



Full Trust Board Meeting

CIT Academies

Tuesday, January 28, 2025, at 1:00 PM

Warwick House, Long Bennington

Minutes of the meeting

1. Welcome and check in

Presenter: Chair

Points to note

Present

Stephen Hopkins – Chairman

Helen Drew-Bradley – Trustee

Pam Powell – Trustee

Kate Goodman – Trustee– Trustee (via Teams)

Julia Lindley-Baker – Trustee (via Teams)

Harpaul Dhindsa – Trustee (via Teams)

Paul Tallentire – Trustee (via Teams)

Alex Hole - Trustee

Peter Bell – CEO/AO

Daran Bland- Director of Governance and Operations/ Interim CFO

Jane Starbuck – Director of Growth (Guest)

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

The Director of Growth was introduced.

Following the DDOG's appointment in the role of Interim CFO, the Director of Growth will take over the Director of Governance role on an interim basis.

2. Apologies for absence

Presenter: Clerk

Points to note

Kim-Adele Platts – Trustee – Personal commitments

Nathan Jeremiah – Trustee – Work commitments

Apologies accepted.

Absent:

Leah Miller – Trustee

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

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

All were reminded regarding the CIT Values and encouraged to speak up should this meeting not abide to these.

Two successful Ofsted inspections have taken place at Boston Endeavour Academy and Caythorpe Primary School. A letter of congratulations has been sent by the TB Chair, to the respective Headteachers and their teams, on behalf of the Trust Board.

DfE approval has been received in respect of Newark Orchard Special School to join CIT.

5. Minutes of last meeting- FOR APPROVAL

Presenter: Chair

Documents provided

Draft Trust Board Minutes 10th December 2024

Resolutions The Minutes of the 10th December 2024 full Trust Board meeting were approved as a true and accurate record.

Any votes against or abstentions with reasons

None

6. Action Tracker- FOR INFORMATION Documents provided

2024-25 Trust Board Action Log- Archived- Updated December 2024.

2024-25 Trust Board Action Log- Outstanding Actions only from the December 2024 meeting- Update 22.01.25.

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

Action point 5 of the 10.12.24 meeting remains outstanding. This rag rating will remain AMBER until the visit to Woodlands Academy can take place.

7. Report from Board Committees - FOR INFORMATION/ ASSURANCE

Presenter: Chairs of: F&E Committee/ A&R Committee / PEOPLE Committee/ ES&SG Committee

Documents provided

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

F&E Committee

No verbal update provided due to the Chair of this committee not in attendance.

A&R Committee

The Trust's Final Accounts were discussed, approved and recommended for Trust Board signature at their December 2024 meeting.

The role of the CFO was discussed. The Trust's auditors made Trustees aware regarding the qualifications and skills of the post holder as stated in the Academy Trusts Handbook. Members of all Board committees feel comfortable with the decisions made to date in respect of this role. Monitoring continues on an ongoing basis.

Conversations were held in relation to the Trust being a *going concern*. A process will be introduced at the Autumn Term 2025 F&E Committee meeting. This process will be ratified by the A&R Committee.

The *Four Questions* document has been shared with CIT LSBs. Their responses will be presented to this committee in Spring 2025.

Decisions were made in relation to the requirement for further scrutiny to be given to the Data Protection Policy and Under/Over Trading section of the Risk Register document.

A query was raised in relation to previous discussions and agreement for the recruitment of a CFO to be carried out externally.

Assurances were sought in terms of Trust compliance around the appointment of a CFO as advised by the Trust's auditors.

People Committee

In the absence of the Committee Chair, the TB Chair chaired the meeting.

The Committee's Terms of Reference for 2024-25 were approved.

From the HR & Wellbeing perspective, focus was given to the management of staff absences and the positive impact this has had.

Concerns were raised in terms of non-compliance around certain HR processes in certain CIT schools. Assurances were received from the ELT that the Trust is fully compliant in all statutory HR processes. However, certain schools are yet to meet the high standards and high expectations set by CIT.

Trustee input was provided in relation to the Staff Code of Conduct (standard of expectations from staff). Committee members approved the appointment of a Director of Secondary Education subject to the CIT/ RCT merger.

Policy work was carried, several policies were approved at the meeting.

Remuneration Committee

The committee formally accepted the National Pay Award for Teaching and Support staff.

The Pay Policy was reviewed and approved.

