



Full Trust Board Meeting

CIT Academies

Tuesday, July 15, 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 (via Teams)

Nathan Jeremiah- Trustee

Paul Tallentire – Trustee

Alex Hole - Trustee

Laura Cook- Trustee

Jo Slessor - Trustee

Daran Bland- Interim CFO

Sarah North- Deputy CFO- (Guest)

Jane Starbuck – Director of Growth/ Governance Lead (DoG)

Rebecca Jackson- Deputy DoE Mainstream/ TDSL- (Guest)

Paul Hill- DoE Mainstream- (Guest)

James Ellis- DoE SEND- (Guest)

Steve Scott- DoHR- (Guest)

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

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular the recently appointed new Trustee Laura Cook (LC).

LC proceeded to provide background information in relation to her skills set and experience as requested by the TB Chair.

2. Apologies for absence

Presenter: Clerk

Points to note

Leah Miller – Trustee- Work Commitments

Julia Lindley-Baker – Trustee- Annual leave

Peter Bell- CEO/AO- Illness

Apologies accepted.

Absent- Harpaul Dhindsa- Trustee

Quorum met.

The Chair noted that the term of office for Trustee Dr Julia Lindley-Baker will come to an end in August 2025.

He requested for a formal letter of gratitude to be sent on behalf of the Board.

Actions

ACTION 1: For a formal letter of gratitude to be sent to Trustee Dr Julia Lindley-Baker on behalf of the Board.

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

CIT Values Survey Outcomes

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.

Context was provided in relation to the CIT Values Survey Outcomes document.

This document reflects the organisations' alignment to its core values; it is a useful monitoring piece of the culture of the Trust.

A suggestion was made for an action plan in relation to the suggestions made within the 'What could CIT do better to strengthen alignment' section to be put in place, for this matter to be considered by the Board at their first meeting in September 2025, and for this exercise to be extended wider across the whole organisation.

Actions

ACTION 2: For an action plan in relation to the suggestions made within the 'What could CIT do better to strengthen alignment' section to be put in place.

For this matter to be considered by the Board at their first meeting in September 2025, and for the Board to decide what the next step are.

For this exercise to be extended wider across the whole organisation.

5. Minutes of last meeting- FOR APPROVAL

Presenter: Chair

Documents provided

Draft Trust Board Minutes 29th April 2025.

Resolutions

The Minutes of the 29th April 2025 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

Presenter: Chair

Documents provided

2024-25 Trust Board Action Log- Archived- Updated April 2025.

2024-25 Trust Board Action Log- Outstanding Actions only to include those of the 29.04.25 2025 meeting.

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

Two action points remain rag rated AMBER, none of high significance.

The DoE SEND provided relevant context related to action point 6 of the 28.01.25 TB meeting.

Trustees deemed this point complete and requested for the rag rating to be changed to GREEN (actioned at the meeting).

7. Reports from Committees - FOR INFORMATION

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

Documents provided

Summary Report- Education Scrutiny Committee Meeting 13 May 2025.

Verbal update from Board Committee Chairs.

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

F&E Committee

Estates reports were received. All is good and on track.

H&S was scrutinised; relevant assurances were provided by the H&S Trustee.

Focus was given to IT and the imminent changes as stated in the Academy Trust Handbook (ATH). These changes will have a financial impact on the organisation, in particular to the Trust's capital funds.

ES&SG Committee

In the absence of the Committee Chair, the above report was shared on the Onboard portal prior to this meeting. No comments made.

A&R Committee

The schools' concerns stated within the LSB Consolidated report were discussed, in particular the issues raised by POP and CAY, ongoing issues with SEND funding in general and the potential impact of this to CIT schools.

ELT feedback in relation to the Four Questions was received and discussed. Potential risks are already mitigated within the Risk Register and covered by current Risk Assessments.

The report issued by a third-party Internal Audit provider, commissioned in relation to an external concern, was also discussed. An action plan has been put in place. The committee will have oversight to ensure all actions are carried out and closed off.

Due Diligence being carried out prior to potential growth was a matter considered and discussed.

A three-year rolling Internal audit plan was agreed. The budget planning cycle is yet to be finalised.

People Committee

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

It was agreed for the HT at Osbournby Primary to join the committee at their first meeting of the academic year to share the school's experience related to the onboarding process to the Trust.

Scrutiny work was carried out in terms of staff attendance. A request made for granular analysis and reporting around the 'other' category to be carried out going forward.

Settlement Agreements and confidentiality clauses (NDAs) were discussed.

The job description for the role of Director of Secondary was approved.

Assurances were received in relation to BEA and the positive impact of recent changes (culture and staff attendance).

The potential impact in term of staff reduction at LIN was discussed.

