

Meeting Minutes

Trust Audit, Finance and Resources Committee

Wednesday 13 March 2019, Cranbrook Education Campus

In attendance:

Alex Walmsley –Chair (AW)	Moira Marder (MM)
Philip Bostock (PB)	Beccy Mitchell (RM)
Richard Jacobs (RJ) –present until 18:00	
Sue Pym – Director of Finance (SP)	
Josie Medforth –Director of Operations (JM)	
Fran Metay - Clerk (FM)	

Meeting Minutes

Item Ref	Business	Action
1.	<p>Welcome and Attendance</p> <p>The meeting opened at 17:00. AW welcomed all present. Apologies were received from Rob Bosworth. RJ had notified he would need to leave at 18:00.</p>	
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>AW's role at First Federation Trust was noted. No other interests were declared.</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes of Previous meetings</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 23.01.2019 were approved as a full and accurate record. Actions from the previous meeting were reviewed; all had been completed. FM clarified that the new Serial and Unreasonable Complaints policy would now be presented to the March Board meeting, rather than the May P&S Committee meeting, to fast track implementation.</p>	
4.	<p>Matters Arising</p>	
4.1	<p><u>Reduction in the number of AF&R Committee meetings in 2019-20.</u> A reduction from five to four meetings had been proposed as part of the Autumn 2018 governance review to offset the planned increase in full Board of Trustees meetings next year. In view of the volume of business to be conducted and the current pace of growth, and to limit instances of financial approval having to be sought outside of meetings, all agreed on the value of retaining all five AF&R Committee meetings next year. FM to adjust the draft 2019-20 calendar accordingly.</p>	FM
4.2	<p><u>Expenses for governors.</u> The chair of CEC's LGB had queried the introduction of an expenses budget for governors to eliminate financial barriers to joining TWMAT LGBs, particularly for parents with limited means. SP confirmed that provision already exists for governors to recoup expenses, although few claims tend to be made. Whilst the group was reluctant to create a specific budget, which might erode the current culture of good will, all agreed the Trust should make its commitment to fair access clear by stating in advertisements for governors that financial help can be made available if the costs involved in discharging the role are a concern. At this stage, there are no plans for the Trust to provide hardware for governors. RJ suggested that claims are sent to the Clerk to the Trust to facilitate monitoring.</p>	
4.3	<p><u>Lin Donnellan.</u> In view of Lin's business, rather than educational, expertise, it has been proposed that she switches from the P&S Committee to the AF&R Committee. All agreed to co-opt Lin onto the group, with effect from the next meeting. FM to formalise the move.</p>	FM

	<p>Estates Management (new risk) –JM noted that with the now significant size of the Trust’s estate, the ageing fabric of non PFI buildings and planned refurbishment/building works, the workload and level of risk to the Trust warranted the creation of an Estates Manager post. After consideration, the group accepted the need for this appointment, and the cost effectiveness of recruiting rather than using external consultancy services.</p> <p>SP confirmed that our current charging structure to the Plymouth schools accurately covers the cost of the support provided by central services. MM noted that it is in fact the addition of the Plymouth schools which places the Trust in a financial position to consider the Estates Manager post at this time, for the benefit of all schools within TWMAT.</p>	
Items for Approval		
9.	<p>School Condition Funding Capital Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The size of the Trust has now made it eligible for School Condition Funding (SCF). This will be financially more favourable than bidding for ESFA Condition Improvement Funding. • The SCF funding is allocated annually and based on a set formula, which will guarantee funding for the Trust year on year. However, the funding formula is complex and it is difficult to assess at this stage what the Trust will receive. • The Trust Capital Programme aligns with the priorities identified in the Trust Asset Management Plan, drawn up in consultation with headteachers and previously reviewed by the AF&R Committee. • This will be the platform for a five year capacity and maintenance programme linked to Trust budgeting, which will be developed by the new Estates Manager. This programme will capture works linked to condition as well as remodelling within school buildings to meet the changing curriculum/growing pupil numbers. • It was noted that the £4 million awarded for the refurbishment of Whipton Barton would require shrewd management to ensure the school gets maximum benefit from the available monies bearing in mind the significant improvements needed. • JM confirmed that prioritisation of ACOs and timescales for the completion of works in PFI schools had improved as a result of the Trust taking over management of the PFI contract. The Committee was content to approve the proposed Trust Capital Programme. 	
10.	<p>Policies Update</p> <p>The group approved JM’s suggested updates to policies due for review: Freedom of Information, LGPS Discretions, Gifts and Hospitality, Due Diligence for New Schools, Conflict of Interest. FM to proceed with making the revisions to the policy documents.</p> <p>The Trust Finance Policy is due for review on 31st March 2019. Due to current commitments, and to give the document due attention to ensure it is fit for purpose across all Trust schools, SP proposed to make revisions over the Summer. The Committee supported this proposal.</p>	<p>FM</p> <p>SP</p>
Items for Information		
11.	<p>PFI Update</p> <p>Rachel Carter, PFI Contract Manager, took up post on 14th January 2019 and great strides have already been made in improving standards of service and in developing our relationship with partners within the contract. David Johnson, external PFI advisor, was commissioned from 1st March 2019 to take forward the recommendations of his original report. The Committee confirmed its support for the PFI Working Group’s direction, outlined in Part B of the minutes. AW shared plans for Andy Mulcock to add his PFI experience to the working group.</p>	

12.	<p>Compliance Report The Committee noted the contents of the report and the major progress made in gathering information. JM felt confident the quality of information would continue to improve.</p>	
13.	<p>Independent Internal Audit The findings of the audit were noted and felt to be appropriately cautious but not cause for concern. SP shared her intention to request a focus on Whipton Barton in the next audit.</p>	
14.	<p>Growth <u>Whipton Barton Federation</u> –Joined the Trust on 1st March 2019. SP tabled FMGS return questions linked to the academisation of the federation. SP clarified this was standard procedure. The Committee authorised SP to respond on behalf of the Trust. Discussions relating to other schools are reported in Part B of the minutes.</p>	SP
Any Other Business and Next Meeting Date		
	<p>Any Other Business –none was raised.</p> <p>Date of next meeting: Wednesday 05 June 2019, 17:00, Cranbrook Education Campus.</p> <p>The meeting closed at 19:05.</p>	

Signed by the Chair of the Committee:

Date: