



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 at Wednesday 3rd March 2021 at 5.30 pm.

Present	Yes/No	In Attendance	Yes/No
Mr B Cook- Chair	Yes	Mr D Buckley, CEO	Yes
Mr R Newton Chance	Yes	Mrs J Lumbard, CFO	Yes
Mr C Piper	Yes	Mr S Green, COO	Yes
		Mrs K Williams, Clerk	Yes

Summary of matters for the Trust Board	
a)	The Resources ToR have been reviewed and endorsed. The resources section of the Governor Handbook has been reviewed and will be ready for circulation pending some minor changes.
b)	There is still vacancy for a Compliance Trustee.
c)	Additional funding: Covid Recovery Premium Funding, LFD Testing and Pupil Growth Funding will be received. Public pay freeze will benefit future budgets.
d)	Catering contract continues to be a key area of risk.
e)	The Annual Accounts Return was submitted within deadlines.
f)	Insurance provision will be extended for one year with a formal tender process to follow for 2022/23.
g)	ICT Infrastructure continues to be a focus of the Resources committee.
h)	Finance policies have been reviewed and recommended for approval by the Trust Board.

14. **Welcome and format of meeting**
The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
15. **Declaration of Business or Pecuniary Interest and Academy-related parties - update on any changes since completion of written declaration**
No declarations were made.
16. **Apologies for Absence**
All Trustees were present.
17. **Approval of minutes of meeting held on 3rd November 2020**
The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November 2020, having been circulated in advance, were agreed as an accurate record and will be signed when social distancing ceases.
18. **Matters Arising**
 - M7. **CEO Update**
g) A Trustee asked if the 20/21 budgets will be amended. Mrs Lumbard advised that ongoing budgets will be prepared. Income from lettings is normally included in budgets and the reduction in this income stream will be reflected in the revised ongoing budgets. Mrs Lumbard explained that data is

being collected to provide evidence to request further funding to keep the schools open and the staff and students safe. Trustees asked for updated information as soon as it is available.

Update: Work on budgets is ongoing.

M10. Capital spend project updates – for information

c) Trustees requested that updates for the capital spend project are provided as a paper for subsequent meetings.

Update: Complete.

M12. Update on Premises, H&S and IT

f) A Trustee asked if a further report could be circulated to provide assurance on premises compliance and the works in place. Mr Green will provide that for that next meeting. Clerk to add H&S and Premises as a standing agenda item.

Update: Complete.

19. Review and agreement of the Resource Committee’s ToR and Resources section of Governor Handbook

Documents have been circulated in advance of the meeting. From these:

a) **A Trustee asked for the motivation behind reviewing the ToR (Terms of Reference).** Mr Newton Chance advised that he has revised the role descriptors and clarified areas within the SoDA (Scheme of Delegated Authority) but the ToR for the Resources Committee have not changed.

b) “Oversight of the effectiveness and efficiency of the staffing model used across the Trust’s schools”

A Trustee asked for clarifications on the actions for individuals in this area of oversight. It was discussed that this has been agreed and included in the ToR in the past but it was clarified that the top level of the impact of this needs to be the focus. It was agreed that operational level of detail is not needed. It was noted that Trustees have been challenging the top level data so far in meetings.

c) Trustees requested that there is a formatting change to the SoDA. Left hand range on all the subheadings.

Action: Clerk

d) “Oversight of Health and Safety issues across the Trust’s estate”

A Trustee noted that Trustees are reactive rather than proactive and queried that actions are not in place but generally are prompted following discussions in meetings. Mr Buckley advised that at a strategic level, Trustees are up to speed. LGC (Local Governing Committees) representatives are cross checking processes within schools during monitoring visits under normal circumstances. A Trustee noted that the work of the Resources Committee has ensured that the Capital Allocation Policy connects directly to school development planning and added that Trustees are looking at oversight of processes rather than operational actions.

e) “Oversight of compliance with GDPR”

A Trustee asked if this should be included under the ToR for the Audit & Risk Committee and it was explained that the Compliance Trustee is a member of this committee although there is currently a vacancy. It was discussed that the ToR are written based on a full complement of Trustees.

f) **A Trustee noted that we have specified GDPR but have not included all the other areas of oversight needed for statutory regulations and premises and H&S management.**

This was discussed at length and agreed that the ToR will be rephrased to include general data compliance for statutory regulations instead of specifically GDPR.

