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| **Present****In attendance** | N Willbourn (Chair of Management Committee), M Woolston (Head Teacher), A Woodhouse, D Alphonso, K Marlborough, C Norwood, O Kelham, C Hood, M Moaby, M Blanning E Bradshaw (Alternative Learning Trust), D Ward (Alternative Learning Trust), N Bennett (Alternative Learning Trust) |  |
| **1** | **Welcome & Apologies for Absence** |  |
|  | 1. Apologies had been received and accepted from C Jackson.
2. The meeting was deemed quorate.
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| **5** | **RSC Update** |  |
|  | 1. E Bradshaw outlined the Alternative Learning Trust’s intentions as an academy trust.
	* The Trust was converted in 2018. They have a close working relationship with local schools, understand the context of vulnerable young people and support a reduction in exclusions. They don’t want a takeover, to change anything that is working or to build an academy chain with a nice office. They want a collaborative partnership, working together to improve outcomes and destinations for students and having a stronger voice in national policy and decisions. They expect to be recipients as much as providers of ideas around teaching and learning and have already taken good practice back to their school. They support the management committee being representative of local partnerships and community.
2. Members discussed LA contracts and noted the following:
* LA have suggested they will issue a separate Service Level Agreement to schools in Kent.
* No schools are wrongfully permanently excluding students, and the few permanent exclusions that occur are unavoidable.
* The funding forms an important part of school finances and new contract may impact jobs.
* The contract removes the flexibility and versatility of existing relationship between schools and NWKAPs.
* The academy would support NWKAPS and add their input to Kent to maintain that flexibility.
1. The members noted a problem with students with EHCP and no special places available. This is one area where NWKAPS could take advice from the Alternative Learning Trust. They have negotiated with Sutton for High Needs Funding to create a group for highly vulnerable young people in conjunction with Early Help, CAHMs and other agencies. This would be the first time HT would have a peer dealing with the same kinds of children.

**Question (N Willbourn): How will conversion impact the management committee?**Answer: So long as the management committee is functioning in terms of delivering accountability and the outcomes we want to see, we are flexible. The academy would see that the management committee was part of any head teacher appointment. They would have a member of the trust on the interview panel, just like the LA would. They are setting out to be a better custodian of the service than Kent.**Question (Chris Norwood): What will happen when Gravesham heads want something the Academy doesn’t.**Answer: The academy wants general, light touch policies and recognises that what schools want will be different in Sutton and here. The door would always be open for discussion.**Question (M Moaby): Would there be representation from the NWKAPS management committee on the board of trustees?**Answer: There is that opportunity if we want it. We expect a member with a link to NWKAPS. If not one of you, then a member of the trust allocated NWKAPS.**Question (M Moaby): How many directors are there?** Answer: Five.**Question (M Moaby): What are your expansion plans?**Answer: We are not seeking to expand. We’d be focusing on NWKAPS and getting this right. Then we would consider something else and would be interested in other alternative provisions in Kent. I asked Director of Education what his plan was for AP in Kent and he didn’t have one. **Question (K Marlborough): We are seeing more exploitation and gang related issues. While you obviously have expertise in that area, given that you are small, what capacity do you have for practical support?**Answer: EB – We have put a bid into the DfE for a grant for academy expansion. We don’t want to take money away from kids in either provision but want to build capacity. Once the formal process begins, we want a dialogue with local schools to reassure that we are interested in supporting and enhancing a service already on a trajectory of improvement. **Question (M Moaby): Any idea of a top slice?**Answer: As minimal as possible but realistic. It would be at the bottom of the scale: 2-3% maximum but it needs to include a lot of services.**Question (M Moaby): As a small trust, can you utilise economies of scale?** Answer: Wherever possible we want to bid for funds and pool resources. We acknowledge we will both need increased financial resource and hopefully we’ll be able to release a little bit more control over resources. There is so much we can share but we don’t want to give anything you don’t need. The more autonomy that you have, the more effective you will be. 1. Members noted that:
* Stakeholders are ultimately the commissioners. If they don’t like it, they can take back the funding and withdraw from NWKAPS.
* If freed to be a market force, we could solve the problem of losing money allocating resources to kids from Bexley and Bromley by going directly to schools in that area.
* The dynamics of our cohort limit the capacity to expand NWKAPS in current building. The academy would help deliver off site provision for high needs students or put funding in place for outreach.
* HT will feedback to Gravesham heads and be the first person to contact Dartford heads about the conversion.
 | **MW** |
|  | E Bradshaw, D Ward and N Bennett left the meeting |  |
|  | 1. Members discussed the meeting with the alternative learning trust and noted the following:
	* The ALT are the first academy who are genuinely interested in working with and supporting us as opposed to telling us what to do.
	* They have a wealth of knowledge and experience but concerned that they are too small to offer it and economies of scale will not be reached.
	* They are not predatory because they only want 2% of budget. That won’t allow them to be a massive central service and it will be a few years before it builds up. The benefits of being a small, embryonic MAT will help both services. For schools in the future this would be a different conversation but at this stage, it’s easier for us to get representation on their board and that is where you absolutely have a voice.
	* E Bradshaw is a real expert in her field and well recognised. She knows people that will open doors. Despite massive support from stakeholder schools and heads, HT currently has no similar peer.
	* Only one thing can go wrong and that is if the academy are not true to their word, change things and let down the stakeholders. They have the option to take back their funding: it is in the new contracts, year on year, to take back. In some areas, individual schools have already chosen to take their allocated amount back.
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Meeting closed at 6.20pm

Signed by CMC: ……………………………………………………………

Dated: