



COMMUNITY INCLUSIVE TRUST BOARD MEETING
MINUTES OF THE MEETING 12th DECEMBER 2023 AT 5:30pm – WARWICK HOUSE, LONG BENNINGTON

Attendees	Paul Boucher – Member Isabel Burford – Member (via Teams) Sandy Paley – Member (via Teams) Jonathan Jackson – Member (via Teams) Stephen Hopkins – Chairman Helen Drew-Bradley – Trustee Julia Lindley-Baker – Trustee Jo Slesser – Trustee Pam Powell - Trustee Kim-Adele Platts – Trustee (via Teams) Kate Goodman – Trustee (via Teams) Keith Stanton - Trustee Bryan Steele – Trustee Nathan Jeremiah - Trustee Peter Bell – CEO/AO Michelle Allbones - CFO Daran Bland- Director of Governance and Operations Chloe Lyon – CIT Management Accountant (Observer) Ana Hendrickson – Company Secretary/ Clerk to the Trust Board (Minutes)
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1. WELCOME AND CHECK IN

The Chair to TB welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Leah Miller – Trustee – Work commitment
Harpaul Dhindsa – Trustee – Family commitments

Apologies accepted. Quorum met.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None for this meeting.

4. CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair to TB reminded all present regarding the CIT Values as mentioned previously at tonight's AGM.

5. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING- FOR APPROVAL

The DRAFT Minutes of the 19th September 2023 full Trust Board meeting were made available on the Onboard portal, for information, prior to this meeting.

The draft minutes from the 19th September 2023 full Trust Board meeting were accepted as a true and accurate record.

The Chair to TB praised the Clerk to TB for the accuracy and quality of all Trust Board Minutes.

Resolution: The Minutes of the 19th September 2023 full Trust Board meeting were approved as a true and accurate record.

6. ACTION TRACKER - FOR INFORMATION

The 2023-2024 Action Log document was made available on the OnBoard portal for information prior to this meeting.

The Chair to TB noted that only one item remains open, action point 7 (19.09.23 meeting).

The DDOG advised that the completion of this action point is not straight forward. Further investigation is required.

For the benefit of Members, the Chair provided brief context regarding this action point and suggested for a meeting with the DDOG and the CS/ Clerk to be arranged to enable its completion.

ACTION 1: For a meeting between the Chair to TB, the DDOG and the CS/ Clerk to be arranged to enable the completion of action point 7 of the 19.09.23 TB meeting.

7. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES – AUTUMN TERM 2023 - FOR INFORMATION / ASSURANCE

People Committee

The Committee Chair provided high-level overview regarding the work of this committee.

The committee continues to establish the culture of the Trust, making conscious choices and taking action to improve stakeholders' working conditions ensuring the Trust abides by the CIT values.

The clarity of information provided by the ELT enables data driven decisions. As the Trust grows and evolves, the People Committee has responded to and addressed in-year challenges taking a '*lessons learnt*' approach.

Remuneration Committee

This committee ensured data driven and longevity decisions in relation to Cost of Living increases and staff salaries who currently fall outside their salary banding. The requirement for a salary band review was identified. Committee members are working in partnership with the DoHR in order for external benchmarking to take place, so a proposal is presented to this committee for recommendation for Trust Board approval.

Trustees praised the CIT Values Award and thanked the People Committee.

Assurances were requested in relation to Wellbeing and support for all Trust Leaders.

The CEO added that robust support systems are in place for CIT schools within the Ofsted window. Senior Leader support for HTs is also provided to ensure staff wellbeing.

A conversation took place around Ofsted, their expectations during monitoring visits, pressures on school staff and the Trust's complaint against Ofsted.

F&E Committee

The Committee Chair advised regarding a budget deficit forecast of £290,000; should all opportunities come to fruition a 122,000 surplus would be expected.

Additional funding is being invested in St Paul's Primary to ensure a '*Good*' Ofsted grading.

The 3-Year forecast submitted to the ESFA shows deficits for the next three years. A realistic forecast has been requested. Committee members are yet to meet to determine a revised way of financial reporting.

The IT Lead and DPO roles will be carried out by two different members of staff as from January 2024.

All GDPR open actions have been dealt with and are now complete.

No open actions remain in relation to Health and Safety audit points.

The Committee Chair commended the work of the DDOG and the Estates team for effectively addressing these and ensuring the closure of all tasks.

Surveys in terms of RAAC were carried out, none was found in any CIT buildings. Building condition surveys will be refreshed in September 2024.

The roof repair at St Paul's Primary has been given priority due to its leaking condition.

SCA funding continues being used for Repair & Maintenance work.

