



Full Trust Board Meeting

CIT Academies

Tuesday, December 9, 2025, at 2:00 PM

Warwick House, Long Bennington

Minutes of the meeting

1. Welcome and check in

Presenter: Chair

Points to note

Present

Jo Slesser – Chair

Paul Boucher – Chair / CIT Members group

Kate Goodman – Trustee (via Teams)

Laura Cook – Trustee (via Teams)

Helen Drew-Bradley – Trustee

Pam Powell – Trustee

Alex Hole – Trustee

Simon Enstone- Trustee

Andrew Hutton- Trustee

Mark Knapton- Trustee

Megan Tomlinson- Guest

Peter Bell – CEO/AO

Daran Bland- Chief Finance and Operations Officer (CFOO)

Jane Starbuck- Director of Governance and Trust Growth (DoG)

Becky Jackson- Trust Designated Safeguarding Lead (TDSL)/ Deputy DoE Mainstream

Paul Hill – DoE Mainstream

James Ellis- DoE SEND

Nick Law- DoE Secondary

Steve Scott- DoHR

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

2. Apologies for absence

Presenter: Clerk

Points to note

Paul Tallentire – Trustee- Medical reasons

Nathan Jeremiah – Trustee – Work commitments

Harpaul Dhindsa – Trustee – Work commitments

Graham Gustard– Family reasons

Apologies accepted.

Quorum met.

3. Declarations of Interest

Presenter: Chair

Points to note

Agenda item 10 – ELT Pay

ELT members will leave the meeting at this point prior to any discussions.

4. Chair's opening remarks

Documents provided

CIT Values and Principles.

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

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting in particular today's guest (also a prospective Trustee) and the recently appointed Trustees.

For the benefit of the new Trustees introductions took place.

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

The Chair advised that Trustee Paul Tallentire is temporarily unable to fulfil his duties due to medical reasons and subsequent treatment. He has expressed his desire to continue in the role of Trustee at CIT and has requested for his position on the Trust Board to be held open and for communications with him to continue in order to remain updated.

Trustees indicated their unanimous agreement for Paul Tallentire's position on the Trust Board to be held open until he is fit to return and for communications to continue in order to provide Board updates.

Trustee Laura Cook has agreed to join the E&SG Committee for as long as it is required and will continue being a member of the People Committee.

Paul Tallentire's role of Safeguarding Trustee may be covered by another member of the Board going forward. Any school staff/ LSB safeguarding concerns will be reported directly to the TDSL.

The CEO's Performance Management review will take place on Wednesday 17th December 2025.

The Trust Board Chair will leave this meeting at 3:25pm to attend a mandatory course.

In the absence of the Trust Board Vice Chair, the Company Secretary and Governance Professional to the Board will close the meeting.

Resolutions

For Paul Tallentire's Trusteeship to be held open until he is medically fit to return to the Board and for communications to continue in order to provide him with relevant updates.

Votes against or abstentions with reasons

None.

5. Minutes of last meeting- FOR APPROVAL

Presenter: Chair

Documents provided

Draft Trust Board Minutes 16th September 2025.

Resolutions

The Minutes of the 16th September 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

2025-26 Trust Board Action Log- Outstanding Actions only to include those of the 15.07.25 meeting.

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

Trustees were encouraged to visit their special interest schools. Visits are to be arranged via the Governance Professional.

Trustees indicated they were content with the context provided.

Summary of: Management response

An update was provided in relation to action point 2 of the 15.07.25 meeting- The ELT have renewed their commitment to document clarity around all the areas of responsibility within the Trust, identifying functions that are centrally aligned and those that remain the responsibility of individual schools.

To support this, a live and dynamic document is being developed. This information will be maintained on an Excel spreadsheet, to ensure that it can be easily updated and shared across the organisation. A further update will be provided at the January 2026 TB meeting.

The following outstanding action points rag rated AMBER were reviewed and discharged by the ELT prior to this meeting:

15.07.25 Meeting Action point 6- Graph reporting format already included within monthly Management Accounts

28.01.25 Meeting Action point 1- The DoE SEND has actioned this point and has liaised with the school.

7. Annual Report and Final Accounts sign off - FOR RESOLUTION

Presenter: Chair of A&R Committee/ Chair of F&E Committee

Documents provided

CIT Final Accounts

CIT Final Report to Trustees

Risk & Audit Committee Meeting Report and Recommendation on Annual Accounts 24-25.