Action: R Newton Chance

g) Governor Handbook

The Trustees provided positive feedback on the Resources sections of the Governor Handbook. **A Trustee asked if the handbook requires any further consultation.** The Clerk advised that each

section has been reviewed by the Trust Board Committees and it was agreed that following some minor changes, it would be issued to governors as. The handbook will be reviewed annually. It was agreed that the term "Finance Governors" would be used throughout to ensure consistency with the SoDA.

20. **Financial Update**

Documents had been circulated in advance of the meeting. From these:

- a) The Chair advised that the Management Accounts have been circulated by email.
- b) Mrs Lumbard explained the changes included in her finance report; Covid Catch Up Funding was based on a per pupil rate but recently, the government has advised a Covid Recovery Premium, which will be calculated differently and this funding has not been added to the accounts until the allocations have been received. The Headteachers and their Senior Leadership Teams will discuss and agree the appropriate spending of this funding.
- c) Other funding available is the LFD Testing funding which will be calculated on the number tests carried out and reported to Track and Trace. It is anticipated that the larger secondary schools will receive £10-13k and this will be added to accounts once received.
- d) In the Spending Review at the end of November 2020, the Government announced a freeze on public sector pay for 2020/21. This will affect both Teachers and Support staff pay but will benefit the budgets for the future. **A Trustee asked why there has been a pay freeze as it's not a saving at national level.** Mrs Lumbard explained that the budget statements have arrived and teachers pay and pensions grants have been included in pupil funding. There is still a small increase to pay and pension grants and an increase in the lump sum per school. Trustees discussed the impact of freezing pay.
- e) **A Trustee noted that there is further consultation on sparsity factor** and Mr Buckley explained that the Small Schools Funding used to be provided to make small primary schools viable but in this differing climate, it is now being used to make them attractive to Trusts. Mrs Lumbard that she will be looking at the consultation on behalf of SMART and also advised that we have received Pupil Growth Funding as there has been an uplift in numbers from the census at Looe and Trewidland. These increases in funding have been added to ongoing budgets.
- f) Mrs Lumbard explained that catering continues to be a risk as the schools have been closed for two months. The CFO, COO and Operations Managers have tried to reduce costs as quickly as possible and requested that Chartwells staff were furloughed to keep costs low but there will be an impact on the budget towards the end of the year. The schools will continue to operate using bubbles as this keeps the children safe but this does reduce the uptake of meals and this could impact on the final year charges. The position of the catering contract will be reviewed after Easter. Mrs Lumbard added that Saltash is using a pre-order system which is not working well in terms of uptake and the provision for students needs review and it is hoped that this can be reviewed and improved to increase uptake.
- g) The ESFA funding statements for 2021/22 have now been received and there is a slight increase. The allocations include the additional funding that was announced by the government. The information will be used to inform our future budget planning. The budgeting process for 2021/22 is already underway and the initial budgets will go to LGCs in May for feedback.
- h) The Annual Accounts Return was submitted last week and the deadline was extended this year. This year the ESFA have used the data from the Annual Accounts Return submission that has just been completed (results from 2019/20) to prepopulate most of the self-assessment tool. Mrs Lumbard will complete the remainder of the work on the self-assessment tool and circulate to Trustees. The return date is 15th April. The headings in the self-assessment tool are the same as Trust benchmarking so Trustees should find this familiar. The data used for the VMFI tool is 18/19 and has not been updated yet.

