



Full Trust Board Meeting

CIT Academies

Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at 5:30 PM

Warwick House, Long Bennington

Minutes of the meeting

1. Welcome and check in

Presenter: Chair

Points to note

Present

Stephen Hopkins – Chairman

Paul Boucher – Chairman / CIT Members group

Isabel Hanmer – Member (via Teams)

Rachael Sharpe- Member (via Teams)

Jonathan Jackson – Member (via Teams)

Kate Goodman – Trustee– Trustee (via Teams)

Helen Drew-Bradley – Trustee

Pam Powell – Trustee

Paul Tallentire – Trustee

Alex Hole - Trustee

Peter Bell – CEO/AO

Daran Bland- Director of Governance and Operations/ Interim CFO

Ana Hendrickson – Company Secretary/ Clerk to the Trust Board (Minutes)

2. Apologies for absence

Presenter: Clerk

Points to note

Julia Lindley-Baker – Trustee – Work commitments

Kim-Adele Platts – Trustee – Work commitments

Nathan Jeremiah – Trustee (via Teams) – Work commitments

Harpaul Dhindsa – Trustee – Family commitments

Leah Miller – Trustee– Work commitments

Apologies accepted.

3. Declarations of Interest

Presenter: Chair

Points to note

None for this meeting.

4. Chair's opening remarks - Governance Priorities for 24/25

Documents provided

CIT Values and Principles

5. Minutes of last meeting- FOR APPROVAL

Presenter: Chair

Documents provided

Draft Trust Board Minutes 17th September 2024

Proposed New Format- Draft Trust Board Minutes-17.09.24 Meeting

Summary of: questions raised / clarifications sought / challenges / points to note

An alternative format for meeting minutes was presented for deliberation and decision.

Most MATs are adopting this style of format.

The proposed format is in line with the new approach to meetings, a record of governance, outcomes and decisions.

Suggestions were made for an additional box to be incorporated to capture any objections to resolutions made; for the proposed new format to be shared with CIT LSBs (for adoption and use going forward) and for a document naming protocol to be followed to ensure version control and clarity when reporting.

Members and Trustees were unanimously in favour for the proposed format to be adopted and to be used for all Trust Board and Board Committee meetings going forward. Therefore, they resolved to approve the proposed format.

Resolutions

The Minutes of the 17th September 2024 full Trust Board meeting were approved as a true and accurate record.

The proposed new format for Trust Board and Board Committee Minutes was approved and will be adopted going forward.

Any votes against or abstentions with reasons

None

Actions

Action 1: For an additional box to be incorporated to the proposed new Minutes format to capture any objections to resolutions made.

ACTION 2: For the proposed new Minutes format to be shared with CIT LSB Clerks at their next networking meeting for adoption and use by all CIT LSBs.

ACTION 3: For a document naming protocol to be followed to ensure version control and clarity when reporting (for a date to be added to the name so it is clear when the document was produced).

6. Action Tracker- FOR INFORMATION

Documents provided

2024-25 Trust Board Action Log- Archived

Summary of: questions raised / clarifications sought / challenges / points to note

All action points were completed and rag rated GREEN.

7. Trustee Visits to Schools - FOR INFORMATION

Documents provided

CIT Schools Trustee Visits Log 2024-25

Summary of: questions raised / clarifications sought / challenges / points to note

Each Trustee visits their Special Interest School once a year to ensure connectivity with the school's Headteacher and with the LSB Chair.

Details of Trustee visits are clearly recorded on the *CIT Schools Trustee Visits Log 2024-25*.

The CIT Team Approach to Governance document will be reviewed and updated to reflect recent Trust Board movements and subsequent allocation of special interest schools.

Some Trustee visits to their designated schools had to be postponed due to work/personal commitments; these include Woodlands Academy, Isaac Newton Primary and Poplar Farm Primary.

Visits will be re-scheduled for the Spring Term 2025.

It was noted that the following schools are yet to be visited:

- Linchfield Primary (LIN)
- Boston Endeavour Academy (BEA)
- Greenfields Academy (GREE)
- Tulip Academy (TUL)

The visit to Foxfields Academy was deferred by the ELT.