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

Thorough scrutiny of the above documents was carried out by the A&R and F&E Committees.

The CIT Final Accounts reflect a healthy financial position as highlighted within the *Risk & Audit Committee Meeting Report and Recommendation on Annual Accounts 24-25* document.

No issues were identified by the Auditors; a minor recommendation was made for a full review of the Fixed Asset Register (removal of old or obsolete items).

The A&R Committee and the F&E Committee are content to recommend the *CIT Final Accounts* for Trust Board approval.

Trustees praised the Trust's clean audit and noted that the narrative within the Financial Statements section (pages 46 -50) refers to 'Academy' as opposed to 'Academy Trust'.

It was suggested for an amendment to be made to reflect 'Academy Trust' prior to DfE submission, if possible.

Trustees resolved to approve and sign the *CIT Final Accounts* for 2024-25.

Resolutions

Trustees resolved to approve and sign the *CIT Final Accounts* for 2024-25.

Any votes against or abstentions with reasons

None.

8. Reports from Committees-FOR INFORMATION

Presenter: Chair

Documents provided

Verbal update.

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

ES&SG Committee

This committee met on October 7th when a decision was made to amend the scheduled meeting dates, so these align with reporting timelines.

The new Ofsted Framework was discussed and identified as potential risk to be brought to the attention of the A&R Committee.

Oversight of the Education KPIs within the Strategic Plan and the Governance Oversight Assurance Framework took place.

A report is expected from the Director of Secondary in relation to Sixth Form progress data.

Several policies and their renewal dates were discussed to include Supporting pupils with medical conditions, First Aid Statement, Suspensions and Exclusions and Trust-Wide Safeguarding Statement.

Trustees requested for an additional column to be added to the policy tracker to reflect the initials of the Trustees linked to the review of policies.

F&E Committee

In the absence of the F&E Committee Chair, a member of this committee provided an update.

The Strategic Plan KPIs, Operational Reports, Financial Reports, Accident Reporting and the Hybrid IT solution proposal were discussed.

The general consensus in relation to the IT proposal was to commence with a hybrid model and as a long-term plan, bring IT in-house.

People Committee

The first committee meeting of the year was held on November 25th.

The Committee's Term of Reference (TOR) was updated and approved.

Ongoing discussions continue in terms of *boundaries* so that the People Committee's activity doesn't divert away from *assurance* and into the day-to-day operational remit.

Solid assurances were provided in relation to schools' HR files audits and the Action Plan relating to the Schools Choice June Confidentiality Report 2025.

The People Committee Assurance reporting was refined by the DoHR and approved by committee members (duplicate or irrelevant assurances were removed).

Up-to-date Absence Management information was scrutinised and discussed

Two policies were approved (Disciplinary Policy and Whistleblowing Policy).

Focus is being given to the *Employment Rights* bill.

The Remuneration Committee reviewed, scrutinised and discussed the ELT Pay (agenda item 10 of this meeting).

A&R Committee

Two meetings have taken place to date.

The TB Chair joined the November meeting to ensure quorum was met.

CIT's Risk Register has been combined with RCT's. One additional risk has been incorporated relating to *traded* services.

The committee's Terms of Reference were updated and approved.

Discussions took place regarding the Internal Scrutiny provider's contract (tenders will go out at the end of the Spring Term 2026), the Strategic Plan KPIs (Finance) and the potential risk identified by the ES&SG Committee around the new Ofsted Framework. A mitigation has been put in place to reflect that the Trust will ensure staff undertake relevant training.

The 3 Year Internal Scrutiny programme will be established at the next committee meeting. Already agreed was the inclusion of Cyber Security.

All were encouraged to identify any areas for inclusion within the Internal Scrutiny programme and to bring them to the attention of the A&R Committee for consideration and discussion.

Summary of: Management response

The ELT confirmed that discussions have taken place in relation to policy end dates; policies are live and valid documents until a new version is approved.

Actions

Action 1: For an additional column to be added to the policy tracker to reflect the initials of the Trustees linked to the review of policies.

9. Strategic Plan and progress Report - FOR DISCUSSION

Presenter: CS

Documents provided

CIT Strategic Plan 2026-29.

Summary of Successes 2023-26.

CIT Strategic Plan 2026-29 Presentation.

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

Trustees praised the level of clarity and transparency in all assurance reporting particularly around financial matters.

