a system that can pick up that measure.

**RP made a final observation that she felt the Trust’s partnerships and relationships with local authorities was good.**

CEO concurred with RP and stated it was the best it had ever been, with local authority partners electing, of their own volition, to increase the schools top-funding from 1 April.

**PC – wondered, in terms of partnerships, about the attraction of mainstream schools into the Trust and whether it was progressing the way the Trust intended?**

The Trust has various options to consider, and it was crucial to carefully determine the most viable option. The Department for Education (DfE) Regional Director would require a substantial number of strong primary schools demonstrating consistent high performance over time, bringing their expertise to Nexus to enhance our model. The CEO believes this is the only scenario in which Nexus could ensure mainstream primary growth. The DfE has emphasised that Nexus must have good or outstanding mainstream primary schools to progress growth.

**PC – enquired where that left the Trust in connection with, particularly, specific schools that have approached us?**

Given Nexus’s year-long partnership with some schools, the Trust now awaits the decisions of their governing boards regarding academisation. It is possible they may defer action until after the general election. The CEO emphasised the need for a summer reassessment by officers to redefine the Trust’s approach to engaging in these partnerships. The CEO noted that this growth programme had not unfolded as expected.

**Chair: Transformation Board (page 2) asked for an explanation of the Digital & Gaming Curriculum?**

One of the areas that is a big interest area for young people generally is digital coding and gaming. Trust officers are exploring a partnership with Barnsley College to look at developing skills for that next generation of coders and digital engineers. Officers agreed that this was a niche, growing area and there was a real opportunity for collaborative work with Barnsley College for our young people to pursue Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications. Additionally, the focus would extend to cultivating transferable skills such as effective communication and teamwork.

Directors thanked the CEO and colleagues for their high-quality work on this report.

**6. ACADEMIES DASHBOARD REPORT – TO SCRUTINISE**

The CEO provided a summary of the dashboard in line with the two accompanying reports.

**SB – noted that Fountaindale had a lot of downward arrows on the dashboard, especially in Quality of Education, and enquired as to why?**

The CEO stated that this was mentioned in the accompanying report where there has been a change in Headteacher and there has therefore been a reassessment of

<p>the school's strength in these areas. The school is now subject, through the Trust quality assurance programme, to formal intervention to support and strengthen the school.</p> <p>Dashboard received with no further questions.</p>	
<p>6.1 Academies Dashboard Report – To scrutinise</p> <p><b>Chair – Point 1.7 sets out the six weakest areas and point 1.8 goes on to clarify that addressing those will be applied through the CSIF annual delivery plan. As this is an annual delivery plan, to what extent will these six weakest areas be fully resolved by the end of the academic year?</b></p> <p>CEO stated that they would not, entirely. These are bigger pieces of work than just 12 months, and some of these will be recurrent issues in all schools nationally, from one year to the next with the ebb and flow of school life, which each school addresses independently of each other.</p> <p><b>Chair - when would you see a point in time when they will not be weak? What is the timeline for this? How do you measure success?</b></p> <p>CEO commented that the proxy measure for success would be Ofsted inspection outcomes as Nexus has no other validated data, along with Director's tracking changes through iterative dashboard reports.</p> <p>Report received.</p>	
<p>6.2 Schools Subject to Enhanced Support and Intervention Report – To scrutinise</p> <p><b>RP – question around a number of schools where either the central team have put support in and that it sounds like that's being withdrawn such as Craggs; and Hilltop where there were executive Headteachers supporting schools that has been finished. RP wondered what support was then ongoing specifically around Craggs and Hilltop?</b></p> <p>CEO stated that the Craggs intervention has now completed and the next step will be to assess the impact on SATs outcomes in the summer. Regarding Hilltop, Sacha Schofield had put measures in place to be followed.</p> <p><b>RP – separate to the finance, RP assumed that JT's team were still regularly going in to school to support the curriculum leads at Hilltop to support a plan around improving the skills or knowledge?</b></p> <p>JT concurred with RP's assessment and stated that as well as the EAPs, specialist knowledge staff were also going into both Craggs and Hilltop to support around curriculum development.</p> <p>Report received with no further questions.</p>	
<p><b>7. CONSOLIDATED BUDGET MONITORING REPORT – PERIOD 6 – TO RECEIVE AND SCRUTINISE</b></p>	
<p>KS highlighted the significant updates to Directors. Overall, the Trust was in a really strong position with an in-year Trust level surplus of £1.3 million, almost double what the approved budget was. Questions invited from the Directors.</p>	

