



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 Tuesday 3rd November 2020 at 5.30 pm

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

1. **Welcome and format of meeting**

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**

No declarations were made.

3. **Apologies for Absence**

All Trustees were present.

4. **Approval of minutes of meeting held on 15th July 2020**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15th July 2020, having been circulated in advance, were agreed as an accurate record and will be signed when social distancing ceases.

5. **Matters Arising**

M73. Matters Arising

M66. Finance update:

q) A Trustee asked about the capital expenditure deficit. It was expected that this is due to work not progressing due to the crisis. Mrs Lumbar will check and advise.

This is due to the work not progressing on time and this has skewed the figures. Mrs Lumbar will discuss with the Clerk and update Trustees. It was also noted that the Window walling works have been approved by Trustees via email.

Update: Complete.

M74. Draft School Budgets – For approval

f) A Trustee asked what is the Teacher Pay Grant compared to the 2.12% uplift. Mrs Lumbar will review and advise.

Update: Complete.

g) A Trustee queried the teacher costs in each school per pupil and noted that they seem similar across the Trust and asked what is the underlying reasons for the future deficit at Saltash as it does not seem to be staff costs. Mr Buckley explained that contact ratio is a key indicator which is lower at Saltash. The amount of free periods at Saltash add to the staffing costs. It was agreed that this would be discussed further by the Finance Trustee and the CFO.

Update: Complete.

6. **Issues raised by LGC's – Discuss**

The minutes of the LGC meetings had been circulated in advance of the meeting. From these.

a) Primary Schools – IT provision

Mr Buckley explained that the primary schools have experienced problems due to capacity issues within the ICT teams across the Trust. Further to this, there have been unexpected issues which have arisen and the movement of staff around sites has caused problems with the WIFI capacity. Dobwalls is being upgraded to the new system and the problems at Landulph and Trewidland have now been rectified.

- b) **A Trustees asked if the issues are relating to problems with ICT equipment or the domain upgrade.** Mr Buckley summarised the reasons for the issues within each of the primary schools. Landulph's problems have been resolved, Trewidland has a timetable for completion in place and Dobwalls is ongoing.
- c) **A Trustee asked if the timetable for Trewidland is achievable** and Mr Buckley advised that it is. **Trustees noted concern for the wellbeing and the impact on staff and asked if there is anything we can do differently.** Mr Buckley advised that this situation is being monitored and external support has been provided to the ICT teams.
- d) **A Trustee asked for clarification on the current personnel structure of the ICT teams** which Mr Buckley provided. **A Trustee queried if it is a possibility that the ICT teams, who are based in the secondary schools, are prioritising the secondary schools over the primary schools.** Mr Green explained that there have been complexities with the upgrade which has hampered the support being provided to the primary schools.
- e) **A Trustee noted that there have been long standing issues at Dobwalls and voiced concern that there is a focus on the secondary schools and not the primary schools and wanted assurance that this does not persist.** Mr Green explained that Nexus support has been purchased and the central team are aware of the issues.
- f) **A Trustee asked if there are clear dates in place for the issues to be resolved.** Mr Green advised that the Trust is reliant on IT and in terms of moving to the single domain, it is expected that Liskeard will join fully in Summer 2021 and Looe at Easter 2021. Once all schools are on the single domain, ICT support will be provided as a central service from any of the secondary schools depending on the particular requirement of the primary school.
- g) Saltash – Covid Catch Up Fund spending
Mr Buckley explained that this was largely a misunderstanding. The central team had recommended that 50% of the COVID Catch Up Funding could be used for staffing and had not stipulated that schools could not spend more than this amount.
- h) Moving forwards, the position has been clarified with the school but the central team believe that 50% is reasonable expenditure on staffing but schools can spend more than this amount but there must be clear impact. Trustees were content with the explanation provided by Mr Buckley.

7. CEO Update

Inc review of pupil numbers and budgetary impact

- a) Mr Buckley explained there are no significant changes to pupil in numbers in the schools across the Trust. Looe has attracted a larger number of pupils than expected which include pupils from outside the catchment area. Trewidland has been successful in securing additional pupils.
A Trustee asked if there are any significant changes to cause concern and Mr Buckley explained that there are no areas of concern and therefore no significant impact to funding.
- b) Mr Buckley explained that we have lost a number of teaching days due to COVID and there are associated costs with this. We are capturing data from across the Trust and the up to date figures are 259 lost teaching days in the first half term which is a significant amount.
- c) **A Trustee asked if any of the absence is covered within our normal sickness arrangements.** Mr Buckley advised that that it is not covered if the staff absence is due to COVID but added that

there are some staff members who are able to work from home.