Trustees queried whether annual targets are being set for all KPI's within the Strategic Plan; whether KPI 5's survey data would be split into different categories (Mainstream. SEND, Secondary) and whether a mechanism will be put in place for pupils to explicitly evidence the impact of their voice thorough survey feedback.

Trustees noted that further clarity is required regarding KPI 7 by way of an amendment to the current narrative or the addition of an explanation.

A query was raised regarding the possibility to create in-house behaviour management units/ systems that would allow specific and individual behavioural work with challenging pupils and a smooth and gradual re-integration to the school setting.

It was noted that Safeguarding KPIs do not appear within the Strategic Plan.

Summary of: Management response

Highlights were provided around the Trust's summary of successes within the past three years to include eighteen successful Ofsted inspections, the achievement of value for money through central procurement processes, the invaluable support provided by the Central Team, Trust sustainability and growth (four schools have already joined CIT, one expected to join in early 2026).

Strategic Plan

Trustees were requested to consider a one sentence 'Our Vision' statement for inclusion within the Strategic plan to reflect a legacy for future pupils, staff and communities. Feedback to be sent via the Company Secretary by no later than January 12th, 2026.

The ELT noted that KPIs within the Strategic Plan are written for the whole Trust. A tracker will be split into three sections for monitoring purposes (Mainstream, SEND, Secondary).

Annual targets sit behind the Strategic Plan; these targets are linked to the performance management of the ELT. Results from pupils' surveys are shared with schools as this helps drive the schools' performance moving forward. Pupil voice is also captured during LSB meetings and Governance Development events.

Conversations are taking place around potential changes to improve behaviour management in order to reduce suspensions and exclusions in schools across the Trust.

Safeguarding is considered a non-negotiable; it is tied in within the Ambition and Inclusion KPI section.

Schools and staff are held accountable for safeguarding.

Ambition and Inclusion

From the SEND perspective, KPIs within this section are set to ensure that all pupils, regardless of background, have access to high expectations and opportunities.

The Trust continues developing robust in-house tracking systems for academic and non-academic progress. The target is that 90% of pupils achieve '*above expected*' progress.

These KPIs will also ensure disadvantaged pupils have access to the best education.

Attendance is a challenge in SEND schools, but it is a significant challenge in SEMH schools. The aim is to achieve attendance levels at national average or above across all schools.

The Trust continues to work with its pupils to ensure they feel valued and feel positive about education; reviewing the curriculum to improve engagement and reduce suspensions/exclusions (these are currently slightly above national average).

The school review process (internal and external) focuses on inclusion and quality and alignment to the Ofsted framework and Trust priorities.

From the Mainstream perspective data is intensely scrutinised. SATs exams are taken at KS1 to accurately judge pupil progress.

There are a great range and level of disadvantaged pupils, 67% of *Pupil Premium* pupils. This is not only linked to poverty but to hidden disadvantages which do not include the traveller community.

School performance is variable and cohort dependent. Pupil progress is being tracked, as mentioned by the DoE SEND, robust tracking systems are being developed.

From the Secondary perspective, the context is significantly different.

Both selective secondary schools sit on the top 20% nationally for attainment. One of the two schools currently sits in 10th place across the East Midlands for GCSE attainment.

The percentage of suspensions and exclusions for both schools is below national average.

Current focus is to strengthen attendance for disadvantaged and SEND pupils; Yr 11 pupil retention into Sixth Form and the tracking of *Leavers*.

80% of *Leavers* move on to university, 20% move on to employment. Although more pupils are choosing to continue their further education locally to avoid university costs.

Employment engagement is harder, especially in Lincolnshire.

A progress tracker is under development. The Education team will present this document to the CEO in the first instance prior to presentation to the full Board.

3:26pm- The TB Chair left the meeting.

Workforce Excellence

The Trust aims to have a highly skilled and resilient workforce across the organisation.

It is important to have clear processes and embedded culture to ensure equality and inclusion.

KPIs in this section are linked to day-to-day HR processes and performance, focusing on CPD provision, highly effective staff induction, retention, staff happiness and wellbeing.

Staff absence has decreased year on year, a trend hoped to continue.

Culture and Community

The Trust aims to provide its pupils recognised opportunities for engagement with their communities, being part of community productions/activities, creating Community Champions (working with schools, retirement homes or nurseries), taking part in Dof E Awards or visiting places of worship.

