

## Minutes of the Beckley and Peasmarsch Schools Federated Governing Body

Held at Peasmarsch CE Primary School on

Thursday 4 May 2017 at 5.00 pm

Present: Jane Burnett (JB), Chair, Ian Bryan (IB), Kate Sims (KS), Lison Smart (LS), Emma Hogg (EH), Simon Thurston (ST), Jane Nash (JN), Peter Mayers (PM), Martin Harper (MH) and Alan Lloyd Smith (ALS), Marie-Claire Erith (MCE),

Also present: Vivienne Davies (VD) (Clerk), Ian Bauckham

Apologies: Greg Russell (GR), Ian Bauckham (CEO, TENAX)

	Discussion	Action
1.	<p><b>Welcome</b></p> <p>Jane Burnett welcomed Ian Bauckham. Governors introduced themselves.</p>	
2.	<p>Ian Bauckham reported that Tenax was a MAT of 5 schools. There would be 7 schools in September. There was one secondary school (Bennet Memorial in Tunbridge Wells) the other schools were primary schools, 2 in Crowborough and 2 in Kent. Of the two schools joining in September one was a new school and one a standalone academy. The aim is to have around 15-20 schools by 2020. All schools are good or outstanding apart from one primary school which Requires Improvement.</p> <p>Ian Bauckham is the CEO of the Trust. It is a teaching school trust.</p> <p>TENAX had not been looking to extend in this area however TENAX have a voluntary agreement with the Diocese to open discussions with CE Primary Schools.</p> <p><b>Governors asked questions:</b></p> <p><b>Q. Ian Bauckham had mentioned potential issues with the distance involved. How would the practicalities be overcome?</b></p> <p>A. Discussions would take place and there would need to be planning.</p>	

**Q. Would Tenax consider a federation as a hub or is Tenax specifically looking for a Trust centre. What sort of pupil numbers would Tenax consider?**

A. The Department for Education would not consider a new school unless it was 2 form entry. If the Federation could pull together a hub with 500-600 pupils academisation would be possible.

**Q. What is the difference between the Diocese based trust and a School based trust.**

A. In a school based trust the capacity to develop comes from other schools. In a smaller diocese led trust there may be a larger number of schools which had been in difficulty who had little capacity to help other schools. They will need to buy in services from outside agencies to support the schools. In a Diocesan Trust the top tier of Governance (members) are Diocesan. In Tenax the Members are also Diocesan.

**Q. How much power do you delegate to the Governing Body?**

A. The MAT ensures standards and safeguarding takes place. The local governing body ensures the schools remain their individuality.

**Q. What happens to the Governing body if they joined the Tenax Trust?**

A. In a good governing body the Governors remain. They are reappointed by the Trust.

Governors noted the Finance is managed via the Chief Finance Officer. The local Governing Body have sight of the budget but they are not required to monitor the finances.

**Q. How often does the Head meet with Central Finance?**

A. This takes place once a month.

**Q. What if a school goes bankrupt?**

A. The central team will monitor the school finances to ensure this does not happen.

**Q. Is there a reserve strategy?**

A. There is a carry forward of £100k.

**Q, How many pupils are in the schools?**

A. The secondary school has 1500 children. One school has 400 children, The rest have 210.

**Q. Are there improvement partners within the Trust?**

A. Improvement is undertaken by other schools within the MAT.

**Q. Under ESCC, The SIP comes in to set and monitor targets  
What would be in place of this?**

A. There is a specialist visit once a month in each school. In addition, there is a visit from the HR specialist.

**Q. Is there a general top slice?**

A. The topslice is 3.5%.

**What does the 3.5% cover?**

A. This covers HR, Finance, Contracts.

**Q. Is staff support visit included?**

A, Staff support is included if it is a visit. Further support would be chargeable.

**Q, Why should we chose Tenax?**

A. School improvement provided by ESCC would be very minimal. Tenax provides school improvement with a visit from the Executive Head once per month. Ian Bauckham advised that with diminishing local authority support, the school would find it difficult to recruit a new head, if the need arose. The local authority would only help if the school paid a lot of money. The MAT would provide leadership if a school was without a Headteacher.

