



## TRUST BOARD RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Resources Committee of the Trust Board of South East Cornwall Multi Academy Regional Trust held on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2021 at 5.30 pm.

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<b>Present</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>In Attendance</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
Mr B Cook, Chair	Yes	Mr D Buckley, CEO	Yes
Mr Lee Hallam	Yes	Mrs J Lumbard, CFO	Yes
Mr Chris Piper	No	Mr Steve Green, COO	Apologies
Mr R Newton Chance	Yes	Mrs K Williams, Clerk	Yes

### **Summary of matters for the Trust Board – key points from meeting**

- a) Liskeard – Partial reimbursement of exam fees and leaking roofs across the site  
The Operations Managers continue to discuss with the Local Authority to see if the issue with the roofs can be rectified using PFI before the Trust commits to providing funding. The Trustees noted the LGCs disappointment in the amount of exam refunds but were unable to take any action.
- b) Trewidland – Ceiling collapse  
Trustees wanted to extend thanks to the COO and Estate and Facilities Manager for how quickly this has been dealt with.
- c) Trustees noted there has been a delay in spending Pupil Premium funding but were assured that all ongoing efforts are being taken in the schools but they have simply been impacted by the pandemic. This remains a key priority for the Headteachers.
- d) The Recovery Premium is being extended for another two years and the government have advised additional pupil funding for 23/24 and 24/25 however, we will have to cover the increase cost of starting salaries of main scale teachers to £30k.
- e) The Trust welcomes the return to 2010 levels of funding for schools but noted that there have been funding cuts in previous years.
- f) The Resources Committee recommend the Teacher’s Pay Policy for Trust Board Approval.
- g) The Resources Committee have reviewed the aims of the MAT Strategic Plan which have been allocated to them.

### **1. Welcome**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **2. Declaration of Business or Pecuniary Interest and Academy-related parties - update on any changes since completion of written declaration**

None.

### **3. Apologies for Absence**

It was expected that Mr Piper would be attending the meeting as apologies had not been received by the Clerk. Mrs Lumbard advised that Mr Green would not be at the meeting.

4. **Approval of minutes of meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> June 2021, having been circulated in advance, were agreed as an accurate record and will be signed.

Mrs Lumbard and Mr Cook noted some minor changes to the minutes.

47M – Should be 23/24 instead of 23/44.

47B – methodically should be methodology.

5. **Matters Arising**

**M47. Draft school budgets – For approval**

**h) A Trustee queried budget line “Total Capital Reserve” and noted that income and outgoings should be broadly the same and asked is this correct level of reserve.** It was advised that this is the reserve for the beginning of the year rather than at the end but Mrs Lumbard will investigate and confirm.

*Update: Complete.*

i) Mrs Lumbard advised that there is risk to the Trust in terms of the public sector pay freeze. The NJC (National Joint Council) is trying to negotiate a pay increase for support staff and there is currently no further information. Mrs Lumbard explained the possible impact to budgets and noted that the Trustees have the choice to adopt this pay increase. Mrs Lumbard will update Trustees when she has further information.

*Update: On this agenda.*

**M48. AOB**

a) Mrs Lumbard explained that the energy broker has been in contact today who has advised that the energy contract is due to expire on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021. The prices are looking favourable at the moment and with the ever-changing climate, these prices may change significantly over the next few months. Mr Green has prepared a paper, and this will be circulated by email after the meeting for the consideration and approval Trustees. Mrs Lumbard requested that Trustees reply by email by tomorrow afternoon to ensure that the best possible price is secured by the broker.

*Update: Complete.*

6. **Discuss issues raised by LGCs**

A document was circulated in advance of the meeting. From this:

a) Liskeard – Partial reimbursement of exam fees and leaking roofs across the site

Mrs Lumbard advised the issue with the roofs are included in the COO's (Chief Operating Officer) report. We are working with the LA (Local Authority) as the school is covered by PFI, to see if they will complete the work before the Trust commits to providing the funding. The Operations Managers are working together on this.

b) **A Trustee asked how serious are the leaks** and Mrs Lumbard explained that they are serious leaks but mitigations are in place to limit disruption where possible and the site team is aware of the areas to check after heavy rain. **A Trustee asked about a possible timeframe for this to be resolved** and Mrs Lumbard explained that the LA needs to be chased again and Mrs Lumbard will raise this with the COO. **A Trustee asked about the possible financial risk and outlay if the Trust needs to repair this.** Mrs Lumbard explained that the roof looks to be a substandard fabrication and would need to be completely replaced and this would be a significant cost which would need Trustees to review and agree.

c) Mrs Lumbard explained that the reimbursement of exam fees at Liskeard was similar to Saltash and it is simply the level of reimbursement that was given. Both schools had £10K of expenditure which was not paid out in the first place. Mrs Lumbard advised that this is all that the exam boards are willing to give back to schools. **A Trustee asked if there is any discretion on this position as a Trust** and Mrs Lumbard explained that unfortunately this is not the case. The Trustees noted the LGCs disappointment but were unable to take any action.