**SS – what is stopping the increase in pupil numbers at Hilltop?**

The CEO highlighted the situation involving three pupils from Sheffield City Council, occupying two classrooms at Hilltop. Additional placements are needed, requiring Sheffield's agreement and funding for alternative spaces and staffing. Temporary solutions, like using available space, are being explored, but the long-term aim is for these students to move to a more specialized provider. Alternatively, Sheffield must acknowledge the complexity of the students' needs and provide more funding. It is emphasised that a collaborative approach is essential.

The CEO expressed concern over the underutilisation of appropriate and proportionate disciplinary measures, such as suspension, for students with extreme challenging behaviours. This reluctance may be due to the Headteacher's child-centred approach, prioritising student well-being over labelling or stressing families. However, severe behaviours may necessitate suspension to ensure safety, particularly when staff and other pupils are at risk. Securing additional funding is crucial, but changes in funding policies pose challenges. Once spaces are secured, accommodating numerous needy students physically will be another challenge.

**PC – the Trust has cash in the bank of £5.6m. Are we clear about the investment strategy in relation to that money?**

KS clarified that the Trust's investment income saw a notable increase due to a favourable interest rate of 4.5% on its current bank account. Additionally, KS highlighted plans to review the reserves and investment policy in the near future. The £2 million SCA funding is another contributing factor to the high reserve.

**SB – the TCaF bid of £199k, is that allocated to anything specifically?**

The mentioned income corresponded to expenses from April of the current year to March 2025. £70k had already been allocated for the current budget cycle, mainly to cover anticipated costs. The team is currently exploring different options for utilising the remaining funds before the academic year concludes, in line with the approved bid's spending plan.

**SB – in year capital deficit of £2m, does that wipe out the in-year revenue surplus?**

They are reported separately. The £1.3m represents the revenue in-year surplus. Additionally, in the reports, there is a separate breakdown for capital, indicating a carry forward of £3m and an in-year deficit of £2.5m. We are anticipating a carry forward into the next academic/financial year of £400k.

**SB – has having an in-year capital deficit happened before?**

KS explained that due to being new to receiving SCA funding, the organisation had a substantial capital surplus in the first few years as they didn't spend much of it whilst the audit of the estate was completed. This surplus isn't considered part of the in-year surplus reported to Directors since discussions revolve around revenue, while SCA funds are ring-fenced separately.

**SB – we are allowed to be in a deficit?**

It would be problematic if the Trust didn't spend the SCA income within a certain timeframe. The Trust has carried forward funds from previous years, but with the introduction of RLB, the capital plan is now much clearer. Consequently, the Trust is

allocating the carry forward towards significant SCA projects such as roofing replacements, aligning with what the ESFA would expect.

**SB – asked for clarification around the ‘urgent’ meeting mentioned in the report about Hilltop and Sheffield. Did officers know what the timescale was on this?**

JH responded that a meeting had already taken place with the Council. Officers will go back tomorrow to the Council with the costs for the pupils. It is anticipated that, by the time of the next board meeting, officers should be able to update Directors with an answer.

Directors were interested to know how this developed and what the next steps will be.

**Directors asked around accuracy of reporting and forecasting, especially as reported for Kelford and Fountaindale, and what controls were in place to ensure that errors going forward were eradicated?**

KS explained that part of the reason for this was freezing forecasts earlier in the month to allow regional finance leads to discuss figures with schools. Any adjustments would then be incorporated into the next month. It has emerged that some figures remained frozen in IMP. To address these issues, new measures were implemented within the Finance team this month, including a spreadsheet for vacancy information to prevent duplications. Processes were becoming more efficient as the team utilised the system.

**TH: asked for the Balance Sheet to be a two-page document to include the additional information that Directors asked for in respect of debtors and creditors balances, to give Directors a bit more context as they were big numbers?**

KS informed Directors of her development of a new Balance Sheet Report within the finance system, offering additional information and displaying changes from month to month for Directors. This new version will be distributed this week alongside the current one, for Directors to consider. If received positively, the intention is to transition to using this new format moving forward.