- d) **A Trustee asked how the Trust compares to other organisations.** Mr Buckley explained that this data is not being published. Mr Buckley explained the possible scenario where there would be forced school closure if there is insufficient funding available to remain open and this was discussed at length.
- e) **A Trustee asked how would the Trust decide the financial perimeters between closure and staying open.** Mr Buckley explained that this would need to be initially reviewed with Mrs Lumbard and summarised the current position of staffing and budgets for each school.
- f) **A Trustee asked if school closure would be a result of not being able to staff the school or because the cost of providing supply staff is no longer affordable.** Mr Buckley advised that there are three scenarios which would result in school closure; When staff are sent home due to illness, when there are unsafe levels of staffing on the school grounds or when the cost of supply staff is unachievable. We have currently been purchasing supply cover.
- g) **A Trustee asked if school closure is an operational decision or strategic which therefore needs to be agreed by Trustees.** Mr Buckley explained that he is monitoring the situation within in each school with the MSLT (MAT Senior Leadership Team) who have the autonomy and authority to make these decisions.
- h) Mr Buckley added that timescales need to be agreed for school rotas should year groups need to be sent home. **A Trustee asked if this is an executive decision or should there be referrals to Trust Board.** Mr Buckley advised that this is operational.
- i) **A Trustee queried the number of staffing days lost and asked how this works out as a percentage.** Mr Buckley advised that this is currently around 1%.
Update: This calculation has now been added as a live feed to the tracking document.

8. **CFO Finance Report** Inc financial concerns and monitoring of monthly spend

A document had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

- a) Mrs Lumbard advised that the Trust is currently undergoing the annual audit and the audit clearing meeting is scheduled for later this month.
- b) Mrs Lumbard explained that we have ended the year with a healthy reserve. The budget challenges have been the catering provisions and adhering to the PPN notices, this has had an effect on Saltash and Liskeard budgets but they have managed to make savings elsewhere. Most of the other schools have recouped costs in other areas.
- c) COVID Catch Up Funding has been received. Mrs Lumbard advised that this funding needs to be used effectively and will be closely monitored to ensure that it has impact in the same way as PP (Pupil Premium) funding.
- d) The Teacher's Pay increase was predicted to be 3% but the final position was less than expected. Our staffing across the Trust is heavy in UPS (Upper Pay Scale) but we do have a saving of approx. £9.5K. Mrs Lumbard explained that we are looking to align pay scales to national pay grades and to apply these will not be a significant impact to budgets due to the aforementioned savings.
- e) Mrs Lumbard advised for the last two months; we have been in a "cost plus billing" position for the catering contracts. The schools have not managed to break even on the contract and Mrs Lumbard explained the reasons for this. The uptake in school meals has increased recently but we are reviewing the impact on the catering cost to minimise impact where we can.
- f) Cleaning and health and safety costs have been increased across the Trust and the expenditure has been included in the Period 1 Management Accounts. The costs for supply staff have also

increased and the number of staff who need to shield is due to increase because of the impending lockdown. Mrs Lumbard explained that the availability of supply staff may also be affected.

- 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.

Action: J Lumbard

- h) **A Trustee asked how much extra funding would the Trust need.** Mrs Lumbard explained that it is likely to be around £100k. Mr Buckley advised that there are many variables when agreeing the level of staffing which is acceptable and added that the Trust can cope with 1-2%. Scenario planning is required which will need to be discussed by Trustees.

- i) **A Trustee asked about current energy costs and is there an expectation of additional costs over this period.** Mr Lumbard explained that the Trust procures energy centrally and when budgets are set, historical usage is used to anticipate costs. The finance teams will need to wait until energy invoices are received and it is likely that a percentage increase will be added onto the normal spend to allow for the fluctuation in energy requirements due to the windows currently being open to provide ventilation. Some of the schools only have oil heating so we benefited from the low oil prices earlier in the year.

- j) Mrs Lumbard advised that Management Accounts will be circulated shortly.

