



TRUST BOARD AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Audit & Risk Committee of the Trust Board of South East Cornwall Multi Academy Regional Trust held on Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> July at 6.30pm.

<b>Present</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>In attendance</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>
Mr M Aarts	Yes	Mr D Buckley, CEO	Yes
Ms Jody Chan-Penney	Yes	Mrs J Lumbard, CFO	Yes
Mr Lee Hallam	Yes	Ms K Williams, Clerk to Trust Board	Yes
Mr Chris Piper, Chair	Apologies	Kevin Connor, Bishop Fleming	Yes

26. **Welcome**

Mr Aarts welcomed everyone to the meeting in Mr Piper's absence.

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

None.

28. **Apologies for Absence**

Mr Piper sent his apologies in advance of the meeting and these were received and accepted by the committee.

29. **Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting held on 18-04-2024**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2024, having been circulated in advance, were agreed as an accurate record.

30. **Matters Arising**

There were no action points from the last meeting.

31. **Agree Annual Audit Plan**

- a) Mr Connor explained the audit plan has been circulated. It is a standard audit plan and no specific risks need to be flagged to Trustees. Mr Connor added that we use our previous experiences with the Trust and we have started with an overall low risk rating for the year and everything has been applied a low risk rating. The audit plan identifies the areas which we can have a low risk or heightened risk. The audit plan partner has now changed from Mr Connor. The new partner is local to Cornwall and she is very experienced.
- b) The risks are standard for the sector. The plan discusses standard regularity risks in terms of compliance to the Academy Trust Handbook.
- c) Internal scrutiny will be completed. Difficult and contentious issues do sometimes come up and we would be required to consult with a second Bishop Fleming partner. The timetable for the audit plan has been agreed. Trustees thanked Mr Connor for his hard work and support of the Trust.
- d) **A Trustee referred to the change of personnel in the finance team and asked would the way that risk is evaluated change because of this.** Mr Connor advised that this is relevant although the assessment of our approach will not be significantly affected this year as the post holder will have only just started but this will impact future years due to the nature of the role of Head of Finance and the responsibility/authority that comes with the role.

Mr Connor left the meeting at 6.58pm.

32. **Consider strategic risk including new and emerging risks**

1. Reasons for CST review delay and arrangements for new date set
2. Management of risk surrounding temporary senior team at Saltash based on feedback given to the Chair of the Trust Board from OFSTED and RG.

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

a) Reasons for CST review delay and arrangements for new date set

Mrs Lumbard advised that there has now been someone assigned to the governance review and the CST (Confederation of Schools Trust) is providing an external review of governance at SMART. Mr Hallam advised that we were due an external review anyway but this was a requirement of the DfE in terms of the RIP (Rapid Improvement Plan) at Saltash. Mrs Lumbard is not anticipating to have a timetable for the review before the Members meeting on Monday.

- b) **A Trustee asked if this is a paid for service.** Mrs Lumbard advised that this is the case. **A Trustee asked if we can put some more pressure on the CST for a timeline.** Mrs Lumbard will discuss this with them to ensure it is in place for September.

**Action: Mrs Lumbard**

c) Management of risk surrounding temporary senior team at Saltash based on feedback given to the Chair of the Trust Board from OFSTED and RG.

Confidential appendix.

33. **Finance report to include updates for any significant changes that may impact on risk**

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

- a) Mrs Lumbard advised that the key risks have been highlighted to the Resources committee along with how policies are updated. We have met the right deadlines in terms of reporting to the DfE and budgets have just been approved for recommendation to the Trust Board.
- b) **A Trustee asked if we should have the same attendees for the A&R and Resources meetings and to have them back to back.** It was felt that scrutiny could be better as much of the agenda items have been covered in both the Resource committee and then the A&R Committee. It was suggested that having meetings on different days would be useful.