**Action:** KS to distribute the new version Balance Sheet Report alongside current format for P7 Budget Monitoring.

**Action:  
KS  
29/04/2024**

**8. PROPOSED 2024-2025 MEETING DATES - TO TAKE A DECISION**

Document circulated previously.

**Directors unanimously agreed the proposed 2024-2025 meeting dates in principle.**

**9. APPOINTMENT OF NEW DIRECTORS FOR 1 SEPTEMBER 2024 - TO TAKE A DECISION**

CEO reported that the Trust will have 3 vacancies from 1 September. The Directors had taken the decision to appoint Advisors with the view to those Advisors feeding into the vacancies as and when they emerged.



CEO has discussed this with the AC, RP and SS as Committee Chairs, and as Chair and Vice-Chair. Those Advisors who joined the Board have been very clear on what their intentions are. We know that when PC steps down, the Trust will be losing a key individual with safeguarding experience, who's been the named Safeguarding Director for most of the Trust's existence.

Directors also have a need to increase and enhance their technical expertise around the table in terms of teaching and learning. That's where Naomi Cooper came in. Phil Bradley had been appointed as Advisor with his background in social care and, as Head of Service in Children's Services, with an eye on have a succession plan for safeguarding.

Victoria Morris is experienced in working across public sector, charities and also has got a strong background in safeguarding and early help and working with families. She was a Nexus MAT employee as Extended Services Manager for a period of time, before she left in summer 2022.

Rosie Andrassy was appointed as an Advisor last year with some of the skills that the Board were looking for in terms of education. Directors will recognise that Rosie has been the longest serving Advisor, though she has been able to engage the least with Board meetings due to other work commitments.

The Chair therefore recommended to Directors, that the Board appoint Phil Bradley, Naomi Cooper, and Victoria Morris as Directors to the Board, replacing the 3 directors stepping down, effective from 1 September 2024.

The appointment of **Phil Bradley, Naomi Cooper and Victoria Morris as Directors effective 1 September 2024 was unanimously approved**, via an individual vote for each Advisor, by all Directors present. This will now be taken to Members for final approval.

Directors agreed that they would be valuable additions to the Board.

CEO to write to Members requesting responses by Friday 10 May.

These appointments will ensure the Board retains its full complement of 11 Directors.

Rosie Andrassy to continue as an Advisor into the next academic year.

CEO will inform the new Directors as per protocol and diarise a conversation with RA.

#### **10. APPOINTMENT OF NEW CHAIR OF THE NEXUS MAT BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 1 SEPTEMBER 2024 - TO TAKE A DECISION ON A RECOMMENDATION TO MEMBERS**

CEO confirmed that nine out of eleven Directors took part in the online voting, which meant that a majority of Directors voted and 100% of Directors who voted, voted in favour of **Rachel Potts** becoming the **Chair of Nexus Multi Academy Trust Board of Directors effective 1 September 2024.**

This will now be taken to Members for final approval.



<p><b>11. APPOINTMENT OF NEW VICE CHAIR OF THE NEXUS MAT BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 1 SEPTEMBER 2024 - TO TAKE A DECISION</b></p>	
<p>CEO confirmed that nine out of eleven Directors who took part in the online voting, which meant that a majority of Directors voted and 100% of Directors who voted, voted in favour of <b>Sue Shelley</b> becoming the <b>Vice Chair of Nexus Multi Academy Trust Board of Directors effective 1 September 2024.</b></p>	
<p><b>12. APPOINTMENT OF NEW NAMED DIRECTOR FOR SAFEGUARDING FOR 1 SEPTEMBER 2024 – TO TAKE A DECISION</b></p>	
<p>CEO stated that PB was recruited as an Advisor on the basis of his safeguarding skill set and - given Directors have now, conditional to Member confirmation and approval, elected to recommend PB as a Director - it is proposed that the Board appoint PB as the named Director for Safeguarding from 1 September 2024.</p> <p>CEO and PC had both spoken with PB who understood this was part of the succession planning when he was approached to be an Advisor. PB has the advisory safeguarding experience that the Board were seeking with the view of stepping into this role.</p> <p>The appointment of <b>Phil Bradley</b> as named <b>Director for Safeguarding</b> effective <b>1 September 2024 was unanimously approved</b> by all Directors present.</p>	
<p><b>13. POLICY REVIEW REPORT</b></p>	
<p>The Policy Update Report had been updated with significant changes to the Delegated Financial Powers Policy; and a new policy Acceptable Use Policy (ICT &amp; e-Comms) to reflect the best practice policy guidance published in The Key.</p> <p><b>Policy Update Report was unanimously approved by the Board (apart from 13.2).</b></p> <p><b>Action:</b> JH to issue a policy briefing to inform the workforce on the update.</p>	<p><b>Action:</b> <b>JH</b> <b>25/04/2024</b></p>
<p>13.1 Delegated Financial Powers Policy – To take a decision</p> <p><b>CB – in terms of the financial delegation in terms of the limits, CB was presuming that is a total contract amount, not an annual amount?</b> CEO confirmed that this was correct.</p>	
<p>13.2 Acceptable Use Policy (ICT &amp; e-Comms) – To take a decision</p> <p><b>PC – is aware that this is a fast-moving area, therefore is the review date of April 2025 realistic? Will there be an arrangement that allows the Trust to revisit earlier if the landscape changes?</b> CEO confirmed that all policies have a minimum of one-year review but where there is a policy shift, a policy update report can be brought to Board as and when required.</p> <p><b>PC - 4.2.20 – this list seems a bit incomplete? Why are other forms of discrimination not listed?</b></p>	