- i) **A Trustee asked if this will be the last year of soft formula through Schools Forum.** Mrs Lumbard advised that no it is not and explained that this will be extended to end of 22/23 and the hard formula will be used for 23/24. **A Trustee asked what will happen next year.** Mrs Lumbard explained that there are some budget assumptions from ASCL who are suggesting a 3% increase for teachers pay from September 22 but less for support staff of around 0.87%.
- j) **A Trustee asked about Schools Forum in Cornwall and high needs on the national formula.** Mrs Lumbard explained there was a lot of dialogue about high needs as although there is an improvement in the high needs formula, there is still a shortfall for high needs in Cornwall and there has been a transfer between the high needs blocks into the schools block again for 21/22, with a review for this to reduce. The hard formula will not allow transfers.

21. **ESFA VMFI tool – Overview and discussion**

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

- a) Mr Cook is attending training on this tool on 04-03-2021 and will use his understanding of this to challenge the CFO. Mrs Lumbard advised that an IDAMS account is needed to access this and Trustees would need permissions and within the role of Trustees, they cannot be allocated these permissions.
- b) **Trustees queried the value of this tool as issues have already been addressed.** Mrs Lumbard explained that updated information needs to be added and it can then be reviewed further against the other documents in use to ensure that we are identifying any differences. Mrs Lumbard advised that we need to make sure that we are benching marking properly and review processes where needed and use the tools available to us. **A Trustee suggested that most areas are already being actioned.**
- c) Mrs Lumbard will feed back once this has been updated and analysed.

Action: J Lumbard

22. **H&S and Premises Update**

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

- a) Mr Cook left the meeting briefly at 18.15 and re-joined at 18.17.
- b) Mr Green explained that he began the COO (Chief Operating Officer) post in September 2020. The team is building in capacity following two new site management appointments. Operations Managers were appointed in September at Saltash and Liskeard. The main focus for the new team members has been Covid.
- c) Mr Green advised that reporting processes are in place and he is leading this. **A Trustee asked the H&S and Premises Trustee if he felt that this report is adequate and contains enough level of detail.** Mr Piper noted that this is an improvement and he will discuss the further level of detail needed with Mr Green.
- d) **A Trustee noted that evidence of compliance needs to be included in the report as well as statistics but the narrative provided is useful.** Mr Green advised that data is provided in the spreadsheets and he will be looking to improve the documents. The SMART Estates Officer is regularly visiting all 6 sites and Mr Green is discussing with him to make improvements in reporting compliance items.
- e) **A Trustee noted that a narrative explanation of how the spreadsheet works as a preamble is very valuable to guide Trustees.** Trustees discussed the level of detail and use of data spreadsheets at length.
- f) Mr Green summarised the changes in site team staffing for the schools and noted that until appointments were finalised, it meant that the SMART Estates Officer could not be released from Liskeard. Mr Sanders has started reviewing the building condition surveys from each school which feed into the Capital Works programme. Covid has prevented us from moving forward on

some of the works but it is hoped that some smaller jobs will be completed during the Easter holidays whilst the schools are closed. Looe's flat roof is progressing as it started before lockdown and we are on track for a summer holiday refurbishment. Mr Green is confident that we have a good site team in place now.

- g) **A Trustee asked what is Mr Green's biggest concern at the moment.** Mr Green advised that we have funding available but we are not able to move forward with building works so he is reviewing this with Mrs Lombard to ensure that not spending the funding, does not become an issue. The SMART Estates Officer will be reviewing building work priorities.
- h) **A Trustee queried the impact of not following the list of building priorities that was provided following the building condition surveys and will there be any issues with funding by following our own priorities.** Mr Green advised that the SMART Estates Officer will be providing a recommendation of works which will be reviewed against the schools' priorities and Kendall Kingscott's recommendations. **A Trustee asked if this is included in the SCA and Capital Building project and queried the possible impact with the ESFA of running a different list of priorities.** Mr Green advised that the ESFA do not have our conditions surveys but do have a land and building return so there should not be a negative impact to funding from this point of view.
- i) **A Trustee asked for clarification on the funding allocation and how it is spent.** Mrs Lombard advised that it is for the Trust to allocate the funding and we do need to spend the SCA funding within a time frame to ensure that it is not reclaimed and she is not aware that deadlines are being extended so we are aiming to get as much work done as possible. Some of the works might be higher priority than they were previously. The review is being used to ensure that work is completed in the right order.
- j) **A Trustee noted that two or three key risks have been identified and asked if these could be included in the report if there is a Trust level impact which needs to be considered.**