ES&SG Committee

The Committee Chair advised that assurances received from the LSBs are scrutinised at every meeting. Focus has been given to these to ensure they are robust. This matter was brought to the attention of all LSB Chairs.

Data from two chosen CIT schools is reviewed in depth as part of the committee's case study. The latest schools for scrutiny were Chapel St Leonards and GANF (Ambergate and Sandon).

Attendance figures for GANF are significantly above national average.

Focus has been given to:

- LSB membership which is currently an ongoing challenge.

- Accountability for the safeguarding of pupils attending LNCIP.
- Woodlands Academy – school expected to achieve a ‘Good’ Ofsted grading.
- SEND – Trust-wide SEND review.

A changeover of the role of Safeguarding Trustee has taken place. Trustee Julia Lindley-Baker is now the Safeguarding Trustee.

The Trust’s IT Lead will join the next committee meeting to provide an overview of the Safeguarding systems and filtering processes.

A discussion took place regarding assurance rag ratings, their movement/changes from term to term, visibility of all assurances, LSB Chair’s responsibility around the provision of these in the absence of Governors’ monitoring visits, triangulation, filtering systems to safeguards staff online accounts, and challenges in terms of obtaining safeguarding assurances as this is a rather extensive area.

Trustees re-iterated the importance of supporting and safeguarding the Trust’s HTs and requested that focus is also given to this matter.

It was agreed for Safeguarding Matters’ (Safer recruitment, LADO referrals) to be an agenda item at the next People Committee meeting.

A&R Committee

The Committee Chair advised that two meetings have taken place this term. The committee’s TOR was discussed and agreed.

The Risk Management Policy and the Risk Register have been thoroughly scrutinised and reviewed. A new section has been added to the latter document, Education section.

The Risk Management Policy will be signed of in January 2024.

The Risk Register is a dynamic document and as such, the committee requested for ‘risks and relevant mitigations’ to be an agenda item at each Board committee meeting.

This document has been re-reviewed; therefore, it is the A&R Committee recommendation for the Trust Board to approve at tonight’s meeting.

The Committee Chair encouraged Trustees linked to the review of policies, to highlight any potential risks and to inform the Clerk to TB in order for this to be added to this committee’s meeting agenda.

The committee has held discussions around Audits and has established clarification, based on the updated DfE Academies Trust Handbook, in terms of terminology in relation to Internal Scrutiny and External Financial Audit.

External Financial Audit is the process carried out by the external auditors in relation to financial matters.

Internal Scrutiny being where an independent assurance is provided by an external third party, through a report, directly to the committee as well as the ELT.

Recommendations and suggestions for internal scrutiny can be made by the ELT, however all areas for internal scrutiny will be determined by committee members.

Internal Quality Assurance is determined and commissioned by the ELT, recommendations and actions will be presented to the full Board of Trustees for scrutiny.

This element will now be included in all Board Committee agendas as an opportunity for Trustee input in relation to new areas for internal scrutiny.

The external *internal scrutiny* provider will be attending the next A&R Committee meeting in March 2024 to provide an overview around their skill set and advise in respect of Cyber security.

A suggestion was made for Quality of Business Continuity Plans to be included within the *Internal Scrutiny* plan and for a Risk Appetite statement to be produced by the ELT, based on key categories from the Risk Register, and to be presented to the A&R Committee for scrutiny at their next meeting.

At this point in the meeting the A&R Committee Chair re-iterated that the Risk Register has been thoroughly scrutinised and reviewed therefore this committee is content to recommend this document for Trust Board approval.

Trustees indicated their agreement and resolved to approve, unanimously, the CIT Risk Register December 2023.

ACTION 2: For *'Safeguarding Matters'* (Safer recruitment, LADO referrals) to be an agenda item at the next People Committee meeting.

ACTION 3: For Quality of Business Continuity Plans to be included within the *Internal Scrutiny* plan.

ACTION 4: For a Risk Appetite statement to be produced by the ELT, based on key categories from the Risk Register, and to be presented to the A&R Committee for scrutiny at their next meeting.

RESOLUTION: To approve, unanimously, the CIT Risk Register December 2023 document.

8. RISK REGISTER SIGN OFF – FOR APPROVAL

The CIT Risk Register December 2023 document was made available on the OnBoard portal for information prior to this meeting.

The CIT Risk Register December 2023 document was approved during agenda item 7.

9. GOVERNANCE CODE OF CONDUCT – FOR INFORMATION

The CIT and the Governance Code 2023 document was made available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting.

The Chair to TB advised that the CIT and the Governance Code 2023 document had been produced by the Trust Board Vice Chair.