9. **Annual Pay Settlement – Consider for approval to Trust Board**

- a) It was advised that the Remuneration Committee had discussed the Annual Pay Settlement and have recommended the increase for Trust Board approval.
- b) Trustees were content that that this matter did not need to be discussed further by the Resources Committee.

10. **Capital spend project updates – for information**

- a) Mr Green advised that the Saltash window walling work is drawing to a close.
- b) Mr Buckley clarified the process of undertaking condition surveys at each of the schools and then forming the capital spend project which is based on urgent need and future works. **A Trustee asked about the value of the work programme and backlogs** which Mr Buckley clarified.
- c) Trustees requested that updates for the capital spend project are provided as a paper for subsequent meetings.

Action: S Green/J Lumbard

11. **Review and agreement of photocopier tender**

The draft tender document had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

- a) Mrs Lumbard advised that the central team wish to procure photocopiers for two schools, Saltash and Dobwalls. Due to the timings of the contract, we are unable to include Liskeard but it is anticipated that Looe and Liskeard can be included in contracts next time.
- b) A tender document will be sent out to companies which includes the possibility for further work. The contract needs to be in place before the end of the autumn term. Mrs Lumbard advised that the suggested timeline might not be achievable due to the lockdown.
- c) **A Trustee queried who has decided the level of photocopying support which is required, who is recommending the spec of the machines and how do we know this is correct.** Mrs Lumbard advised that this had been discussed with the Operations Manager at Saltash and previous

discussions with Dobwalls as a smaller school, had identified their needs. In Saltash, work has been completed to reduce the amount of printers on site and machines are being situated in common areas for use. There has been engagement with the schools to ensure that we are tendering for what we need. Mrs Lumbard explained that data from 18/19 has been used as we did not have full data for 19/20 and it is possible that the volume of photocopying may change. Mrs Lumbard explained that the use of Papercut, has reduced the amount of copying across the Trust.

- d) **A Trustee asked why we have our vision statement on the tender document** and Mrs Lumbard advised that it can be removed. A Trustee advised that on page 8 it refers to four schools and should be two. **A Trustee suggested some changes to simplify the document.**
- e) **A Trustee asked if the Trust is putting too much still on quality and suggested that should it be 50/50. A Trustee asked if the Trust is ensuring that contracts in future are aligned and if there can be some contractual obligation on suppliers, if they are awarded further contracts.** Mrs Lumbard will review this with Mr Green. **A Trustee queried if we are looking at awarding a one year or three-year contract.** Mrs Lumbard explained that we are not able to award a one-year contract and it would be better to extend the contracts for Saltash and Dobwalls so that we can then align with Liskeard and Looe.
- f) **A Trustee asked what is a minimum contract** and Mrs Lumbard explained that it is a three years. Mr Green advised that equipment is changing rapidly and advised that there have been previous issues with equipment failures in the third to fourth year and it is worth being mindful of this.
- g) Trustees were content with the document with the agreement that the suggested changes are made but recognised that a longer and higher value contract would need further agreement by the Resources Committee.

12. **Update on Premises, H&S and IT** - Inc Health and safety concerns across the Trust.

A document had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

- a) Mr Green explained that Liskeard have suffered from flooding from a previous flat roofing project and this is still ongoing.
- b) The premises teams have come together and we are recruiting for further site managers at Liskeard and Saltash which close on 4th November. The team is therefore currently short staffed.
- c) The ICT teams have been brought together across the Trust although they still are issues with being short staffed. The recruitment for an IT technician at Saltash was previously unsuccessful so this has been advertised again and this closes next week.
- d) The focus this term has been on COVID but compliance checks are still being completed. Site teams are working hard to keep everyone safe.
- e) **A Trustee asked if there are any possible risks to Premises and H&S over and above the current COVID situation.** Mr Green advised that Liskeard have concerns for the boilers on site. The flat roof at Looe has been included in the capital spend project but it is complicated by a communication mast which is located on the roof. **A Trustee asked if there have been any parental concerns about the mast** and Mr Green explained that readings have been taken and are well below acceptable levels.
- 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.

Action: S Green/Clerk

13. **Date of next meetings:**

03-03-2021, 10-06-2021 and 14-07-2021 at 5.30 pm.

The meeting closed at 18.57.

Action Summary	
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.	Action: J Lumbard
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.	Action: S Green/J Lumbard
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.	Action: S Green/Clerk