

Totnes Local Advisory Committee (LAC)

Meeting minutes

Thursday 2nd October 2025 at 6pm

Held online via Microsoft 'Teams'

Attended:

Trustee Appointed Governor- Cat Radford (Harbertonford) (Stand- in Chair for the meeting)

Parent Governors: Nanya Coles (Broadhempston)

Caroline Lucas (Sparkwell)

Lucy Gibson (Landscope)

Academy Headteacher- Thomas Cole

In attendance:

Governance Professional- Charlotte Roe

CEO- Rachael Sharpe

Minutes: Nicol Bush- Clerk

No	Item	ACTION
1.	Welcome and apologies The meeting was chaired by Cat Radford, who stepped in following the departure of the previous Chair. Introductions were made, including Thomas Cole, Academy Headteacher (AH) at Sparkwell school and the new CEO Rachael Sharpe. The Governors were invited to give an introduction to their roles.	
2.	Declarations of interest There were no new declarations brought forward to the meeting. The Chair reminded Governors that the meeting and associated paperwork were confidential until the minutes were approved.	
3.	Election of Chair and Vice-Chair The committee discussed the ongoing vacancy for Chair and agreed not to appoint a Vice Chair until the Chair role was filled. It was noted that a letter would be circulated again to seek nominations from the wider community and via the parish communications. ACTION- The Clerk to circulate the Totnes Chair nominations letter to the Admin/Academy Headteachers	Clerk
4.	Approval of meeting minutes from 26.06.25 The meeting minutes were approved as a true record and were signed accordingly. ACTION- Clerk to forward the approved minutes to the HR for website publishing.	CLERK
5.	Matters arising from 26.06.25 (not on the agenda) 5.1 Governors to review the responses to the questions raised at the previous LAC and confirm if any supplementary questions. There were no comments brought forward.	
6.	Clerk Update 5.1 Appointments/nominations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Clerk advised the meeting of the vacancy for a Chair on the Totnes LAC hub and updated that the recruitment process had begun for parent governors at both Stake Gabriel and Diptford. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Clerk informed the meeting of the vacancy for a Foundation Governor at Diptford and Harbertonford, she noted that Sharon Lord was reaching out to the local community and parish for any interest. <p>5.2 Online Training - The Clerk reminded the meeting of the upcoming online training and informed Governors that recorded videos could be shared with those unable to attend.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exclusion Panel Training - 20th November 2025 at 1300 Complaints - Prevention and Managing - 15th October 2025 at 1000 <p>5.2.1 Safeguarding mop-up lvl 2- The Clerk reminded Governors to send dates of the Safeguarding mop up training they had booked.</p> <p>5.2.2 Annual Compliance- The Clerk reminded governors to sign and send over their completed annual compliance forms.</p> <p>5.2.3 Annual Housekeeping- The Clerk informed the meeting that she would circulate the annual 'Housekeeping' Tasks, to remind Governors of actions needed to be completed.</p>	
7.	<p>Terms of Reference</p> <p>The Governors acknowledged the terms of reference document that had been circulated by the Clerk via email to Governors- No amendments were requested.</p>	
8.	<p>Standards and Curriculum Committee Focus: Analysis and evaluation of pupil outcomes and targets for the year <u>(Due to GDPR and confidentiality, please refer to visit notes for further information and clarification)</u></p> <p><i>Governors raised highlights from their reports. The following notes are taken from those reports:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive results were reported for Key Stage 2, phonics, and multiplication assessments. However, concerns were raised about the challenges faced by upcoming cohorts, particularly due to high levels of SEND and the impact of COVID on early years development. SEND provision was discussed in depth. Governors noted delays in securing EHCPs due to limited access to educational psychologist reports and staffing constraints. The need for additional support and resources was highlighted, especially for children entering schools mid-year with unmet needs. 	
9.	<p>Standards and Curriculum Committee Focus: Academy Improvement Planning/CPD Plan <u>(Due to GDPR and confidentiality, please refer to visit notes for further information and clarification)</u></p> <p><i>Governors raised highlights from their reports. The following notes are taken from those reports:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors reviewed the ASIPs: While many priorities were Trust-led, schools had adapted them to reflect local needs. Writing and EYFS remained key focus areas. Broadhempston and Landscope were praised for their collaborative approach, sharing resources and planning jointly. Climate change action planning was identified as a distinctive priority at Broadhempston, with links to Devon County Council and outdoor learning initiatives. Challenges around CPD delivery were noted, particularly where staffing limitations affected access to specialist input. The use of PE staff for cover rather than CPD was flagged as a concern regarding appropriate use of the Sports Grant. (see agenda item 18.) 	
10.	<p>Standards and Curriculum Committee Focus: British Values and preparing for life in modern Britain <u>(Due to GDPR and confidentiality, please refer to visit notes for further information and clarification)</u></p> <p><i>Governors raised highlights from their reports. The following notes are taken from those reports:</i></p>	