<p>CEO stated that this was a model policy taken from The Key, Governor Hub. It may be better to exclude the words radicalised and antisemitic so that 4.2.20 reads 'Engaging in content or conduct that is extremist, racist or discriminatory in any other way'.</p> <p>Directors engaged in vigorous discussion around, in particular, 9.6, and the use of the word 'erase' pertaining to data on a child's personal device.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> Directors asked Officers to bring this policy back to the May meeting to ensure that the position that the Trust is setting out in this policy is one that is legally defensible, acceptable and reasonable.</p>	<p><b>Action:</b> <b>CEO</b> <b>22/05/2024</b></p>
<b>14. RISK REGISTER – TO SCRUTINISE</b>	
<p>CEO advised that this had been to Audit &amp; Risk and is going to Standards on 7 May.</p> <p><b>PC – At the bottom of Page 6, in yellow RAG Rating for Item 2 Improvement. Wording in RAG Rating is ambiguous?</b></p> <p>CEO agreed to reword that sentence.</p> <p>Register received.</p>	
<b>15. PROPOSED CENTRAL TRUST STRUCTURE 2024-25 – TO SCRUTINISE*</b>	
<p>*Document to be circulated via email and not put on Governor Hub. Officers other than WC to not attend this item.</p>	
<p>This item was minuted confidentially as a separate appendix.</p>	
<b>16. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS</b>	
<p>16.1 DfE Changes – For reference</p> <p>The CEO informed the Directors that the Governor Gazette highlighted updates from the Department for Education (DfE) regarding governance guides. Specifically, a new guide tailored to the Academy sector had been released, consolidating previous guidance and adjusting language for better alignment. This means Academy Trusts now have their own governance guide. Additionally, the DfE had withdrawn several previous publications and replaced them with updated versions.</p> <p>The CEO confirmed that officers had updated the governance documentation to reflect changes in statutory guidance, as covered in the Policy Update. This practice is considered beneficial by the Trust, especially because auditors would seek assurance that Directors were formally briefed on these changes. Additionally, the Governance Gazette updates were discussed at the Board meeting, providing Directors with an opportunity to ask questions.</p> <p>No further questions were raised.</p>	
<b>17. REVIEW OF RISK</b>	

<p>17.1 To consider any new risks identified during the meeting for referral to Trust Committees</p> <p>None.</p>	
<b>18. CONFIDENTIALITY</b>	
<p>18.1 To consider the confidentiality of any items discussed during the meeting</p> <p>Item 15 was minuted as a confidential item - Appendix 1.</p>	
<b>19. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS</b>	

Wednesday 22 May 2024	17:00 – 19:30	<b>Teams</b>
Wednesday 26 June 2024	17:00 – 19:30	<b>Nexus HQ</b>
Wednesday 17 July 2024	17:00 – 19:30	<b>Teams</b>

**Minutes approved.**

<b>CHAIR</b>	<b>SIGNATURE</b>	<b>DATE</b>