

**MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES – ONLINE ZOOM MEETING****11 OCTOBER 2023 – 5.00 P.M.****PRESENT**

Clare Gaskell	Mike McGarry - HT	Harriet Michael-Phillips
Karen Owens – Chair	Collette Simms	Richard Snowdon (RS)

**APOLOGIES**

Steph Donbavand	Sue Donnelly	Jim Rimmer
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**ALSO PRESENT**

Tom Dolly – SDHT	Gayle Phillips – DHT	Vicky Ashworth – AHT
Julie McGugan – AHT	Chris Tees – AHT	Andy Pritchard - RD
Judith Gordon – Acting Clerk		

**ACTION**

**24/22** The Headteacher explained that the period of consultation regarding the decision on whether to apply to join the Southport Learning Trust (multi-academy trust) had ended on Tuesday 10 October.

The following consultation meetings had taken place (it was noted that consultation was not mandatory but was considered good practice):

Parents/Carers – 27 September 2023 – three families attended. The school had received 5 emails from parents – three were very positive and two (from the same family) were against the school joining a MAT. Copies of the emails were sent to all members of the board prior to this meeting taking place.

Staff – 27 September 2023 – Union representatives were invited to attend – one NEU representative did attend. The feedback from staff was very positive, staff seemed keen and welcomed the opportunity. No written comments from staff were received by the Headteacher.

RS asked if the trustees not present at this meeting had any reservations regarding joining the Southport Learning Trust. The Headteacher responded that, to his knowledge, they did not have any reservations and this had been discussed in detail with the previous Chair of Trustees and at many previous meetings of the full board.

The following recommendation was put to the board:

To submit a formal application to the Secretary of State for Education to join the Southport Learning Trust at the earliest opportunity

**AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**

The Headteacher reported that the Southport Learning Trust Board are meeting next week to decide on whether Range should join the MAT. If the decision is positive, then an application will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Education and a decision on whether the application is successful is expected around February/March 2024.

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**24/23 Legal Representation**

Joining a MAT requires certain legal procedures to be followed, e.g. transfer of staff to the employment of the Trust; transfer of buildings, land etc., and for this purpose legal representation is required.

Range High School currently uses Browne Jacobson as its legal representatives, and so does the Southport Learning Trust.

The Headteacher, Resources Director and members of the Southport Learning Trust recently met with Lydia Michaelson-Yeates from Browne Jacobson, and an email, from her to the Headteacher was shared with the full board prior to this meeting taking place.

It outlined the 3 different options available:

1. Range takes different independent legal advice from a separate law firm and Browne Jacobson continue to advise the Southport Learning Trust
2. Browne Jacobson, if both parties agree, would prepare all the legal agreements and arrangements and Range would obtain independent legal opinion from another firm
3. Browne Jacobson would act for both parties in relation to this matter as they have a substantially common interest in relation to the transfer

The following points were made:

- Browne Jacobson has been through this process before – acting for both schools – within the Southport Learning Trust.
- There are currently seven schools in the Southport Learning Trust and only one school had opted for option 1 above. The other 6 schools had all opted for option 3 and had not encountered any issues
- Browne Jacobson will charge approximately £9.5k - £11.5k + VAT (for both schools) and the Southport Learning Trust will pick up all of the costs
- If Range chooses Option 1, the cost to Range would be in the region of £5k-£6k

The following recommendation was put to the board:

To request that Browne Jacobson act on behalf of Range High School and be responsible for:

- Project management of the legal aspects of the Project
- Funding agreement
- Transfer agreement
- Property
- TUPE
- Board resolutions

**AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**

Signed Chair Karen Owens

Date 7 December 2023