



TRUST BOARD AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Virtual Meeting of the Audit Committee of the Trust Board of South East Cornwall Multi Academy Regional Trust held on Wednesday 24th June 2020 at 12.30 pm.

Present	Yes/No	Yes/No
Mr B Cook	Yes	Mr R Newton Chance
Mr J Crisp	Yes	Yes
In Attendance: Mr D Buckley, CEO		
Mrs J Lumbard, CFO		
Mrs K Williams, Clerk to Trust Board		

26. **Welcome and Format of Meeting**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

27. **Apologies**

All Trustees were present.

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

None.

29. **Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting held on 04-03-2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 4th March 2020, having been circulated in advance, were agreed as an accurate record and will be signed when social distancing ceases.

M15. Strategic Risk including Risk Register – Approval of allocation of risks

c) A Trustee asked if the committees should be agreeing the level of risk and mitigations in place. It was discussed that during this meeting, Trustees will agree the list of risks which are relevant to the Resources Committee and the Resources Committee will then agree the level of risk at the next meeting. Clerk to add to agenda.

Update: Complete.

M17. ESFA Funding Statements – For information

Following the usual checks carried out by the Finance team, a comparison had been circulated detailing the October 19 census to the ESFA funding statements for 2020/21 to check that student numbers, which are the basis for funding, were in alignment. Mrs Lumbard explained there is a slight difference at Saltash which she is checking with the ESFA.

Update: Mrs Lumbard has contacted the ESFA but has not had a response.

M23. Annual assessment of the MAT against CC8, internal controls in a charity – For discussion

d) A Trustee asked if the internal scrutiny testing report will be complete and available for the next meeting. Clerk to add to the agenda and Mrs Lumbard to contact Bishop Fleming.

Update: Mrs Lumbard explained that Covid-19 has impacted staffing at Bishop Fleming so the internal scrutiny testing has been delayed and will now be completed w/c 20th July 2020.

30. **Risk Register in line with Strategic Plan - no change to Risk Register from update of strategic plan**

a) Mr Buckley advised that no further questions have been submitted and the review of the Strategic Plan has been put on hold due to Covid-19 but other plans are in place as an interim measure.

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

- a) Mr Buckley advised that there are no irregularity and propriety issues to report to Trustees.
- b) Financial Statements
The Financial Statements were submitted to the ESFA ahead of the deadline of 31st December 2019. and have been filed with Companies House prior to the deadline of 31st May 2020. Mr Buckley, as Accounting Officer, signed the statement regarding Regularity, Proprietary and Compliance.
- c) Academy Accounts Return
This was completed and submitted to the ESFA in advance of the deadline of the end of January 2020.
- d) Financial procedures
We have kept in line with all financial procedures.
- e) Budgets
Draft budgets have been prepared and shared with the LGCs. Final drafts will be discussed by the Resources Committee on 16th July and then approved by the Trust Board. The budgets will be returned to the ESFA in advance of the deadline of 31st July 2020.
- f) Assurance Testing
Assurance testing will be taking place as discussed earlier in the meeting. The trust's internal finance audit testing is continuing to be completed each term. Mr Buckley advised that finance staff have shown a great deal of dedication and have worked hard to ensure that there have been no lapses in financial procedures. Trustees acknowledged and thanked staff.

g) Intake numbers

School	Reception	Year 7	Year 12
Dobwalls	30	-	-
Landulph	11	-	-
Liskeard	-	208	72
Looe	-	119	-
Saltash	-	219	80
Trewidland	4	-	-

Intake for Trewidland is half of the PAN (Planned Admission Numbers) and there has been a significant rise the in numbers for Looe. Numbers are stable at Saltash and increasing at Liskeard.

- h) Mrs Lumbard advised that the 20/21 budget return date is now 31st September and not 31st July.
- i) **A Trustee queried if Mr Buckley had provided a report detailing this information which should have be circulated with the meeting papers** and Mr Buckley advised that he provides a verbal report at the meeting ensuring that all key questions that have not come up elsewhere in the meeting are answered, rather than a document.
- j)
Trustees discussed the requirements of the AFH (Academies Financial Handbook) on who can Chair the Audit Committee. Mr Cook agreed to accept the function of Chair for this meeting.

32. **Update on internal scrutiny testing due to Covid-19**

- a) Please see 31f.

33. **Finance report to include finance policy changes and a budget update for significant changes that may impact on risk**

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

- a) Mrs Lombard advised that following an announcement by the government last week, Year 7 Catch Up Premium funding will be ceasing from next year. Instead the government will be offering a Catch Up Fund to support the students following absence from school due to Covid-19. Following discussion with Mr Buckley, it has been decided to leave the Year 7 Catch Up fund in the schools' budget as it is anticipated that the Catch Up Fund will be a similar amount. Until there is further information provided, this is the best course of action.

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

A document was circulated in advance of the meeting.

- a) No items to report since the circulation of the document.

35. **School Risk Assessments – Consider and approve**

The school Risk Assessments were circulated in advance of the meeting. From these:

- a) **A Trustee queried if the People Committee had reviewed the proposal of individual risk assessments and a standardised approach to staff returning to work.** Mr Buckley advised that this had been discussed and the invite for individual risk assessment has been circulated to staff and the Headteachers have not received any requests. **A Trustee asked if we have sought legal advice on this matter** and Mr Buckley summarised the advice provided by the Trusts legal advisors.
- b) Mr Buckley advised that the government announcement yesterday on the reopening of schools in September will need to be interpreted and then an action plan developed. It is expected that it will be full opening in September and mitigations will be in place. It is expected that there will be a need for rapid response rather than containment should there be an outbreak in a school.
- c) **A Trustee asked what steps will be made to ensure the safety of the staff and children.** Mr Buckley explained that current processes such as systematic handwashing is not realistic for a school with full attendance of students and so realistic mitigations will be needed. Mr Buckley advised that rapid closure would be needed if there was an outbreak in any of the schools.
- d) **A Trustee asked about the responsibility of the Trust Board to approve the Risk Assessments and the proposals for full reopening in September.** Mr Buckley advised that he is working on possible models of re-opening and he will be circulating a document to the Trust Board for consideration and approval.

36. **Date of next meetings:**

10th December 2020 for presentation of the accounts by Bishop Fleming.

The meeting closed at 13.07.