In terms of *Risk*, the committee suggested for the A&R Committee to consider any potential risks related to the recruitment of staff but in particular around the recruitment of Headteachers.

Data relating to exit interview feedback will be further analysed going forward, specifically around the latest *bullying and harassment* legislation changes.

8. Management Accounts P7, P8 & P9 -FOR ASSURANCE / RESOLUTION

Presenter: F&E Committee Chair

Documents provided

24-25 P7 Management Accounts (SN MB)
 24-25 P8 Management Accounts (SN MB)
 24-25 P9 Management Accounts P4 (SN MB)

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

All Management Accounts were extensively scrutinised. All is on track to achieve a modest surplus figure.

There has been a slight movement in month between April and May. This is due to staffing movements and income.

Wider ELT conversations have taken place with the local authority in terms of the SEN funding. Relevant assurances were received by the committee.

The cash position is good. The budget surplus will contribute to the Trust's Reserves position at year end. Trustees suggested to increase the budget forecast figure relating to April's Support Staff pay increment and a lower Reserves figure in order to avoid a negative budgetary movement should the unions and the government opt for an increment higher than 3.5%.

It was agreed for this matter to be an agenda item for discussion at the first F&E Committee meeting in September 2025.

Trustees thanked the F&E Committee for their scrutiny and monitoring, the CFO and his team for the comprehensive, clear and transparent reporting and resolved to approve the Management Account for periods 7, 8 and 9.

Summary of: Management response

The ELT confirmed that a 3.5% for the Support Staff pay increment has been budgeted for. This percentage is subject to the government's final pay award.

Actions

ACTION 3: For the percentage level of the Trust's Revenue Reserves and the provision in relation to April's Support Staff pay increment to be an agenda item at the September 2025 committee meeting (option to increase the budget forecast figure and a lower Reserves figure in order to avoid a negative budgetary movement should the unions and the government opt for an increment higher than 3.5%).

Resolutions

To approve the Management Account for periods 7, 8 and 9.

Any votes against or abstentions with reasons

None.

9. Budget Update - FOR ASSURANCE

Presenter: CEO/CFO

Documents provided

Verbal update.

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

Update provided as part of agenda item 8 of this meeting.

10. Financial KPIs -FOR ASSURANCE

Presenter: CFO

Documents provided

Board level KPI Tracker 2024-25 (SN 23.06.25).

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

LEARN's financial position was scrutinised, discussed at length and its sustainability challenged.

The Board considered prudent for the F&E Committee to hold strategic discussions, have oversight, robust scrutiny and monitoring of LEARN's Management Accounts.

A suggestion was made for the two key KPIs reflected within the *KPI 25-26- Staffing of TRI* document to be added to the *Board level KPI Tracker 2024-25 document*.

Trustees requested for information within the *Board level KPI Tracker 2024-25 document* to be presented in graph format.

Summary of: Management response

The ELT advised that this is the first year that LEARN finds itself in this challenging financial position.

Significant work has been planned for next academic year. There is a positive outlook in terms of committed large projects and expected income.

An effective month by month monitoring plan is in place to ensure that any challenges in year are dealt with, LEARN staff are deployed across the Trust if required, and savings are made to avoid the current financial position.

A separate set of Management Accounts will be produced for LEARN as it is a separate trading unit.

Actions

ACTION 4: For the F&E Committee to have oversight, scrutiny and monitoring of LEARN's Management Accounts going forward.

ACTION 5: For the two key KPIs reflected within the *KPI 25-26- Staffing of TRI* document to be added to the *Board level KPI Tracker 2024-25 document*.

ACTION 6: For information within the *Board level KPI Tracker 2024-25 document* to be presented in graph format.

11. Provisional 2025-26 Budget - FOR APPROVAL

Presenter: CEO/ CFO

Documents provided

2025-26 Proposed Budget Report.

Appendix 1- Consolidated Comparison 25-26 vs 24-25.

Appendix 2- KPI 25-26- Staffing of TRI.

Appendix 3- Mainstream Falling Rolls.

Appendix 4- Proposed 3- Year ISB.

Resolutions Sheet 25-26 Budget.

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

The Chair noted the requirement for the approval of the 2025-26 Budget and the 3-Year BFR.

The Board emphasised that staffing targets are to be tailored to each individual school in the Trust.

The Board requested for the Agility Fund to be monitored by the F&E Committee to ensure robust governance.

F&E Committee members praised the excellent level of detail within the sensitivity analysis document as this has enabled the committee to conduct a robust scrutiny. The Trust is on a journey to a clearer financial strategy.

Members of the F&E Committee recommended the proposed 2025-26 for Board approval.

On that basis, Trustees resolve to approve the 2025-26 Budget, the Three-Year Forecast and gave permission for the Accounting Officer/CFO to submit to the DfE the 2025/26 BFR.

