



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 10th June 2021 at 5.30 pm.

Present	Yes/No	In Attendance	Yes/No
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	
a)	Newly appointed Compliance Trustee, Lee Hallam has joined the Resources Committee.
b)	All schools are currently forecasting balanced budgets although they are waiting for final confirmation of teacher resignations and SLAs. The draft budgets will be approved at the next round of LGC meetings and then by the Resources Committee on 14 th July ahead of the trust Board meeting on 20 th July.
c)	Key risks to the budgets are the continuation of Sports Premium funding and the Support Staff pay increase.
d)	Trustees have approved the Zurich insurance quote for a further year with a tender process to begin in 21/22.
e)	A Trust Wide H&S audit was completed and work continues to centralise processes.
f)	Catering costs are still a concern but the uptake of meals has improved.
g)	The Resources Committee would like to recommend the 16-19 Bursary Policy and the LGPS Employers Discretion Policy for Trust Board approval.

30. **Welcome and format of the meeting**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

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

None.

32. **Apologies for Absence**

It was anticipated that Mr Piper would be attending the meeting.

Subsequent to the meeting: Mr Piper advised by email that he had been out of the area and his internet connect was not sufficient to join the meeting.

33. **Approval of minutes of meeting held 3rd March 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd March 2021, having been circulated in advance, were agreed as an accurate record and will be signed when social distancing ceases.

M19. Review and agreement of the Resource Committee's ToR and Resources section of Governor Handbook

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

Update: Complete.

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.

Update: Complete.

M21. ESFA VMFI tool – Overview and discussion

c) Mrs Lumbard will feed back once this has been updated and analysed.

Update: Mrs Lumbard advised that the tool still has the end of year information from 2018/19 but has been updated for 19/20 from the annual accounts return. Mrs Lumbard explained that from this, she will be able to provide the ESFA recommendations. A Trustee asked how the tool is managed. Mrs Lumbard explained it is a tool available from the ESFA who amalgamate data from our financial statements but access to the tool is only provided for Trust employees rather than Trustees. Mrs Lumbard will put together a report for Trustees with recommendations and key points of comparisons to other schools' similar to the SMART schools. A Trustee asked if the tool is providing insights that we are not already aware of. Mrs Lumbard said that the tool is populated and is being made use of but there are not any issues highlighted that we are not already aware of. A Trustee asked if this is a standard item for the Committee. Mrs Lumbard advised that the tool needs to be reviewed annually. It was noted that RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rated financial documents are already providing information for Trustees and are based on ESFA benchmarks. The monitoring spreadsheets which are circulated are a useful tool for Trustees.

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.

Update: The Trustees agree that progress on the depth of detail in the report is being made.

M25. Policies to review and recommend for agreement by Trust Board

a) Director and Governor Expenses policy - "Directors" need to be changed to "Trustees".

Update: Complete.

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.

Update: On this agenda.

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.

Update: Complete.

34. Finance Update

Including draft budgeting process. Documents were circulated in advance of the meeting. From these:

a) **A Trustee asked if the budget is on target.** Mrs Lumbard explained that the budget is in a better position than expected especially considering the challenging year that we have had. The Period 8 Management Accounts are due for circulation shortly which have been slightly delayed due to Easter.