The newly appointed Trustee visited BEA and Caythorpe Primary as part of his induction to CIT.

He indicated that both schools were very impressive.

The Chair to TB advised of his recent visit to Greenfields Academy. He will re-visit the school in January 2025 and will liaise with the school's designated Trustee prior to her visit in the Spring Term.

He will visit Caythorpe Primary on December 11th to meet with inspectors following their two-day Ofsted inspection.

Context was provided in relation to the Inclusion Fiesta.

The general feedback received by the ELT was very positive.

Formal feedback from Headteachers and the survey issued by the Communications department is yet to be received.

The Chair of the CIT Members group praised the event and described it as superb, wonderfully organised and with a great atmosphere.

Actions

ACTION 4: For the CIT Team Approach to Governance document to be reviewed and updated to reflect the latest Trust Board movements and subsequent allocation of special interest schools.

ACTION 5: For the CS/Clerk to TB to liaise with Trustees so all postponed and outstanding visits to their special interest schools are scheduled for the Spring Term 2025.

8. Annual Report and Final Accounts Sign Off- FOR RESOLUTION

Presenter: A&R Committee Chair

Documents provided

CIT 2024 Final Accounts

CIT 2024 Final Report to Trustees

Finance Report for AGM and Trust Board 10.12.24 Annual Accounts Final

Summary of: questions raised / clarifications sought / challenges / points to note

Context was provided by the A&R Committee Chair in relation to the reviewing process of the Trust's Accounts prior to their recommendation for Trust Board approval.

The *Draft CIT 2024 Accounts* and the *Draft CIT 2024 Report to Trustees* were presented by the Trust's auditors, Streets Chartered Accountants, to the A&R Committee at their 3rd December meeting.

These documents underwent thorough scrutiny and review. Some amendments were made, none of these were material changes.

The DDOG provided context in relation to the 2023-24 surplus budget opening balance, in-year budgetary movements resulting in a potentially significant overspend and the measures put in place to mitigate this.

A percentage of the 2023-24 budget was committed in-year to strategic development. The impact of this has been significant with the two targeted schools moving from being graded as inadequate to Good by Ofsted, St Pauls and Woodlands. The Trust are particularly proud of the Ofsted grade achieved by St Pauls, as it has never in the history of Ofsted been graded any better than RI/Satisfactory.

The government fully funded 5.5% Teachers Pay Award reinforced the budget position resulting in an end-year surplus figure. This in turn has increased the Trust's level of Revenue Reserves and has resulted in a positive figure for the 2024-25 budget opening position.

A detailed 2024-25 budget forecast will be presented to the F&E Committee at their January 2025 meeting.

Key financial indicators for 2023-24 are detailed within the *Finance Report for AGM and Trust Board 10.12.24 Annual Accounts Final* document.

A Management point was raised by the auditors in relation to the requirement for the provision of monthly Management Accounts as stated in the Academies Trust handbook (ATH).

Unvalidated accounts were reported for one accounting period due to transitional issues related to the migration from one finance software package to another.

Despite this, ample clear and accurate financial information was provided to Trustees at all times.

This non-compliance issue has since been resolved.

A further risk and relevant mitigation in relation to systems' migration has been added to the Trust's Risk Register.

Members requested assurances regarding the LGPS changes in terms of the value of the Trust's liabilities as stated in section 6 of the *CIT 2024 Final Report to Trustees*.

Members were assured that there are no concerns in relation to the above; the Trust is solvent, compliant and a *going concern*.

Members indicated they were content with the assurances received.

Trustees thanked the Chairs of the F&E and A&R Committees for their thorough scrutiny and the ELT and the Finance Team for their clarity of reporting.

Trustees indicated they were content to adopt, approve and sign the *CIT 2024 Final Accounts*.

Resolutions

Trustees resolved to adopt, approve and sign the *CIT 2024 Final Accounts*.

Any votes against or abstentions with reasons

None

9. Strategic Plan Progress Report- FOR ASSURANCE

Presenter: CEO

Documents provided

04 School Improvement Tracker September 2024
CEO Strat Plan Report to Trust Board Dec 24 v2

Summary of: questions raised / clarifications sought / challenges / points to note

For the benefit of the newly appointed Trustees, the *School Improvement Tracker September 2024 document was explained*.