Trustees praised and thanked the CFO and his team for their comprehensive and clear reporting.

Summary of: Management response

Detailed reports have been provided.

Headline figures in relation to the Trust's estimated income, projected staffing and other cost were provided.

The previous proposed budget has been adjusted and revised, presented today as a balanced budget.

Sensible projections in terms of falling pupil rolls, estimates, and assumptions have been incorporated.

The proposed 2025-26 budget will generate a prudent surplus. Figures are not inclusive of RCT and Newark Orchard schools. It is based on the current size of the Trust.

The pooled surplus feeds into the contingency/agility fund within the Revenue Budget that supports any unforeseen costs (maternity payments, boiler repairs etc).

The Trust has set a very clear direction of travel, particularly in terms of staffing levels.

Some schools have met the set target; others are not far from doing so.

Challenging conversations have been held with CIT HTs; schools are fully on board.

Headline figures for 26-27 were detailed (projections reflect a surplus figure).

This surplus position rises in the 27-28 projections; modelling includes RCT as part of CIT.

Budgeted figures in relation to ICT costs include the mandatory requirements as stated by the ATH (Academy Trust Handbook) and the Digital Strategy.

A pragmatic approach is to be taken in terms of compliance and affordability.

Resolutions

To approve the 2025-26 Budget, the Three-Year Forecast and gave permission for the Accounting Officer/CFO to submit to the DfE the 2025/26 BFR.

Any votes against or abstentions with reasons

None.

Actions

ACTION 7: For the Agility Fund to be monitored by the F&E Committee going forward.

12. SEND Funding from LCC and implications FOR INFORMATION

Presenter: DoE SEND

Documents provided

Verbal update.

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

Trustees thanked the ELT for the re-assuring update.

Summary of: Management response

A follow up meeting with the LA has taken place.

Current SEND funding means that pupils will be disadvantaged as the Trust grows due to the LA's economies of scale factored into the funding formula.

The LA has agreed to the following:

- A funding formula review, this process will commence in September 2025. Any changes to the current formula will be reflected in April 2026.

- Interim SEND funding for individual cases (enhanced funding).

- Enhanced funding for Earl of Dysart pupils (on completion of Newton Bridge school's extension).

- Significant enhancement of the Earl of Dysart school building (will be treated as a new school).

- Significant improvement in the Earl of Dysart's site accessibility.

13. Governance Oversight and Assurance Framework- FOR INFORMATION

Presenter: DoG

Documents provided

Governance Oversight and Assurance Framework v2.

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

The previous Schedule of Assurances has undergone several consultation stages with all layers of governance. After a rigorous reviewing process, the refreshed version will be adopted and implemented for 2025-26.

Th Board noted that the *Governance Oversight and Assurance Framework* is a great document. However, there are some gaps in relation to *sources of evidence* which require addressing.

Trustees queried how this will be addressed and whether this will be carried out by Board Committees.

Summary of: Management response

The *Governance Oversight and Assurance Framework* is a working document. Some amendments may be necessary on completion of the CIT/RCT merger.

This document will be monitored collectively and reviewed termly.

The respective SOAP report is currently being updated.

LSB Chairs and LSB Clerks will receive the relevant training for the completion of their SOAP reports.

Assurances within the Executive Directors' reports will be linked to the *Governance Oversight and Assurance Framework*.

The DoG welcomed input from stakeholders in relation to *sources of evidence* and indicated that the next step is the assurance assignment to all Board Committees.

The *Governance Oversight and Assurance Framework* document is to be scrutinised at each Board Committee meeting in order for a decision to be made regarding the assignment of relevant assurances.

Actions

ACTION 8: For The *Governance Oversight and Assurance Framework* document to be an agenda item at each Board Committee meeting in order for a decision to be made regarding the assignment of relevant assurances.

14. Trust Growth Update- CIT/RCT merger

Presenter: DoG

Documents provided

Verbal update.

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

Trustees thanked the DoG for the relevant update.

Summary of: Management response

Relevant merger documentation has been received and is ready for Trustee signature.

There are two outstanding elements for the merger completion; one relates to the deal of adherence for the Football Foundation grant and the other one relates to Article 4B (benefiting local inhabitants).

The DfE considers the inclusion of Article 4B a requirement, the Trust's solicitors insist this is not necessary. Their strong case has been presented to the DfE who are currently considering it.

There are three possible outcomes although a decision is yet to be made by the DfE (the CIT/RCT merger has been delayed twice).

All documentation must be signed off by September 1st, 2025, to avoid a financial impact to the public purse.

15. Risk Register

Presenter: A&R Committee Chair

Documents provided

Risk Register June 2025.

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

The *Risk Register* is a live, generative, management and assurance tool.