- b) Mrs Lumbard explained that the LGCs (Local Governor Committees) have gone through the initial draft budgets. There are no significant issues at the schools and they are all forecasting balanced budgets although there is still some uncertainty on staffing as teachers are able to resign up to the end of term and schools are waiting on final information for SLAs (Service Level Agreements). Finance staff continue work on the draft budgets as and when fresh information is received. The LGCs will approve budgets at local level at their next meeting before the budgets come to the Resources Committee on 14th July.
- c) **A Trustee asked if the SLAs are internal or external.** Mrs Lumbard advised that they are bought in services from external companies such as the Local Authority. In terms of risk items, the Sports Premium (SP) funding for next year has still not been confirmed and there is uncertainty around the suggested NJC support staff increase of 1.5%. Mrs Lumbard advised that Trustees would need to agree to adopt this increase and the 1st of April is the increase date so this will affect the forecast.
- d) It was agreed that Mr Hallam as a newly appointed Trustee would meet with Mrs Lumbard to discuss Trust finances.
- Action: J Lumbard/L Hallam**
- e) **A Trustee asked about AWPU (Age Weighted Pupil Unit) and if the teacher pay grants will be fully funded.** Mrs Lumbard confirmed that this was the case. She has reviewed the anticipated pay grants against the increase in the AWPU and there is indeed an increase in pupil funding over and above the inclusion of the teacher pay grants.
- f) **A Trustee asked if the anticipation is that there will be balanced budgets for all 6 schools.** Mrs Lumbard advised that this is the case. **A Trustee asked if the schools have had to make difficult decisions to arrive at a balanced budget.** Mrs Lumbard explained that the smaller primaries have needed work on this. In the secondary schools, there have been some changes of staff and this has helped offset costs. Staffing using the Sport Premium Funding has been cautious to avoid a long term commitment in case this funding is stopped. Mr Buckley noted that there are monthly struggles at all the schools and restructures have been needed. There have been issues with ECTs (Early Career Teachers) at Saltash as there are 10 which has a significant financial impact to budgets. Trustees acknowledged these challenges.
- g) **A Trustee noted that in the current budget, the teacher contact ratios were low but these are now much higher at Saltash.** Mr Buckley explained that the differences were relatively small and recently we have appointed an additional teacher appointment at Saltash due to timetabling issues. **A Trustee asked if the issues at Saltash have resolved.** Mr Buckley explained that this needs further review due to the impact of the change to the ECT framework but the low teacher contact ratio is no longer an issue.
- h) **A Trustee noted that the capital reserve is reducing and asked if it is that a true picture of the situation or an area for concern.** Mrs Lumbard advised that due to Covid, we have been unable to spend on projects. The aim for the next twelve months is to move the backlog of works forward. The central capital is £478K and each school has a capital spend plan.
- i) **A Trustee asked what the total capital reserve figure represents.** Mrs Lumbard advised that the reserve is increasing as we have income coming in so the amount brought forward is not being depleted. The allocation is to be spent on the school buildings and has been unspent due to Covid.
- j) **A Trustee asked if there is a precautionary level of reserve that we should be keeping.** Mrs Lumbard advised that the capital policy states that we should leave a 10% contingency with the view to spend the rest to improve buildings across the Trust.
- k) **A Trustee asked if we are accruing against projects.** Mrs Lumbard explained that condition surveys have been completed at all 6 schools and a schedule of works has been provided and

prioritised. We may need to reprioritise as time moves forward.

35. **Insurance quote**

- a) Mrs Lumbard explained it had been previously agreed by Trustees to remain with Zurich for one further year before starting a tendering process. Mrs Lumbard has secured a quote from Zurich which has been reduced from £20.95 to £19.33 per pupil. The RPA scheme run by the ESFA is £19 per pupil so the Zurich quote is broadly inline but also provides some added extras.
- b) **A Trustee asked when we need to finalise this quote.** Mrs Lumbard explained that the Insurance policy ends on 31/08. If Trustees are happy with the quote, she can move forward and sign up for the one further year.
- c) Trustees were in agreement to the proposed quote which will start from 1st September 2021. Mrs Lumbard will start reviewing the tender process in the autumn.

36. **Resources update (IT, H&S, Catering, Cleaning, Capital projects)**

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

- a) ICT
A Trustee asked if there is funds available in the existing budget for the ICT project. Mr Buckley advised that we have made some relative savings in staffing and we are not concerned about the additional investment needed to be made. Mr Buckley advised that Dobwalls had caused concern but they are now on the one system and any issues are now able to be dealt with remotely.
- b) **A Trustee queried the central procurement for the Trust and noted it would be useful for Trustees to know the scale and be provided with costs for this on the report.** It was agreed that an update would be provided at the next meeting.