The development of *Community Hubs/ Community Cafes* within CIT schools is being trialled initially at Greenfields and Newton Bridge Academy to enable pupils' hospitality skills, provide work experience and support engagement with parents and the wider community.

Sustainability, Digital and Operational Excellence

The trust views sustainability, digital, and operational KPIs as enabling factors rather than core priorities, ensuring the focus remains on delivering excellent pupil outcomes. Strong systems underpin quality education, so KPIs target digital readiness, financial resilience, and operational efficiency to drive stability, value for money, and long-term impact.

Key initiatives include achieving DfE digital standards, taking ownership of IT infrastructure, and leveraging real-time data for informed decision-making.

Financial KPIs emphasise clarity, governance, and strategic budgeting to maintain surpluses, build reserves, and support agility for future investment. Operational measures cover estates, safety, and compliance, ensuring safe, well-maintained environments and effective use of funding to reduce risk and improve school conditions.

The trust has demonstrated a mature and responsible approach to sustainability through initiatives such as solar panel installations, LED lighting upgrades, and energy monitoring, reinforcing our commitment to environmental stewardship and efficient estates management.

The Trust's sustainable growth KPI ensures that expansion is values-driven, strengthening the Trust while delivering clear benefits to new schools and enabling smooth integration.

Collectively, these KPIs provide Trustees with a transparent line of sight into performance, ensuring accountability and evidencing steady, meaningful progress towards educational excellence underpinned by operational strength, financial sustainability, and responsible growth.

Actions

Action 2: For further clarity to be provided within KPI 7 by way of an amendment to the current narrative or the addition of an explanation.

10. ELT Pay -FOR RESOLUTION

Presenter: Chair

Documents provided

ELT Pay.

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

3:46pm The ELT left the room.

The ELT pay document was thoroughly scrutinised, discussed and recommended by the Remuneration Committee for Trust Board approval.

Trustees explored the restructuring proposal favouring an Executive Headteacher model across the two secondary schools with day-to-day leadership retained in each.

Trustees queried if the proposed Executive Headteacher role would be advertised and filled internally or externally, if pension contributions are included within the proposed salary and whether this role has been benchmarked.

The current *Teacher* contracts for the CFOO and the DoG were challenged as these roles are not education based therefore should align with Support Staff contracts. Also challenged was the significant salary increase for the DoHR and DoG.

Trustees indicated they were content with the outcome of today's discussions and resolved to approve the ELT Pay proposals and the proposed Executive Headteacher role and relevant salary.

Summary of: Management response

As stated by the Academy Trust Handbook 2025, all salaries over £100,000 are to be approved by the full Trust Board.

A key discussion point is the potential leadership restructure for the two CIT secondary schools.

The preferred option is an Executive Head model overseeing both schools while maintaining their distinct identities, supported by day-to-day leadership in each school.

The salary for the proposed Executive Headteacher role would exceed £100,000 therefore requires Board approval.

The recommended salary excludes pension contributions; these are standard and nationally set.

Financial implications have been considered, with costs broadly balancing due to redistribution of resources.

The new post is intended to be filled internally, conversations are ongoing.

ELT members, apart from the DoHR, have an education background which enables them to step into a Headteacher role at short notice should it be required.

The role of the CFOO is currently on an interim basis. A decision will be made regarding a change of contract should this position become permanent.

The contract for the DoG will remain as is, as the role holder is significantly involved in education and is also the SEND Lead for the Midlands.

ELT salary proposals have been benchmarked and align with sector standards.

Further work is required on organisation-wide benchmarking, proposals will be presented for Board approval and ratification. Current benchmarking is carried out by median; the median size of Trust is four and a half schools.

Resolutions

To approve the ELT Pay proposals as follows:

- Deputy DoE Mainstream- An increase in range from L31 to L36 (£108,202 to £122,306), equal to the scale for the Directors of Education, from September 2025, starting on L31. The role title will also change to Director of Safeguarding.
- DoE SEND- Pay progression within existing range to L36.
- DoE Mainstream- Progression within range to L36.
- DoG- An increase in range to L25 - L30 (£93,424 to L30 £105,595), from September 2025, starting on L25. This is currently a temporary role.
- DoHR- an increase in range to Grade 19 to 20 (Points 54 [£95,022], to 60 [£106,679]).
- Executive Headteacher role- An increase to L36 range.