34. **Accounting Officer report to include any irregularity and proprietary issues and matters referred to the AO for guidance**

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

- a) Mr Buckley advised that the financial report was submitted in advance of the deadline. Financial statements have had no instances of noncompliance since they were signed in December and this will be signed as Accounting Officer.
- b) The academy accounts return was submitted ahead of the deadline.
- c) The budgets have been approved ahead of the deadline.
- d) The internal testing program has been carried out by Westcotts. The level of testing was in line with the guidance in the Academy Trust handbook.
- e) The internal financial testing is signed off in the audit.
- f) Pupil intake numbers for September
  - Dobwalls is 27 which is three under PAN (Published Admission Number)
  - Landulph is 9
  - Liskeard 226 which is 6 over PAN
  - Looe is 94 which is four over PAN
  - Saltash is 218 12 under PAN

- Trewidland is 6 which is two under PAN

g)

**A Trustee asked for those schools that are under PAN, is there any concern with this.** Mr Buckley advised that Saltash have not recruited as many students from Plymouth and there are reasons for this. First choice for Saltash was 240 but Mr Buckley is not aware of any major incident which caused this change.

35. **Report of any novel or contentious transactions to consider risk**

- a) Confidential appendix.

36. **Business Continuity Plans – consider and approve**

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

- a) There have been minimal changes. Moving forwards, once we have more capacity in the central group, we want to have a testing programme for each of these plans and a Saltash governor is willing to support the testing of this as he works for Zurich and has experience in this area.
- b) **Trustees felt that looking at the approach for business continuity planning is needed when there is capacity. A Trustees asked about the conflict of interest for the Saltash governor.** The Clerk advised that he declares that he works for Zurich annually on his related parties declaration and during meetings so that any conflict can be managed.

37. **Summary of matters for the Trust Board**

- a) The Annual Audit Plan has been shared with Trustees. There will be a new Bishop Fleming partner. All risks are standard for the sector.
- b) CST will be undertaking the external review of governance for us. This process has been delayed and it is expected to take place in the autumn term.
- c) The Trust Board will need to discuss the position of the interim Senior Leadership Team at the next Trust Board meeting.
- d) Intake number for September are stable:
  - Dobwalls is 27 which is three under PAN (Published Admission Number)
  - Landulph is 9
  - Liskeard 226 which is 6 over PAN
  - Looe is 94 which is four over PAN
  - Saltash is 218 12 under PAN
  - Trewidland is 6 which is two under PAN
- e) Business continuity plans have been reviewed. It is hoped that once there is more capacity in the central team, schools will test the plans.

38. **AOB**

- a) Internal audit

**A Trustee referred to internal audit above and beyond finance and we are having a CST governance review this year and asked if there will be budget for next year.** Mrs Lumbard advised that yes that is correct. Trustees should think about this and let Mrs Lumbard know what they want to be reviewed next year. **A Trustee suggested that this should be informed by the Risk Register.** It was agreed that yes, it would be worth noting what is the biggest risk to the Trust. Mr Buckley advised that we can capture what has been a risk that has remained high during the year. It was felt that the debate on what should be the focus should be in this meeting.

- b) Energy contracts

Mrs Lumbard advised that the contract for one meter at Liskeard can now be procured. The energy broker will go to market tomorrow and Mrs Lumbard will be in contact with Trustees for

an agreement on a proposal. Trustee asked for a reminder by text.

**Action: The Clerk**

39. **Agreements made by email – For information**

None.

40. **Date of next meetings:**

Resources 05-11-2024 at 6pm, A&R 11-12-2024 at 4.45pm, A&R and Resources 25-03-2025 at 6pm, A&R and Resources 03-06-2025 at 6pm and Resources 10-07-2025 at 6pm.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm.

<b>Action Summary</b>	
<b>M32. Consider strategic risk including new and emerging risks</b> <b>b) A Trustee asked if this is a paid for service.</b> Mrs Lumbard advised that this is the case. <b>A Trustee asked if we can put some more pressure on the CST for a timeline.</b> Mrs Lumbard will discuss this with them to ensure it is in place for September.	<b>Action: Mrs Lumbard</b>
<b>M38. AOB</b> <u>b) Energy contracts</u> Mrs Lumbard advised that the contract for one meter at Liskeard can now be procured. The energy broker will go to market tomorrow and Mrs Lumbard will be in contact with Trustees for an agreement on a proposal. Trustee asked for a reminder by text.	<b>Action: The Clerk</b>