**Q. What savings would be made?**

A. With 200 children there would not be a lot of financial savings.

**Q. Does Tenax centralise payroll?**

A. Yes. Savings can be made with centralised payroll and HR.

The federation was talking with a third school. 12 months ago, Tenax had been approached by Penny Gaunt re a MAT with Beckley, Peasmarsch and Playden. Tenax had not wanted to pursue the proposal at that stage

Ian Bauckham reported that he was aware that Peasmarsch had entered conversations with DCAT 12 months ago regarding an academy but this had not been viable. Governors advised that the previous academy proposal had been with other local

schools. **Governors emphasised that DCAT had re-approached the federation with a view to joining.**

**Further questions were asked by Governors.**

**Q, Tenax had a mix of schools. Are more free schools planned?**

A. This was the case. Tenax had put in another bid in East Sussex but had not been successful. This would have provided a hub in the middle and southern parts of East Sussex.

**Q. Governors questioned the principles behind the free schools.**

A. 25% of places would be reserved for church going families. The admissions policy in other schools would remain unchanged.

**Q. Are there any schools which would not be considered?**

A. Schools with a deficit or a premises issue would not be considered.

**Q. Had Tenax turned schools down?**

A. This had not happened. Some schools been put on hold as associate members. They receive access to events. There was no topslice and expensive services would not be involved.

**Q. How would Tenax conduct due diligence?**

A. If the first part of due diligence did not indicate any risk Tenax applied for an academy order.

**Q. Did Tenax attend meetings with parents?**

A. This was the case. Ian Bauckham was happy to come along to a public consultation.

**Q. One of the reasons behind the exploration was the risk of isolation. How would this change? Would the individual identity of small rural schools be maintained?**

A, Tenax tried not to get involved with school identity. There would be no changes to name, uniform, term dates,

**Q. Would there be any changes to the curriculum?**

A. Tenax did not prescribe any changes to the curriculum. If outcomes were good and Ofsted judgements were good Tenax would be happy for the school to continue with its curriculum.

**Q. How is data analysed?**

A. There is an educational dashboard. Tenax ask for data and

for a RAG rating on how close the school is on reaching the targets.

**Q. Is there a particular assessment system used?**

A. No.

**Q. How involved is the MAT in the appointment of new staff?**

A. The scheme of delegation gives Tenax the right to employ the Head and Deputy. The appointment of other staff is delegated to the Head.

**Q. Who conducts the Head teacher performance Management?**

A. Ian Bauckham and Rachel the Executive Head would be involved in the process.

**Q. What about Terms and Conditions for existing staff?**

A. TUPE takes place. The terms and conditions of pay and service for existing staff will not change.

**Q. Once the school becomes part of the MAT have any variations to terms and conditions been requested by the Trust?**

A. No. However, teachers have approached the Trust for opportunities.

**Q. What about services for children with additional needs?**

A. This would be the same as via ESCC. Tenax would contract with ESCC on the schools behalf.

**Q. Do schools have to bid on a needs basis?**

A. The academy charge 3.5% pays for the academy to be run. There is a principle for schools not to subsidise other schools. The recovery would have to come from the individual school's budget.

**Q. Is Tenax sponsored by anybody?**

A. No.

**Q. How many policies are central?**

A. There are: -

- One group of trust policies for all schools e.g. Freedom of Information.
- A second group determined at local level (Complaints

Policy)

- A third group which the LGB can determine (e.g. Worship Policy).

The Trust works across dioceses. All schools pay the SLA with the diocese of Chichester. SIAMS inspections are still commissioned.

**Q Is the SLA paid by the school?**

A. This was the case.

**Q. Have the schools improved since Tenax took them on?**

A. Yes in many cases. There is an Ofsted readiness audit conducted by an ex Ofsted inspector. It was considered to be better than a local authority with no school improvement.

**Q. There had been issues in East Sussex with Lilac Sky which had gone bankrupt. The schools had been re-brokered into other Trusts. What has been learned to prevent this happening again?**

A. Diocesan MATS do not have the same commercial focus. Financial irregularities are less likely in a church MAT as the Bishop and Education Boards are the Members and the same people are not on the other levels of governance.

**Q. How long would due diligence take?**

A. This is quite quick. The delay may be paperwork from the DFE.

**Q, Does Tenax have a wide variety in levels of deprivation within the school catchment?**

A. This is the case.

**Q. Are there any representatives from the Trust at Governors meetings?**

A. This can be requested. There is a limit to how many Governors meetings Ian Bauckham could attend.

**Q. Are the SLT roles within the Schools filled?**

A. Yes.

**Q. The schools are closest to the viability margins with PANS which are full. What would the situation be if numbers reduced?**

A. Due diligence would indicate if there is a pipeline of children/new planned housing. Tenax would rethink if a school future was not viable.

	<p><b>Q. How many of the 6 primaries are rural?</b></p> <p>A. Most are apart from Crowborough.</p> <p>The Federation would meet on 15th June to discuss everything. Thanks were given to Ian Bauckham.</p>	
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