He praised the thorough report, suggested for the Trust Board Vice Chair to liaise with the DDOG should there be any implications which require to be incorporated within the Governance Annual Delivery Plan and proposed for this agenda item to be deferred until the January 30th Trust Board meeting.

Trustee indicated their agreement with the above.

ACTION 5: For the Trust Board Vice Chair to liaise with the DDOG should there be any implications which require to be incorporated within the Governance Annual Delivery Plan.

ACTION 6: For the Governance Code of Conduct to be an agenda at the January 30th Trust Board meeting.

10. GOVERNANCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN– FOR ASSURANCE

The Governance Annual Delivery Plan 23-24 document was made available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting.

The Chair to TB advised that the above document is for information purposes only.

Progress made in relation to this plan is presented by the DDOG at each Trust Board meeting.

11. TRUSTEE SKILLS AUDIT – FOR INFORMATION

The Annual Survey of Trustees – Summary 2023-24 document was made available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting.

The Chair to TB advised that outcomes from the latest surveys are reflected in the document presented today.

He advised that the outcome of the skills' survey confirms a strong skill set in most areas and evidence that the right Trustees have been assigned to the right committees. This has been a re-assuring piece of work.

Areas highlighted in the *Limited* skills' column within the Annual Survey of Trustees – Summary 2023-24 document have been noted and will be addressed. Bespoke support / training will be provided to those who require it.

12. 2022-23 AUDITED ACCOUNTS AND ANNUAL RPEORT – FOR SIGN OFF

The CIT Final Accounts 2023 and the CIT Final Report to Trustees documents were made available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting.

Documents noted as read.

The Chair to TB stated the requirement for the Board to resolve to adopt the CIT Final Accounts 2023 and noted the recommendation from the A&R Committee for approval.

Trustee comments were welcomed. None made.

Trustees resolved to adopt the CIT Final Accounts 2023 and CIT Final Report to Trustees 2023 as approved.

RESOLUTION: To adopt the CIT Final Accounts 2023 and CIT Final Report to Trustees 2023 as approved.

13. FINANCE MATTERS – FOR INFORMATION AND APPROVAL

The 10a Resolutions Cover Sheet – Reserves Policy, 10b Reserves Policy FINAL Nov 2023, 10c Reserves Policy Changes Template, BFR Three-year Forecast 23-24, Delivery Plan Priorities – Trust Board, Email with ESFA re: 3 Year Forecast, Financial Information Report for Trust Board P2, Resolutions Cover Sheet – BFR Three-Year Forecast 2023 and the UPDATED Three Year Forecast 23-24 documents were made available on the OnBoard portal prior to this meeting.
Documents noted as read.

The Chair to TB advised that two resolutions are to be made at tonight’s meeting.
He mentioned the documents related to the Reserves Policy and noted that the changes made to this policy are clear and robust. It is the recommendation of the F&E Committee for Trust Board approval.
On that basis Trustees resolved to approve the Reserves Policy.

The second resolution is in relation to the BFR Three-year Forecast 23-24 which required Trust Board approval prior to its submission to the ESFA in August 2023.

The Chair to TB advised that an approval is to be done retrospectively although this is not the preferred option.
Trustees resolved to approve the BFR Three-year Forecast 23-24.

The Chair to TB provided context around the KPI reports produced by the CFO which are scrutinised by the F&E Committee and presented at each Trust Board meeting for information purposes.
He praised the Delivery Plan Priorities – Trust Board document produced by the CEO with details of the strategic spend.

A Trustee queried if future pupil numbers (prospective admissions) are monitored / forecasted per school as these may have a potential impact on the finance of the school.

The CEO added that a significant update will be carried out to the Growth Strategy in January 2024. He agreed to include the above-mentioned matter as part of the update.

Suggestions were made for information to be presented as a clear table of school by school.

The Chair to TB highlighted the urgent resolution e-mailed to the Board earlier today in relation to the school meals contract at Isaac Newton Primary.

Trustees resolved to approve the recommendations of the working group to appoint their preferred meal provider on a 12-month contract as detailed in the Resolutions Cover Sheet e-mailed to the Board on December 12th, 2023.

RESOLUTION: To approve the following documents:

- Reserves Policy.
- BFR Three-year Forecast 23-24.
- The recommendations of the working group to appoint their preferred meal provider on a 12-month contract as detailed in the Resolutions Cover Sheet e-mailed to the Board on December 12th, 2023.

ACTION 7: For the monitoring/ forecasting of future pupil numbers per school and the potential impact these may have on the schools’ finance to be included as part of the Growth Strategy update due to take place in January 2024.

For information to be presented as a clear table of school by school.

14. CHAIR’S CLOSING REMARKS

The Chair to TB thanked everyone for their attendance and good governance work.

Meeting closed at 6:46pm.