Committee members resolved for performance related pay to be applied to the ELT and Headteachers only. Benchmarking and relevant scrutiny was carried out in relation to ELT pay. The ELT pay is in line with that of the sector. This exercise will be conducted every three years.

The CEO's recommendation for the performance related pay for ELT members was approved.

The Performance Management review for the CEO is yet to take place. The outcome of this review will be discussed and approved at the March 2025 committee meeting.

ES&SG Committee

Deep Dives were carried out into two schools BEA and BIN.

BEA was in the Ofsted inspection window; this school consequently secured a *Good* Ofsted outcome.

Assurances were provided through the Safeguarding and Education Reports in terms of Safeguarding, compliance

and staff workload related to the manual transfer of information from one system to another. Focus was given to *Attendance* across all CIT schools. Detailed information was provided. Policy work was carried, several policies were approved at the meeting.

Summary of: Management response

Context was provided regarding the recruitment for the role of CFO which was unsuccessful. A decision had been made for the recruitment for this role to be deferred. A proposal will be presented to the PEOPLE Committee regarding an 18–24-month extension of the Interim CFO role. The current role holder has enrolled in a 12-month Operations and Finance Diploma. An informal mentor from the Nova Education Trust will also provide relevant support. There is a crossover between the DDOG and CFO roles. Part of the role of a CFO is the management of a team; in CIT's case, a team of qualified and experienced accountants particularly after the RCT merger takes place.

Assurance

Trustees were assured that the Trust is compliant with the ATH's stipulations in terms of the appointment of a CFO.

8. LSB Reports- Autumn Term 1 2024-25- FOR ASSURANCE

Presenter: DDOG

Documents provided

2024-25 LSB Consolidated Report V4.0 - Autumn Term 1 2024
Autumn Term 1 2024-25 LSB Consolidated Report- Main Report- January 2025
Autumn Term 1 2024-25 LSB Consolidated Report - Areas for Trust Consideration
Autumn Term 1 2024-25 LSB Consolidated Report- Summary- January 2025
Autumn Term 1 2024-25 – Matter for Trust Board consideration- January 2025 LSB Feedback to Trust Board-ELT Responses Autumn 2024-25 FINAL

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

No RED rag ratings reported for this period. FOX LSB has oversight for BOW at present. A few assurances were rag rated white. LSBs must ensure rag ratings are aligned to the key colours specified in the report. All concerns raised by CIT LSBs, in particular those raised by BEA, GANF and BIN, and the respective ELT responses were discussed at length. A suggestion was made for the Trustee linked to GANF to discuss the matters raised by the LSB, at her next visit. Also, for the *LSB Feedback to Trust Board-ELT Responses* to be a standing agenda item for discussion, at each ES&SG Committee meeting.

Summary of: Management response

Nothing of concern at present. Conversations have taken place between the DoE SEND and GANF's Headteacher. The Trust has monitored this school through deep dives. The school is now out of its adjustment period. Recruitment of additional staffing (TA) at BIN has taken place.

Actions

ACTION 1: For the Trustee linked to GANF to discuss the matter raised by the LSB, at her next visit.

ACTION 2: For LSBs to be advised that all assurance reporting is to be aligned to the key colours specified in the SOAP report (no assurances to be rag rated white).

ACTION 3: For the *LSB Feedback to Trust Board-ELT Responses* to be a standing agenda item for discussion, at each ES&SG Committee meeting.

9. Merger of RCT to CIT- FOR RESOLUTION

Presenter: Chair/ CEO/ DoG

Documents provided

CIT Growth Approval Grid RCT

RCT Final Due Diligence Report to Trustees

RCT Trust Merger Stakeholder Engagement Presentation

Resolutions Sheet RCT

Integration Plan Master

Key Dates Transfer Timeline

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

Trustee voting was carried out via the Onboard portal. Trustee response was unanimously affirmative.

One vote is yet to be casted.

On this basis, Trustees resolved to approve for the Community Inclusive Trust to be the receiving Trust and for the merger with the Robert Carre Trust to take place.

Next steps

Trustee representation within the Task and Finish group has now ceased. Relevant Trustees were thanked for their contributions.

The process for the recruitment of four additional Trustees (currently RCT Trustees) has taken place.

Letters of application and CVs were received from all applicants. Conversations were held with two CIT Trustees.

Relevant Trustees were thanked for their rigorous and robust work.

All four appointments were CIT Member appointments.

