



## CANON LEE SCHOOL

### Minutes of the meeting of the Full Governing Body held in school on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2016, at 5.00pm

**Present:** Miss Samantha Buckley (Chair), Mrs Alison Davies, Mr Peter Hodge, Mr John Kesterton, Mr Patrick Looker, Ms Donna McMahon

**In attendance:** Mr Brian Crosby (Executive Principal, Hope Learning Trust)  
Mr Simon Bryan-Smith (Finance Director, Hope Learning Trust)

Ms Salli Radford (Clerk)

#### 1. Welcome, Apologies for Absence and Declarations of Interest

Apologies were received and accepted from Mr Lodge. It was noted that the staff governors had not been invited to the meeting. There were no declarations of interest.

Miss Buckley thanked governors for attending the meeting.

#### 2. Hope Learning Trust – presentation of proposals for Canon Lee School

Miss Buckley advised that the meeting had been called to allow Mr Crosby to present plans for Canon Lee as an Academy Order had been issued for the school, with sponsorship from Hope Learning Trust. It was noted that staff and parents would be informed of the arrangement during the week commencing 18<sup>th</sup> April, with a press release to follow.

Mr Crosby advised that Canon Lee staff would be told of the sponsorship arrangement and Academy Order at the end of the school day on 18<sup>th</sup> April, with staff at Manor being provided with this information earlier that day. Staff at The Joseph Rowntree School would be informed on 19<sup>th</sup> April and a press release issued on 20<sup>th</sup> April. It was noted that the press release would be delayed to allow the positive Ofsted monitoring visit outcome to be fully communicated.

Mr Crosby advised that the resolution to arrange a sponsored conversion with support from Hope Learning Trust had been sent to the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) on 24<sup>th</sup> March and that this arrangement had now been approved.

Mr Crosby outlined the process for conversion applied to a school in Special Measures. It was noted that a period of consultation would follow the issuing of the Academy Order, with this allowing any concerns expressed by staff or parents to be discussed. It was noted that the consultation process was different to that followed in a good or outstanding setting as it was not managed by governors and the conversion was already agreed. Mr Crosby advised that staff conditions, pensions and other contractual benefits and obligations would be transferred over to the Trust, with the intention being that these would be retained.

Mr Crosby advised that the Trust carried the liability for staff pensions with this resulting in a "paper" deficit in the accounts. It was noted that the pensions liability for Canon Lee staff would be carried over to the Trust and added to this deficit.

Mr Crosby advised that the local primary schools would be contacted with the intention of holding events for parents to build support for the Trust. Mr Crosby expressed the wish to establish a vision for the Clifton area, advising that all local primary schools other than Clifton with Rawcliffe were currently significantly undersubscribed, with anticipated intakes being analysed. It was

noted that demographic forecasting for the area showed zero growth in pupil numbers, though of the 180 young people currently in the area and due to transition to secondary school in September only c110 were planning to remain within the local group of schools, suggesting that the Canon Lee needed to engage with parents.

Mr Crosby advised that the press release would thank Richard Crane for his work at Canon Lee and that some follow-up articles were planned.

Mr Crosby advised that the Regional Schools Commissioner had signed-off the Academy Order for Canon Lee to join the Hope Learning Trust on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016. It was noted that £25,000 conversion funds would be provided for Canon Lee School's legal and other fees, with a £55,000 enabling grant to be provided to Hope Learning Trust to support IT, finance and other aspects of centralised functions.

Mr Crosby advised that processes were in place to oversee the conversion if governors preferred this, with a consultant working with the Trust and able to support Canon Lee. It was noted that land and other assets currently owned by the LA would need to be signed over to the Trust. Mr Crosby asked governors to consider whether they wished to retain the conversion funds or to allow the Trust to manage this allocation. It was noted that any unspent funds would be transferred to the Trust.

*Donna McMahon withdrew from the meeting at 4.15pm.*

**Governors discussed the option of having Tim Priestly oversee the conversion process on behalf of the Trust, noting the recommendation of Mr Crosby. Governors agreed to delegate Canon Lee's £25,000 conversion funding allocation to the Trust on this understanding.**

Mr Crosby advised of the need to consider the timeframe for the signing-off of legal documents, advising that Mr Priestly could coordinate this and would also act as adviser to the governing body.

Mr Crosby advised that the Trust intended to appoint an Interim Governing Body in September in order to strengthen governance at Canon Lee. It was noted that this process could be brought forward in order to strengthen the committees and provide additional capacity. Mr Crosby stated that the Trust wished to retain all existing governors but to strengthen and reconstitute the structure as it recognised the commitment and passion of current governors. Mr Crosby advised that individual governors could choose whether or not to remain on the governing body.