23. **Trust Insurance provision for 2021/22**

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

- a) Mrs Lombard explained that last year, due to the disruption with Covid 19 and the added risks involved, a decision was made to extend the Trust's insurance policy with Zurich for another year. Therefore, this policy will now expire in August 2021 and we will need to consider our arrangements for the insurance provision for September 2021 onwards.
- b) Mrs Lombard asked if Trustees would like her to explore the different options which are; apply for another year's extension to the policy with the current supplier or a tender is prepared during March, and we run a full tender process for the insurance provision for 2021/22 and beyond, this year.
- c) Mrs Lombard clarified that we are in the fourth year of the contract and we have one more year until we have to do a formal tender. If Trustees believe that the risk is still high, could we stay with Zurich or Trustees could decide to do a full tender.
- d) **A Trustee suggested that an extra year to renegotiate would be of benefit.** All Trustees were in agreement to an extension of one year.
- e) Mrs Lombard will circulate further information at the next meeting.

Action: J Lombard

24. **Update on IT project**

- a) Mr Green explained that the ICT team is still forming as there are currently two vacancies. Mr Green is working on a job description for one role based at Saltash and it will be advertised internally initially. An apprentice position has been advertised and has three applicants.
- b) Mr Green explained that progress has been made despite Covid and Liskeard has recently moved

server although there were some issues. Mr Green clarified that the old contract had expired and needed to be renewed and it was unfortunate that this coincided with a further lockdown.

- c) Mr Green noted from the LGC minutes, that the governors have been concerned about the ICT provision at Trewidland and he explained that there have been some issues but the school is being supported. Some new kit has been ordered. Dobwalls has also received site visits from the ICT Team and do not have any outstanding issues.
- d) **A Trustee asked what skills and expertise do Trustees have in order to challenge Mr Green on the progress of this project.** A Trustee suggested that the Resources Committee do have adequate expertise to challenge this area.
- e) **A Trustee asked if the review of job descriptions will include job evaluation.** Mr Green advised that job evaluation is being carried out but added that this is a new role and so needs a new description which will then be evaluated. **A Trustee asked if this is being related back to the LA.** Mr Green advised that as the majority of job roles are originally from the LA, the structure and evaluation process uses the same structure as the LA and that this will be applied to the new role.
- f) **A Trustee asked if the WIFI issues at Liskeard have been resolved.** Mr Green advised that it is still outstanding and he is waiting for an update.
- g) Mr Buckley advised that managing peoples' expectations is still the biggest challenge. The current situation could have been improved considerably by having a calendar of deadlines in place and noted that Trustees could request for deadlines to be set. Expectations and delivery were discussed at length. Trustees agreed that a calendar of progress points would be valuable.
- h) **A Trustee noted that in the original tender contract did have dates for progress.** Mr Buckley advised that it did and progress is being made with regard to the contract but the delivery of other elements of the ICT rollout required by the in-house team is not timetabled. A timetable produced by the in-house team would help the LGCs to monitor progress and correctly manage expectations. This is particularly needed in the case of Trewidland to ensure the ICT required to provide the curriculum will be in place so planning for it can happen.
- i) **A Trustee asked who would be tasked to set up a ICT rollout timetable.** Mr Buckley advised that this should be included in the schedule of work of the ICT team and they would be asked to provide this. Mr Buckley advised that future project management will help with expectations of service delivery.
- j) **A Trustee noted that the Risk Register only has ICT as a risk 3 and suggested that it should be a 5. A Trustee suggested that capacity problems have meant that the ICT project has not been project managed adequately.** It was discussed that management for further ICT projects would be included in the SMART ICT Managers' role in future. Oversight of this would be Mr Green.
- k) **Trustees suggested that this should be reviewed and requested that Trustees are kept informed.**