RCT Trustees will join CIT's Trust Board subject to the DfE's CIT/RCT merger approval.

Summary of: Management response

The required forms and an Integration Plan have been submitted to the DfE.

The DfE Advisory Board will meet on March 18th, 2025.

A Task Force Group is now in place to oversee the conversion/ transition process should the merger be approved.

A merger timeline for a September 1st conversion (legals) has been received from the Trust's lawyers.

Meetings between the CIT CEO, RCT CEO and the DfE advisor will take place to ensure the transfer of documents and deadlines are met.

A suggestion was made for the A&R Committee to monitor the CIT/RCT merger.

Resolution

To approve for the Community Inclusive Trust to be the receiving Trust and for the merger with the Robert Carre Trust to take place.

Any votes against or abstentions with reasons

None

Actions

ACTION 4: For the monitoring of the CIT/RCT merger to be an agenda item at the A&R Committee meeting.

10. Refreshed Strategic Plan - FOR RESOLUTION

Presenter: CEO

Documents provided

Full Strategic Plan 2023-2026 FINAL- 22.01.25

Annex_A_Trust_Quality_Descriptions_July_2023

January 2025 SEF- DRAFT Strategic Plan Review- 22.01.25

Resolutions Sheet- Strategic Focus 2025-22.01.25

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

The DfE's Trust Quality Descriptors document has been used to define a high-quality Trust. These are divided into five categories: High-quality and Inclusive Education, School Improvement, Workforce, Financial Operations, Governance and Leadership.

The conversion of the current 2023-2026 Strategic Plan onto the new national framework is an ongoing piece of work. The Trust Board will have a line of sight in terms of progress relating to the new Strategic Plan.

The first iteration of this document will be presented at the April 29th 2025, Trust Board meeting and a final version will be presented to the Board at their July 2025 meeting.

A suggestion was made for the addition of bullet points alongside every judgement stating how it was informed/ data captured for clarity purposes (i.e. pupil / HT voice).

It is the Trust Board's responsibility to sign off the Strategic Objectives for the Trust, to monitor their progress and to hold the CEO/ Accounting Officer to account.

The Trust-Wide review commissioned to Nova Education Trust has been delayed until May 2025. Any findings from this review will be included within the final version of the revised Strategic Plan which will be presented to the Board in July 2025.

Summary of: Management response

Refreshed Strategic Plan

It was requested for two additional priorities to be considered and agreed by the Board for inclusion within the new framework: EDI and CIT/RCT merger amalgamation and integration.

January 2025 SEF- Strategic Plan review

A proposed Self Evaluation document has been written by the ELT in line with the DfE's Strong Trust Quality Descriptors. This is an evidence-based evaluation document which is at a draft stage, currently under ELT scrutiny. Attention was drawn to page 17 (School Improvement) which will require the review of the Board, and page 19 (ELT's review section), KPIs will be used behind every decision made and score given by the ELT.

One section of this document will be presented, for Trustee review, at each of the five Trust Board meetings of the academic year.

A rolling programme for the review of this document will be set up by the ELT.

<p>Actions</p> <p>ACTION 5: For the addition of bullet points to the January 2025 SEF- Strategic Plan review that sit alongside every judgement stating how it was informed/ data captured for clarity purposes (i.e. pupil / HT voice).</p>
<p>Resolutions</p> <p>Trustees resolved for two additional priorities to be added to the refreshed Strategic Plan: EDI and CIT/RCT merger amalgamation and integration.</p>
<p>Any votes against or abstentions with reasons</p> <p>None</p>

11. EDI Policy -FOR RESOLUTION

Presenter: Chair

Documents provided

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Policy- January 2025 Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Policy Changes- January 2025

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

A strong process was followed for the updating of the Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Policy.

The following amendments were considered necessary:

- Acronyms throughout the document are to be explained for the benefit of those not familiar with the terminology (SEND, EAL, EHCP, RSHE etc).
- Addition of visuals to section 1.2.
- Addition of *systemic barriers* to section 1.13. The review of systems and processes is not currently detailed.

A suggestion was made for this document to be shared with staff and to ensure their awareness and understanding. Also, for CIT LSBs to have sight of this document (for this to be added as an agenda item at their next meeting).

Summary of: Management response

The ELT will discuss, at their next meeting, the suggestion made in relation to the sharing of the EDI Policy with staff and to ensure their awareness and understanding.