	Governors reported that British values were being taught through PSHE, assemblies, and projects such as Global Neighbours and Food for Thought. Schools promoted diversity and inclusion, with visits from representatives of different faiths and links to international schools. Pupils demonstrated respect and community spirit, supported by buddy systems and charity initiatives.	
11.	Feedback from Ethos Committees and Community Groups The Clerk advised that this agenda item would be revisited at the next LAC meeting, due to the absence of the Foundation Governor at this meeting. Landscape- Ethos meeting 19.9.25- agenda, reports and minutes available on website Ethos Group had parent reps to gather the parent view.	
12.	Successes and Sharing of Good Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meeting agreed that the two schools working together (Broadhempston and Landscape) was a great example of sharing good practice. Landscape- Eco Green Flag award came through in August, Silver Global neighbours award last summer term, a huge thanks to staff at Landscape for work in driving this forward. 	
13.	School Updates <u>Broadhempston</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PAN (to include pupils joined/left)- 42 Pupil wellbeing- It was noted that some activities would not be funded by the PTFA this year, including the Helen Foundation mosaic workshop, Judo sessions, and the Young Voices event in London. It was highlighted that unless these events were jointly funded through alternative means, they would not be able to take place. Attendance- 97.2% Feedback on any parent forum meetings/parents' evenings/PTFA- First one taking place in September <u>Landscape</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PAN (to include pupils joined/left)- 15 per year grp – 105 capacity currently 90 on roll. Staff wellbeing and workload Attendance- 96.2% Feedback on any parent forum meetings/parents' evenings/PTFA- Parent meetings held with new class teacher week beginning 8th September. Parents evenings booked for 4th & 5th Nov <u>Sparkwell</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PAN- 15/15 95 children 8 joined (2 in pipeline) Attendance- 95.6% <u>Harbertonford</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PAN =15x7. Currently 102 on role, including nursery. 91 without nursery. Attendance: whole school 97.7%. PP children 98.5% Educational Psychologist visiting to support an EHCP application, as in school support without an EHCP is not sustainable. £10K grant obtained from South Hams District Council Sustainable South Hams pot to support the development of the school garden 	
14.	Standards and Curriculum Trustees Meeting (Minutes circulated to Governors before the meeting) The meeting acknowledged the S&C minutes, no comments were brought forward.	
15.	Next S&C Focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal Development/Wellbeing – Relationship Education, PHSE & RHSE SEF Overview – Academy Head's overview of accuracy and effectiveness of their school self-evaluation Christian distinctiveness/SIAMS The GP informed the meeting of the next S&C foci.	

	There were no comments brought forward.	
16.	<p>Key Accountability Questions</p> <p><i>1.Are children safe? Do they feel safe?</i></p> <p><i>2.Are children attending? Are the places of education fit for purpose?</i></p> <p><i>3.Are children achieving? Are we providing the opportunities and support they need to achieve</i></p> <p><i>4. How are our staff feeling?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was agreed that pupils felt safe and that buildings were secure. It was agreed that future meetings should include regular review of attendance and engagement with off-site pupils to ensure robust oversight. Attendance was identified as a major priority, particularly engagement with off-site pupils and those in alternative provision. Governors were encouraged to include this in future meetings as part of their accountability checks. TC shared insights from recent discussions with the local authority, including plans to introduce locality models and share data on home-educated children. Concerns were raised about pupil recruitment, which appeared on the risk register. Reputational risks and retention issues were also flagged. TC provided a broader perspective, noting that many schools had single-digit intakes and that pupil numbers were a key focus across the Trust. He emphasised the importance of building strong communities and being proactive in engaging families. Preschool provision was discussed as a potential strategy to improve community engagement and pupil recruitment. It was suggested that preschools could serve as a gateway to increase awareness of Trust schools. 	
17.	<p>Summary of Questions to be raised at LAC level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governors raised questions about the Trust-wide challenges in supporting SEND pupils, particularly those joining mid-year with unmet needs. It was noted that smaller schools often faced difficulties in providing adequate support due to limited staffing and resources. The Governance Professional suggested these concerns be raised with the Trust leadership for wider discussion and sharing of good practice. The CEO noted that schools typically did not receive children who were thriving in their current settings. In-year transfers often involved pupils who have struggled in previous schools, had unmet educational or healthcare needs, or had been educated at home and were now entering formal education. While there were exceptions, such as families relocating, most in-year admissions were perceived to involve children who were not doing well in their previous school, and many of these pupils had SEND. The use of the P.E staff for cover rather than CPD, was this an appropriate use of the sports grant? The CEO noted that each school was recharged for their allocated PE team member, and it was the responsibility of the headteacher to determine how that individual was deployed, in line with the PE strategy and its five strands. It was suggested that, before further discussion, it would be helpful to confirm whether the AH had explored all available options for using the PE team to support cover. 	
18.	<p>Summary of Questions or matters to be raised at S&C level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Are other schools having the same challenges around and obtaining the support they need to support SEND and the same limitations with the inclusion hub?</i> <i>Are there examples of good practice amongst Link Academy Trust School in supporting mid-year pupils with un-met SEND need, particularly in the context of limited staffing and resources?</i> <i>Could the Trust explore whether the collaborative approach used by Broadhempstead and Landscope, where the two schools work closely together to develop their ASIP and share resources, might be replicated across other schools in the Trust, especially where schools are geographically close and serve similar communities?</i> 	
19.	The meeting concluded with thanks to all attendees, including Rachel Sharpe, CEO of the Trust.	

	Governors expressed appreciation for the collaborative and transparent discussion and agreed to continue refining how challenges and successes were recorded in minutes.	
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The meeting ended at 7pm

Signed by the Chair of the Committee..... on 27th November 2025