The A&R Committee Chair noted that the *Risk Register* a working document which is in constant review. Board Committees raise additional/ potential risks which are reviewed at each A&R Committee meeting. Decisions are then made regarding their inclusion to the *Risk Register* or not.

The A&R Committee were content to recommend the *Risk Register June 2025*.

On that basis, Trustees resolved to approve the *Risk Register 2025*.

Resolutions

To approve the *Risk Register 2025*.

Any votes against or abstentions with reasons

None.

16. Trustees' visits to school/ Governance Development Day

Presenter: Chair

Documents provided

Linchfield Visit Report- 11.07.25

CIT Schools Trustee Visits Log 2024-25- Updated June 2025.1

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

The Chair noted the positive governance stakeholder attendance at this year's Governance Development Day and their invaluable input towards the revised assurance framework.

Trustees provided an update around their latest visits to their special interest schools as follows

GREE- Two visits have taken place.

A School Council meeting and an Awards assembly were attended.

Impressive achievements considering the challenges and difficult circumstances of some pupils in terms of their mental health and well-being.

The support received from the central team was praised, in particular by the HT. This has previously been fed back to the Board.

The school's Ofsted grading from its recent inspection was praised. All were encouraged to visit this impressive school.

LIN- Visit report provided prior to this meeting. The link Trustee had the opportunity to meet with the LSB Chair and the school's HT. Conversations with staff enabled assurance triangulation.

TUL- Visited by the TB Chair during their recent Ofsted inspection.

BEA- As above.

WDL- Visited by the TB Chair on behalf of the link Trustee (LM). A Leavers assembly and an Award presentation were attended. Very impressive visit, evidence that the school is well lead.

CSL- A visit has recently taken place. Feedback will be provided in due course.

POP- The Trustee link to this school advised that two visits have been scheduled and postponed by the school. A further visit will be scheduled for the Autumn term 2025.

17. School Improvement Tracker- FOR ASSURANCE

Presenter: Chair

Documents provided

School Improvement Tracker- June 2025.

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

Trustees acknowledged and praised TUL's recent Outstanding Ofsted grading. They recognised the staff's continuous hard work in spite the building work and the HT's resignation.

It was requested for data in relation to LEARN to be removed from the *School Improvement Tracker* document.

No further comments made.

Actions

ACTION 9: For data in relation to LEARN to be removed from the *School Improvement Tracker* document going forward.

18. Election of Chair and Vice Chair for 2025-26- FOR RESOLUTION

Presenter: Chair

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

The Trust Board Chair informed all present regarding his intention to step down from the role of Trust Board Chair and the role of Trustee at the Community Inclusive Trust.

Trustee Jo Slesser had expressed an interest in taking over the role of Trust Board Chair.

No nominations for the role of Vice Chair were received prior to this meeting.

Trustee Nathan Jeremiah expressed his interest in the role of Vice Chair.

Trustees unanimously resolved to approve for Trustee Jo Slesser to take over the role of Chair to the Trust Board and for Trustee Nathan Jeremiah to take over the role of Vice Chair to TB for academic year 2025-26.

Resolutions

To approve for Trustee Jo Slesser to take over the role of Chair to the Trust Board and for Trustee Nathan Jeremiah to take over the role of Vice Chair to TB for academic year 2025-26.

Any votes against or abstentions with reasons

None.

19. Clerking Matters- FOR INFORMATION

Presenter: Clerk

Documents provided

Draft Governance Meeting Dates 2025-26 (Trust Board and Board Committees).

Draft LSB Chairs and Clerks Meeting Dates 2025-26.

Director ID Checks- Step-by-Step Guide.

Changes to the Academy Trust Handbook for 2025-26- A Summary for Trustees.

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

Trustees noted that the Companies House ID verification process is straight forward unless the individual is already a director of several companies.

Summary of: Management response

All were reminded regarding Companies House' statutory requirements in relation to Directors' ID checks.

The ELT suggested for company secretarial advice to be sought, through the Trust's lawyers, should technical issues be experienced.

The proposed Governance meeting dates were discussed.

Trustees agreed for the full Trust Board meeting scheduled for Tuesday 16th September to remain as is, and for the Trust Board meeting scheduled for 28th April to be moved to Monday 27th April 2026.

Key headline information was provided in relation to the changes to the *Academy Trust Handbook for 2025-26*.

20. Chair's Closing remarks

Presenter: Chair

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

The TB Chair acknowledged that it is an appropriate time to move forward and conveyed his heartfelt gratitude.

The TB Vice Chair, seconded by the full Board of Trustees, stated that Dr Hopkins has been an inspirational Chairman who has made Trustees responsibilities clear, has provided guidance, support and has welcomed individuals' views.

Trustees thanked him for his hard work over the past six years.

Meeting closed at 2:59pm.