Governors discussed their views, noting the central government view of parental involvement in school governance. Mr Crosby advised that Manor sought governors from the parent group based on available skills, with this being much more successful than the election process at generating high quality candidates as it removed the perceived risk attached to a public vote which appeared to deter volunteers. It was noted that a high level of parental input had been secured based on skills and that this evidenced the Trust's commitment to parental involvement in governance. It was noted that the current governing body of Canon Lee included five vacancies from a total possible membership of 14.

Governors further discussed their positions, with Mrs Davies agreeing to speak to Mr Crosby about opportunities to engage with the local business community.

**It was agreed that a decision on future governing body membership be deferred to the next meeting.**

Mr Crosby advised that the school currently carried eight or nine staff vacancies, with these having been discussed with Mr Crane, Mrs Johnston and Mrs Munro. It was noted that the core subject areas were either understaffed or needed strengthening. Mr Crosby advised that quality-assured staff from Manor could be seconded to support Canon Lee in the short term, with longer-term solutions being sought. It was noted that NQTs could not be employed within the school for the time being.

In response to a question regarding staff from within the EU and overseas, Mr Crosby advised that he was considering options including the employment of teachers from Canada on two-year visas. It was noted that Maths and Physics specialist teachers were exempt from a number of employment restrictions due to current shortages.

Governors discussed staffing options, with Mr Crosby advising of Schools Direct training opportunities which might bring further options to the school. It was noted that the NQT restriction would be lifted once the school was showing sustained improvement.

**Governors noted that Mr Crosby held no authority until 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016, although a decision could be made to authorise Mr Crosby and Hope Learning Trust to address staffing issues before this date. Governors discussed this option, agreeing to delegate authority to Mr Crosby. It was agreed that governors would continue to be involved in the recruitment of staff.**

In response to a question regarding the recruitment of a headteacher for the school, Mr Crosby advised that it was too late to begin a recruitment process for appointment to start in September, although a Principal Designate could be brought into the school more quickly. Mr Crosby recommended that this be pursued, with a full recruitment process to follow. Mr Crosby advised that he wished to appoint a Principal and Vice-Principal by May half term, with the Principal to be appointed on a short-term contract.

In response to a question regarding this short-term appointment, Mr Crosby provided governors with a confidential proposal for appointments to the Principal and Vice-Principal positions. Governors discussed the proposal, seeking clarification of the positions of current SLT members. Mr Crosby advised that the Associate Headteacher was aware of the proposal to appoint a Principal and would revert to her substantive Deputy Headteacher / Vice-Principal role. Mr Crosby suggested that the Principal Designate shadow the Associate Headteacher until the end of the summer term. Mr Crosby proposed that an interview be arranged to ensure that the proposed candidate was an appropriate appointment.

Mr Crosby advised that Manor was working to appoint a new Principal on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> April, with Mr Crosby to act as Executive Principal. It was noted that both Manor and Canon Lee would need to have strong Principals in post for both settings to be self-supporting. Mr Crosby further advised that the wider leadership team would need to be strengthened and middle leaders developed.

Governors discussed the proposals, with Miss Buckley proposing that governors formally agree to provide Mr Crosby and the Trust with authority to move forward and make leadership appointments as necessary. It was noted that the proposed Vice-Principal appointment could be progressed via a contract at short notice.

In response to a question regarding the recruitment of the Principal, Mr Crosby advised that a full process would be run in the future for a permanent appointment, suggesting that governors discuss the role with the proposed candidate to ensure that they were sufficiently reassured that appropriate challenge would be provided.

In response to a question regarding the substantive post of the proposed appointee, Mr Crosby advised that this would be held for the time being as the intention was to provide leaders who had knowledge of Canon Lee with the authority to address weaknesses. It was noted that a three-year plan was needed.

Mr Crosby advised that work begun by Mr Crane would continue but that Mr Crosby wished to align the curriculum at Manor and Canon Lee to enable the sharing of resources. It was noted that both settings needed to be financially viable and that courses with low take-up were at risk, though aligning the timetable would allow some joint delivery from September 2017. It was noted that resources at Manor could be drawn on and that future plans could be refined to suit both schools.