- d) Trewidland – Ceiling collapse  
**A Trustee asked for clarification on the whereabouts of the Headteacher when the ceiling collapsed.** Mrs Lumbard explained that no one was injured and this has been dealt with expertly by the COO and the Estates and Facilities Manager. The new ceiling will be installed this week with the electricians finished early next week and it is anticipated that the classrooms will be back in operation by the end of next week.
- e) **A Trustee asked if there is any further potential risk and what was the reason for this collapse.** Mrs Lumbard explained it was water ingress which caused the plaster to come off the wall above the false ceiling and a survey has been undertaken to check for any further problems. **A Trustee asked what the cost of this is.** Mrs Lumbard explained that the majority of the costs will be covered by our insurance policy. We are hoping to claim for the replacement of the full false ceiling rather than just the part that was damaged but this is something which can be picked up from the central budget if needed. **A Trustee asked if these types of incidents are logged** and Mrs Lumbard explained that they are.
- f) Trustees wanted to extend thanks to the COO and Estate and Facilities Manager for how quickly this has been dealt with.

## 7. CFO Finance Report

A document was circulated in advance of the meeting. From this:

- a) Mrs Lumbard explained that the financial year ended much more favourably than predicted and there were some underspends of PP (Pupil Premium) and SP (Sports Premium) due to the schools being closed. This will be carried forward and the Headteachers and Client Managers are working on this together as SP must be spent by July 2022.
- b) Liskeard and Saltash had planned to complete site works over the summer but these were impacted by the contractors being short staffed and some goods which have been ordered, have not arrived and this cannot be included in the accounts. These commitments will sit in the reserves until it can be spent which will show as an overspend this year.
- c) **A Trustee asked about not spending the PP funding and queried where this sits ethically.** Mrs Lumbard explained that the underspend is not a large percentage in the secondary schools. All ongoing efforts are being taken in the primary schools but they have simply been impacted by the pandemic. This remains a key priority for the Headteachers. Mr Buckley added that the spending of these funds is done strategically which is included in a year-long plan and so this is not quick to rectify. This funding will be added to the SDP (School Development Plan) this year as minimising disadvantage is a key strategic priority. The way in which this fund is spent also needs to be published on the websites as a report. Mrs Lumbard advised that set template reports for this spending have recently been released by the DfE.
- d) **A Trustee queried the position of funding for the National Tutoring Programme.** Mr Buckley advised we are being encouraged to allocate more funds to this particular tutoring route but there is an issue with staffing which is causing some problems. Every effort is being made to allocate funding to tutoring. Mr Buckley explained that external tutoring was used last year and there were mixed reviews from the Headteachers.
- e) **A Trustee asked if there is any risk to this funding if it is not spent.** Mrs Lumbard explained the tutoring programme data is being collected using the termly census and the funding will be issued during the year. Based on the data, the government will do a final reconciliation and reclaim any unspent allocation, so it is in our best interest to use this correctly. Mr Buckley added there is some risk in this due to the bid and allocation process and we could have to pay for this and the funding does scale back over the next two years.
- f) Mrs Lumbard added that in the Government Budget and Spending Review there have been recent announcements on education funding. The Recovery Premium is being extended for

another two years and the government have advised additional pupil funding for 23/24 and 24/25. However, from this additional funding we will have to cover the increased cost of the starting salary of a main scale teacher which will increase to £30k. This could impact all the other pay scales above this level. At the moment, we do not have any detailed information from the announcements

- g) **A Trustee asked if the government would set the bottom and the top pay scales and suggested that pay points would then be compressed between the top and bottom of the scale.** Mr Buckley advised that this has been tried by the government before but they now use a recognised standard scale which has been added to our teachers pay policy appendix. The result will be a higher cost of individual teachers' pay and Trustees recognised the risk to future budgets.
- h) Mrs Lumbard advised that there is still no further information on Support Staff pay.
- i) Mr Buckley added that the Trust welcomes the return to 2010 levels of funding for schools but noted that there have been funding cuts in previous years.
- j) Mrs Lumbard explained that we are preparing Period 1 Management Accounts for the current year which should be finalised by Friday 5<sup>th</sup> November and will be circulated shortly after.