25. **Policies to review and recommend for agreement by Trust Board**

Policies had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

- a) Capital Allocation policy
Charging and Remissions policy
Counter theft, fraud and corruption policy
Director and Governor Expenses policy - "Directors" need to be changed to "Trustees".
- b) Donations policy and procedure
Financial Regulations procedures and policy
Financial Scheme of Delegation

Action: Clerk

Reserves & Investment policy – **A Trustee asked if we have a policy to maintain reserves of a specified amount.**

HSW Statement – Mr Green has reviewed this policy and there have been some minor changes which include Mr Green’s role and Mr Piper’s name will be added as H&S and Premises Trustee.

- b) **A Trustee asked if all these policies are due for review.** Mrs Lumbard explained that we are reviewing these annually in case there are changes in the Academies Financial Handbook or following the audit.
- c) Trustees were happy to endorse these policies with the minor changes as suggested.
- d) LGPS Employer Discretion policy – Mrs Lumbard explained that this policy has not been attached with the papers and this will be circulated separately as she needs to review it further before agreement.

Action: J Lumbard

26. **Agreements made by email**

- a) None.

27. **LGC minutes**

- a) Minutes from the Local Governing Committees had been circulated for information. The Trustees requested that the Clerk provides a summary table from issues arising from all 6 schools.

Action: Clerk

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

- a) The Resources ToR have been reviewed and endorsed. The resources section of the Governor Handbook has been reviewed and will be ready for circulation pending some minor changes.
- b) There is still vacancy for a Compliance Trustee.
- c) Additional funding: Covid Recovery Premium Funding, LFD Testing and Pupil Growth Funding will be received. Public pay freeze will benefit future budgets.
- d) Catering contract continues to be a key area of risk.
- e) The Annual Accounts Return was submitted within deadlines.
- f) Insurance provision will be extended for one year with a formal tender process to follow for 2022/23.
- g) ICT Infrastructure continues to be a focus of the Resources committee.
- h) Finance policies have been reviewed and recommended for approval by the Trust Board.

29. **Date of next meetings:**

10-06-2021 and 14-07-2021 at 5.30 pm.

The meeting closed at 18.59.

Action Summary	
M19. Review and agreement of the Resource Committee’s ToR and Resources section of Governor Handbook	Action: Clerk
c) Trustees requested that there is a formatting change to the SoDA. Left hand range on all the subheadings.	
f) A Trustee noted that we have specified GDPR but have not included all the other areas of oversight needed for statutory regulations and premises and H&S	Action: R Newton Chance

<p>management. This was discussed at length and agreed that the ToR will be rephrased to include general data compliance for statutory regulations instead of specifically GDPR.</p>	
<p>M21. ESFA VMFI tool – Overview and discussion c) Mrs Lumbard will feed back once this has been updated and analysed.</p>	<p>Action: J Lumbard</p>
<p>M22. H&S and Premises Update c) Mr Green advised that reporting processes are in place and he is leading this. A Trustee asked the H&S and Premises Trustee if he felt that this report is adequate and contains enough level of detail. Mr Piper noted that this is an improvement and he will discuss the further level of detail needed with Mr Green.</p>	<p>Action: C Piper</p>
<p>M23. Trust Insurance provision for 2021/22 e) Mrs Lumbard will circulate further information at the next meeting.</p>	<p>Action: J Lumbard</p>
<p>M25. Policies to review and recommend for agreement by Trust Board a) Director and Governor Expenses policy - “Directors” need to be changed to “Trustees”. d) LGPS Employer Discretion policy – Mrs Lumbard explained that this policy has not been attached with the papers and this will be circulated separately as she needs to review it further before agreement.</p>	<p>Action: Clerk Action: J Lumbard</p>
<p>M27. LGC minutes a) Minutes from the Local Governing Committees had been circulated for information. The Trustees requested that the Clerk provides a summary table from issues arising from all 6 schools.</p>	<p>Action: Clerk</p>