*Donna McMahon returned to the meeting at 4.45pm.*

Governors discussed the proposals, with Mr Crosby advising that governors from a secondary school outside York had undertaken a due diligence exercise and intended to pursue membership of Hope Learning Trust. Mr Crosby advised that the Trust was also in discussion with a number of primary schools, adding that it would be positive if feeder primary schools joined the Trust. It was noted that finance systems would need to be aligned across Trust members.

Mr Bryan-Smith advised that the finance system required by the Trust would need to address management information needs as well as providing information for the Education Funding Agency (EFA), further advising that PS Financials was currently used by 80% of large MATs. It was noted that individual settings could use this system remotely with management being centralised. Mr Bryan-Smith advised that the HCSS online forecasting system was also commonly used. It was noted that purchase of these systems could be funded by top-slicing the budget share of each MAT member, with this fund then also supporting a central team. It was noted that the creation of this centralised team had been approved by the Trust Board and would support all settings within the Trust. It was noted that Mr Bryan-Smith would meet with Mrs Munro as part of the due diligence process.

Mr Crosby advised that a central team of seven staff would be in place for September and would include a Chief Operations Officer. It was noted that Tim Priestly was currently fulfilling some aspects of this role, including updating the MAT's Articles of Association.

Mr Crosby suggested that Canon Lee could provide a base for the centralised Trust team or for the Teaching School Alliance as space was available on the site. It was noted that this would make a significant statement regarding the position of the school within the MAT. Governors discussed this suggestion, expressing support in principle for either or both options. Mr Crosby advised that long-term teacher-training placements in schools were being arranged through the Schools Direct secondary programme, although finding space for all 24 students to meet regularly was proving challenging. It was noted that use of space at Canon Lee might address this issue.

In response to a question regarding the former primary school building, Mr Crosby advised that this could be developed as a centre for Trust use although £1M had been estimated as the investment required to bring the building back to a useable condition.

Governors reviewed the options presented by Mr Crosby, discussing the staffing options and expressing concern about the proposal to employ another temporary leader for the school. Mr Crosby advised that he would arrange an interview between the proposed candidate, Miss Buckley, Mr Kesterton and Mr Looker.

**Governors agreed to authorise Mr Crosby to progress the appointment of an Interim Principal and a Vice-Principal.**

In response to a question regarding the support that governors could provide to the plans, Mr Crosby advised that he could produce a timeline for governor actions.

**Mr Crosby suggested that he provide a weekly drop-in session for governors to ensure that they remained up to date with progress. This was agreed, with Mr Crosby to make arrangements and circulate details.**

Mr Crosby suggested that a weekly bulletin also be arranged to ensure that all governors remained informed.

Mr Crosby advised that consultation meetings would be arranged, further advising that the recently announced White Paper and notion of enforced academisation might create some negativity. It was noted that an agreed communication strategy would be needed.

Governors further discussed staffing and recruitment, noting that future recruitment advertising would be under the Hope Learning Trust banner and would promote roles working across the Trust.

Mr Crosby advised that a due diligence process would be pursued, with actions identified:

- Finance – Mr Bryan-Smith
- Buildings – the Hope Learning Trust premises team
- Education – Mr Crosby
- Governance – a governance review would be considered

Governors discussed the recent review of governance, noting that a full report had not yet been received.

Governors discussed the challenges attached to running HR and student discipline panels and appeals with a small number of governors in post. Mr Crosby noted the current governance structure of two standing committees and one monitoring group in addition to a Pay Committee.

Miss Buckley tabled the draft letter for parents and the press release for information. It was noted that the documents would remain embargoed until w/c 18<sup>th</sup> April.

### 3. Any other urgent business

There was no other business

### 4. Date and time of next meeting

26<sup>th</sup> April 2016 at 5pm.



Mr Alan Lodge – Chair of Governors  
MISS S BUCKLEY

18/7/16

Date

### Canon Lee School Action Plan following the Full Governing Body meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 2016

	Action	Agenda Item	Person(s) Responsible	Timescale
1	Academy conversion process to be progressed by Hope Learning Trust (via Tim Priestly) funded by Canon Lee's £25,000 conversion grant	2	Mr Crosby / HLT	1/9/16
2	Governing body membership to be considered at the next meeting	2	Mr Lodge / All	24/4/16
3	Mr Crosby to progress staff recruitment and management as necessary, with governors to be involved in the recruitment process as appropriate	2	Mr Crosby / HLT	Ongoing
4	Mr Crosby to progress the appointment of an Interim Principal and a Vice-Principal	2	Mr Crosby / HLT	1/9/16
5	Weekly drop-in session for governors to be arranged	2	Mr Crosby / HLT	ASAP