Each CIT school is categorised when joining the Trust. Their progress in terms of quality of education is monitored, re-assessed and categorised into colour coded CIT judgements.

The above information is complemented by the latest statistics in terms of CIT pupil number data for Mainstream and SEND schools.

Assurance

Trustees were assured that monitoring and support systems in place are robust.

10. Growth 1 Orchard Special School - FOR RESOLUTION

Presenter: Chair

Documents provided

CIT Growth Approval Grid
Pre DD Report December 2024
Resolutions Sheet Complete- Orchard

Summary of: questions raised / clarifications sought / challenges / points to note

For the benefit of CIT Members and new Trustees, the Chair mentioned that the Trust Board had made the decision to allow the CEO to proceed with the Due Diligence process for Newark Orchard School.

Context in relation to Newark Orchard School and highlights of the documents provided at today's meeting were provided by the CEO. These included the staffing position, SEND funding/SEND banding challenges.

The school was recently judged 'Good' by Ofsted inspectors.
The values of the school align to those of CIT.

On the basis of the information and documentation provided by the CEO, Trustees indicated they were content to onboard Newark Orchard School to the Community Inclusive Trust, subject to full due diligence and approval by the Regional Director in January 2025.

Resolutions

Subject to approval by the Regional Director in January 2025 and full due diligence, The Trust Board resolved to onboard Newark Orchard School to the Community Inclusive Trust.

Any votes against or abstentions with reasons

None

11. Growth 2 Robert Carre Trust -FOR INFORMATION, UPDATE AND ASSURANCE

Presenter: Chair

Documents provided

CIT Governance- Recruitment to the Board Nov 2024- Time framework of events

Summary of: questions raised / clarifications sought / challenges / points to note

Trustees were reminded regarding the proposal to proceed or not with the Robert Carre Trust (RCT) merger and the creation of a Task and Finish group to explore this further.

The next step of this growth project is for the Trust Board to resolve, by their 28th January 2025 meeting, whether the Robert Carre Trust (RCT) can join CIT.

Trustee voting will be done via the Onboard portal. Votes will be ratified at the 28th of January 2025 full Trust Board meeting.

The relevant approval will open two weeks before the above-mentioned meeting.

The CS/ Clerk to TB will liaise with Trustees to ensure all votes are casted in time.

Brief context was provided by a Trustee, who is a member of the Task and Finish group, in relation to the parental questions, concerns and challenges expressed during the first consultation meeting.

The Task and Finish group felt confident and considered the outcome of this meeting encouraging and positive.

There will be potential places for additional Trustees on CIT's Trust Board should the merger between CIT and RCT go ahead.

All RCT Trustees are welcomed to apply.

Information regarding the application process and time framework of events is detailed on the document presented today.

A Nominations Committee will be set up for the selection of new Trustees to ensure the CIT Board of Trustees continues to remain strong.

Conversations will be held with each applicant.

Two recommendations will be made for Trust Board's appointment and two recommendations will be made for Members' appointment.

The future of the Task and Finish group will be decided at the January 28th Trust Board meeting when the merger, the principles in which it will be conducted, and the transitional process will be agreed.

12. Trust Self-Evaluation Report -FOR ASSURANCE

Presenter: CEO

Documents provided

01 Community Inclusive Trust Self Evaluation Form Draft

Summary of: questions raised / clarifications sought / challenges / points to note

The planned Trust Review was postponed until the Spring Term 2025.

The current Strategic Plan will be moved to a Strong MAT framework.

Key reporting areas will remain (High-Quality and Inclusive Education, School Improvement, Workforce, Finance and Operations, Governance and Leadership). The structure of this document will change to that of a national framework.

The reasoning behind the movement of the Trust's evaluative scores against the DfE Trust Quality descriptors and core initiatives to drive improvements was explained.

The reviewed version of the Strategic Plan will be presented to the Board of Trustees at their January 2025 meeting. Current information will be threaded into a different structure within the revised version.

Paper copies will be shared at the meeting for ease of understanding.