#### 8. **Review of H&S Issues across the Trust's estates**

A document was circulated in advance of the meeting. From this:

- a) Mrs Lumbard advised that in terms of the review of accidents, the outcome for Liskeard is looking high in comparison to the other schools and the Operations Manager has undertaken some further analysis of this. There are no incidents which are not legitimate and we are reviewing the statistics as a whole to ensure that common reporting is in place across all the schools in the Trust.
- b) **A Trustee queried how much more detail is needed in the COO report to give Trustees assurance and perhaps this could be included for further discussion in the Audit & Risk Committee.** Mrs Lumbard will discuss with the COO. **A Trustee noted the accident information would be useful to triangulate against behaviour incidents.**

**Action: J Lumbard**
- c) Mrs Lumbard explained that the Liskeard IT transition has happened and issues are smoothing out but there have been some staffing issues which were explained. The SMART IT Officer is working on any ongoing issues and he has not made any significant report to either the CEO or CFO. Mr Buckley noted the exemplary work of the SMART IT Officer and the Trustees acknowledged his efforts and skill whilst dealing with issues as they arise.
- d) The majority of items on the H&S Action Plan have been concluded. One outstanding item is having accredited companies for larger procurement and this will be continued to be worked on. **A Trustee noted that completion of the action plan has been dated all on the same date and felt that in terms of compliance and assurance, this should be completed on the date it was processed.** Mrs Lumbard explained that this is likely to have been completed on the COO's SMART working day and he may have used this day to run through his action plan and collated it all on this particular day. Mr Buckley advised that we could sample for assurance. Mrs Lumbard will discuss with the COO.

**Action: J Lumbard**

#### 9. **Monitoring of the MAT Strategic Plan towards Trust's objectives**

A document was circulated in advance of the meeting which had allocated the aims of the Strategic Plan to each Trust Board Committee. From this:

- a) MSP7 Growing sustainably  
Trustee acknowledged that there has not been progress towards this aim. The Chair of the Trust Board explained that there are key strategies which Trustees should be probing. One key indicator is the way in which the CEO interacts with other Trusts in Cornwall and his work with CACE fulfils this.

- b) MSP11 Estates Rolling Programme  
It was noted that that progress towards this aim has been included in the COO report. Trustees acknowledged that further progress is evident by the work in securing school access to capital through the SCA (School Condition Allocation) Policy and how the Trust Board manages this allocation of resources.
- c) MSP12 Business management services approach  
Trustees were still not sure about this particular aim. Mr Buckley advised that we did not have structures in place initially and this aim now seems out of date. There are now clear systems and the Business Management contract is in place. We have a management structure which runs across estates and services. In a complex 6 school structure, we have moved to one Trust so more money has gone back into the classrooms.
- d) **Trustees queried if this aim needs to be included in the new 5-year Strategic Plan.** Mr Buckley advised that we are in the process of writing the new 5-year plan. There have been discussions focussed on the internal structures and we are looking to expand in the future. It was queried that MSP12 does not need to be included in the new plan and just needs to be monitored. Mr Buckley advised that we are moving towards departments running as a business but we are not there yet so it should remain.
- e) **A Trustee asked where the progress on each of the aims is documented.** This was discussed at length. Mr Buckley suggested that there are two approaches; One would be to look at this as an action plan and RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rate it or the alternative would be to look at it as a statement of intent and use the Pocket Guide to hold to account which would allow more flexibility.
- f) **A Trustee asked who has the responsibility to monitor the progress of the Strategic Plan. A Trustee suggested a one-page report on the progress made is provided every 6 months.** Mr Newton Chance advised that the Strategic Plan aims have now been divided into committees for the first time as we have previously been trying to do it holistically. Mr Newton Chance suggested that moving forwards, we can compare the current plan against the new plan which then needs to be monitored more closely.
- g) **A Trustee asked what are the next steps.** Mr Buckley advised that the new plan is due to be launched and we need to look at our aspirations for the next 5 years and build in the monitoring. It was queried if the current headings are correct and if we need to be more ambitious. Mr Buckley suggested that he could do an assessment of the progress and provide a narrative as a first step.

10. **Review the effectiveness and efficiency of the staff model used and consider the Annual Pay Settlement for approval to Trust Board**

Documents were circulated in advance of the meeting. From these:

- a) The Chair advised that the Teachers' Pay Policy was reviewed by the Remuneration Committee at their meeting on Monday. Mr Buckley advised that 80% of our resources are pay and this is the biggest expense of the organisation. It was advised that the appraisal policy has also been reviewed by the Remuneration Committee.
- b) **A Trustee queried the teacher contact ratio for Looe and thought it was not correct.** Mr Buckley advised that the formula might not be correct.  
**Action: J Lumbard**
- c) **Trustee noted that the teacher contact ratio is the key indicator of how efficient the staffing model is and all schools are doing well apart from Looe. A Trustee noted that pay scales are set to a minimum and maximum by the government and the Unions define the scale.** Mr Buckley advised that Unions are unified under the same set of conditions. **A Trustee noted that this will cause an issue with the Unions.** Mr Buckley advised that we would follow the Unions scale.



the COO.	
<p><b>10. Review the effectiveness and efficiency of the staff model used and consider the Annual Pay Settlement for approval to Trust Board</b></p> <p>b) A Trustee queried the teacher contact ratio for Looe and thought it was not correct. Mr Buckley advised that the formula might not be correct.</p>	<p><b>Action: J Lumbard</b></p>