Any votes against or abstentions with reasons

None.

11. Management Accounts - FOR APPROVAL

Presenter: CEO/ ELT Members

Documents provided

25-26 P1 Management Accounts (SN/MB)

25-26 P2 Management Accounts (SN/MB)

24-25 P12 Management Accounts (SN/MB)

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

All Management Accounts were extensively scrutinised by the F&E Committee and therefore recommended for Trust Board approval.

A query was raised regarding the reason behind the significant decrease in the level of Revenue Reserves since period 1.

Trustees indicated they were content to approve the 2024-25 P12 Management Accounts and Periods 1 and 2 of the 2025-26 Management Accounts.

Summary of: Management response

The decrease in the level of Revenue Reserves from Period 1 to Period 2 is due to an accounting timing issue. The incoming contributions of the RCT Revenue Reserves are yet to be recognised within the CIT accounts.

The Trust's level of revenue Reserves will be over 5.2% once RCT's Final Audited Account are received and the Revenue Reserves contributions are recognised.

Resolutions

To approve the 2024-25 P12 Management Accounts and Periods 1 and 2 of the 2025-26 Management Accounts.

Any votes against or abstentions with reasons

None.

12. Reserves Policy- FOR APPROVAL

Presenter: CFO

Documents provided

CIT Reserves Policy December 2025 Draft

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

Clarity was requested by a new Trustee regarding the use of the Trust's Revenue Reserves in previous years and how this spend is tracked.

With no further comments, Trustees resolved to approve the *CIT Reserves Policy December 2025*.

Summary of: Management response

The Trust's level of Revenue Reserves had not reached 5% previously.

A percentage of Revenue Reserves had previously been allocated to an agreed strategic spend. This is at the time where the agreed level of Revenue Reserves was set at 3%.

All Revenue Reserves expenditure is agreed and ratified by the full Board of Trustees.

This year the DfE recommend a level of Revenue Reserves of 5%. CIT is currently in a position where the DfE recommended percentage can be achieved.

Resolutions

To approve the *CIT Reserves Policy December 2025*.

Any votes against or abstentions with reasons

None.

13. Risk Register - FOR APPROVAL

Presenter: Chair/ DoG

Documents provided

The *CIT Risk Register* was shared electronically with all Trustees on 26.11.25.

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

For the benefit of the new Trustees, the A&R Committee Chair advised that the Risk Register is a dynamic document which is discussed, together with any potential risks raised by all Board Committees, at every A&R Committee meeting.

With no further comments or questions, Trustees resolved to approve the *CIT Risk Register*.

Summary of: Management response

The CIT Risk Register was extensively scrutinised by the A&R Committee.

This document has been updated and includes all the potential risks the organisation is aware of and their relevant mitigations. Risks and mitigations are stressed tested by the ELT and the Internal Scrutiny provider.

The Trust's Risk Register is a comprehensive live document which is formally reviewed three times a year. However, should a potential risk arise further mitigations will be put in place as required.

An annual report on the Trust's approach to risk was produced and presented to the Audit and Risk Committee. It was suggested for this document and the Internal Scrutiny provider's report on risk, to be uploaded to the Onboard portal, for the benefit of Trustees outside of the A&R Committee.

Resolutions

To approve the *CIT Risk Register December 2025*.

Any votes against or abstentions with reasons

None.

Actions

ACTION 3: For the annual report on the Trust's approach to risk and the Schools Choice report on risk processes to be made available on the Onboard portal.

14. Governance Update- FOR INFORMATION

Presenter: Chair

Documents provided

Verbal update.

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

All were advised regarding the October 2025 update to the Academies Trust Handbook 2025 in relation to the Treasury guidance for public sector exit payments (DfE approval required for employees earning over £174,000) and the use of confidentiality clauses associated with severance payments (which can no longer prevent an individual from making disclosures in the public interest).

Further updates were provided regarding CST's exploration of effective governance models, Gen Z Governance, CST's Next Generation Governance (and relevant conferences which will be attended by the DoG and CS), the streamlining of all documentation presented to the Board and its committees and the re-organisation of the Onboard portal in the coming months.

15. Chair's Closing remarks

Presenter: Chair

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

On behalf of the TB Chair, the CS thanked all for their attendance and participation at today's meeting and wished all a very happy Christmas.

Meeting closed at 4:16pm.

FINAL