Assurance

Trustees were assured that strategic planning is high on the agenda and is being continuously carried out.

Actions

ACTION 6: For paper copies of the revised Strategic Plan to be provided at the January 2025 Trust Board meeting.

13. Management Accounts P1 & P2 -FOR ASSURANCE

Presenter: F&E Committee Chair

Summary of: questions raised / clarifications sought / challenges / points to note

Agenda item deferred to the 28th of January 2025 Trust Board meeting.

Actions

ACTION 7: For Management Accounts P1 & P2 to be an agenda item at the 28th of January 2025 Trust Board meeting.

14. Reserves Policy -FOR RESOLUTION

Presenter: DDOG (Interim CFO)

Documents provided

CIT Reserves Policy Nov-24 Draft

Summary of: questions raised / clarifications sought / challenges / points to note

The *CIT Reserves Policy* is a completely new document which reflects the latest regulation around Revenue Reserves. This draft policy has been scrutinised by the Trustee linked to it.

The main change is the base level of revenue reserves the Trust is required to hold. This has been set at 5% as a minimum.

The target level of unrestricted reserves sits between 5 and 8 percent. This will provide an opportunity for the Trust to plan for strategic/ capital projects or to ensure that unexpected costs/unplanned emergencies are managed.

No changes have been made in relation to the application process for the use of reserves and reporting procedures.

All applications for the use of revenue reserves require ELT validation and Trust Board approval.

The ELT confirmed that the current level of revenue reserves sits at 6.1%.

The modelling of the reserves position, as the Trust grows, will be shared with the F&E Committee.

Trustees resolved to adopt and approve the CIT Reserves Policy.

Resolutions

To approve the *CIT Reserves Policy*.

Any votes against or abstentions with reasons

None.

15. Financial KPIs – FOR APPROVAL

Presenter: Chair

Summary of: questions raised / clarifications sought / challenges / points to note

A set of financial KPIs will be agreed at the 13th December 2024 F&E Committee.

Agenda item deferred to the 28th of January 2025 Trust Board meeting.

Actions

ACTION 8: For Financial KPIs to be an agenda item at the 28th of January 2025 Trust Board meeting.

16. Risk Register - FOR APPROVAL

Presenter: A&R Committee Chair

Documents provided

Risk Register 2024 November

Register of Strategic Risks and their Management-November 2024

Risk Register- Overview-November 2024

Risk Register- Summary-November 2024

Summary of: questions raised / clarifications sought / challenges / points to note

The process for the reviewing of the Risk Register was explained.

All Board Committees have been requested to assess possible risks and bring those to the attention of the A&R Committee.

Board Committee input is discussed at every A&R Committee meeting.

The Risk Register is reviewed, and if appropriate, new risks are added. This in turn has impacted the planning and the delivery of the Internal Scrutiny Three-Year plan.

The Internal Scrutiny Three-Year plan has been adjusted; some internal scrutiny has been brought forward as requested by Board Committees.

The Risk Register is a living document which is constantly under review.

The up-to-date version is presented today as a snapshot for Trust Board approval (*Register of Strategic Risks and their Management, Risk Register- Overview and the Risk Register- Summary*).

Responses in relation to the Four Questions are yet to be reflected in the Risk Register. LSB input will be captured, collated and discussed in the Spring Term 2025.

Trustees resolved to approve the Risk Register 2024.

They indicated they were content with the reviewing process of the Risk Register and resolved to approve it.

Resolutions

- To approve the reviewing process of the Risk Register document.
- To approve the Risk Register 2024.

Any votes against or abstentions with reasons

None

17. Performance Management of the CEO- FOR ASSURANCE

Presenter: Chair

Summary of: questions raised / clarifications sought / challenges / points to note

Agenda item deferred until a decision is made regarding the Growth 2 Robert Carre Trust project on 28th January 2025.

Actions

ACTION 9: For Performance Management of the CEO to be an agenda item at the 29th April 2025 Trust Board meeting.

18. Chair's Closing remarks

Presenter: Chair

Summary of: questions raised / clarifications sought / challenges / points to note

The Chair thanked everyone for their scrutiny and participation at today's meeting.

Meeting closed at 7:08pm.