Actions

ACTION 6: For the ELT to discuss the Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Policy at their next meeting; to include the requested amendments and the suggestion made in relation to the sharing of the EDI Policy with staff and to ensure their awareness and understanding.

ACTION 7: For the Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Policy to be shared with staff and ensure their awareness and understanding.

ACTION 8: For CIT LSBs to have sight of the Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Policy (for this to be added as an agenda item at their next meeting).

Resolutions

The Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Policy was adopted and approved subject to the following amendments:

- Acronyms throughout the document are to be explained for the benefit of those not familiar with the terminology (SEND, EAL, EHCP, RSHE etc).
- Addition of visuals to section 1.2.
- Addition of *systemic barriers* to section 1.13. The review of systems and processes is not currently detailed.

Any votes against or abstentions with reasons

None

12. Centralisation vs Autonomy -FOR INFORMATION AND ASSURANCE

Presenter: CEO/ TDSL

Documents provided

Alignment and Autonomy Working Copy- 22.01.25

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

Further Trustee input has been added to this working document.

It is important for the *Alignment and Autonomy* to be shared across the organisation in particular with all CIT LSBs.

The review of this document will be carried out annually, it will be presented to the Board at the beginning of each academic year.

Summary of: Management response

The Robert Carre Trust Board are discussing this document at their meeting tonight. Further changes in relation to the alignment of Secondary schools' matters may be considered necessary.

13. Management Accounts P1, P2, P3 & P4 -FOR ASSURANCE

Presenter: F&E Committee Chair

Documents provided

CIT Management Accounts Report 24-25 P4

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

In the absence of the F&E Committee Chair, relevant assurances will be provided at the April 29th, Trust Board meeting.

Summary of: Management response

All Management Accounts information has been shared with the F&E Committee Chair.

The format of the Trust's Management Accounts has recently changed.

Periods 1 to 3 were presented in a different format due to issues with the previous financial software package used.

Period 4 is the first set of Management Accounts presented in the new format.

14. KPIs for 2024-25 -FOR APPROVAL

Presenter: DDOG (Interim CFO)

Documents provided

Management Account Report 2024-25 (Period 4 December 2024) PowerPoint presentation KPI Reporting

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

The new format of the Trust's Management Accounts was praised.

A suggestion was made for information to be presented as bullet points for ease of understanding. Consideration is to be given to the Trust's approach to growth with primary schools.

Trustees indicated their agreement for the KPIs currently reported by the financial software system to continue being presented to the Board, through a Board level KPI report, for monitoring purposes.

It was requested for the Board level KPI report to be presented at the April 2025 Trust Board meeting; for KPI comparison data to be included within this report and for the level of Reserves to be shown as a percentage going forward.

Summary of: Management response

The Management Account Report 2024-25 (Period 4 December 2024) PowerPoint presentation was shared on screen.

Highlights were provided in relation to the overall position of the Trust, total revenue forecasted, staffing expenditure, expenditure as a percentage of total income, deficit/surplus and Reserves position.

This presentation will be shared electronically with the Board of Trustees.

Granular details can be shared with the F&E Committee Chair; a summary report can also be produced for the F&E Committee.

ELT focus is given to continuity of education; pupil numbers is one of several important KPIs which are kept under continuous review.

An overview was provided of all KPIs currently reported by the financial software system.

Actions

ACTION 9: For the Management Account Report 2024-25 (Period 4 December 2024) PowerPoint presentation to be shared electronically with the Board of Trustees.

ACTION 10: For the Board level KPI report to be presented at the April 2025 Trust Board meeting; for KPI comparison data to be included within this report and for the level of Reserves to be shown as a percentage going forward.

Resolutions

Trustees resolved to approve for the KPIs currently reported by the financial software system to continue being presented to the Board, through a Board level KPI report, for monitoring purposes.

Any votes against or abstentions with reasons

None

15. Clerking Matters – FOR INFORMATION

Presenter: Chair

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

Trustees were reminded to cast any outstanding votes in relation to the following open Onboard approvals.

For PEOPLE Committee approval ○ Pay

Policy ○ Performance Management

Policy

○ Staff Code of Conduct

For full Trust Board approval ○

Virtual Governance Policy

○ Annual PFI Charges for WDL and GREE 2025

16. Chair's Closing remarks

Presenter: Chair

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

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance, scrutiny, decision making and contributions.

Meeting closed at 3:10pm.