Action: S Green
- c) H&S
A Trustee noted the information provided about the H&S audit and that the H&S Trustee had asked questions prior to the Trust Wide audit about having central processes in place. Trustees acknowledged that the COO (Chief Operating Officer) had already recognised the need for this and centralisation of processes is moving forwards. Mrs Lumbard advised that there has been a change of personnel and policy which has impacted the speed of progress. She added that Mr Green has already sent through an action plan with work to complete during June and July. **A Trustee asked if an update will be provided in each meeting.** Trustees were content that they would receive updates on this. Mr Buckley added that all processes have been in place but we are trying to bring these together as a Trust.
- d) Catering
It was noted that there has been a significant cost to catering and so Trustees asked for an update. Mrs Lumbard explained that the original agreed contract was based on the number of meals sold and so due to the schools being closed for periods of time due to Covid, we needed to move towards cost recovery. Costs are now being offset by meals being sold.
- e) Saltash has seen an issue due to the meal purchase system which was in place which has now been revised and there have also been some staffing issues at Chartwells at this school. Mrs Lumbard advised that there are regular meetings with the project management company, Litmus and also regular contact with the regional manager for Chartwells. Any change in projected lost is already in the projected year-end figures. Some schools are performing better than others with Saltash being the most challenging.
- f) **A Trustee asked for an approximate figure of monthly costs.** Mrs Lumbard explained that Saltash is looking at a £40k loss based on most recent figures. **A Trustee asked about the financial performance pre Covid.** Mrs Lumbard advised that around £10k of income was agreed.
- g) **A Trustee asked for quantities to be added to the report so that Trustees can assess the financial impact. A Trustee asked why Saltash has been more heavily impacted than the other**

schools. Mrs Lumbarad advised that there was a pre-order system in place due to the bubbles in use and there was not the opportunity for students to get to service areas without mixing bubbles. The pre-order did impact uptake. The loses at the other schools have been less as they have used different systems.

h) Cleaning

This is working well.

i) Capital works

Mrs Lumbarad advised that the agreement for the roofing at Looe was made by email. Mrs Lumbarad explained that LED lighting is being reviewed across the 6 schools for next year and we are looking to invest any savings from other SCA projects in this. The decarbonisation will result in savings within the revenue budget. **A Trustee noted that this is something the Trust should be doing anyway to meet our carbon reduction objective.** It was advised that this should be easier to do at the primary schools.

37. **Policies**

a) 16-19 Bursary

Mrs Lumbarad explained that only minor changes were needed to the policy. A Trustee noted on page 5, the “application to the Trust’s bursary committee” should be to a school committee.

b) LGPS Employers Discretion

No comments.

c) Trustees were content with policies as proposed (with minor suggested change of wording) and would like to recommend both policies to the Trust Board for approval.

38. **Agreements made by email**

- a) School Resource Management Self-Assessment Tool return to ESFA by 15/04/2021
Looe Tower block flat roof re-covering tender process
Looe Telephone Mast – agreement of option 2

39. **LGC Summary table**

This was circulated in advance of the meeting. From this:

- a) Nothing to note for this committee.

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- c) Key risks to the budgets are the continuation of Sports Premium funding and the Support Staff pay increase.
- d) Trustees have approved the Zurich insurance quote for a further year with a tender process to begin in 21/22.
- e) A Trust Wide H&S audit was completed and work continues to centralise processes.
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41. **Date of next meetings:**
14/07/2021 at 5.30 pm budget approval meeting.

The meeting closed at 18.31.

Action Summary	
M34. Finance Update d) It was agreed that Mr Hallam as a newly appointed Trustee would meet with Mrs Lumbard to discuss Trust finances.	Action: J Lumbard/L Hallam
M36. Resources update (IT, H&S, Catering, Cleaning, Capital projects) b) A Trustee queried the central procurement for the Trust and noted it would be useful for Trustees to know the scale and be provided with costs for this on the report. It was agreed that an update would be provided at the next meeting.	Action: S Green