

Meeting Minutes
Trust Audit, Finance and Resources Committee
Wednesday 17 March 2021, *Virtual Meeting*

In attendance:

Alex Walmsley –Chair (AW)	Rob Bosworth (RB)
Philip Bostock (PB)	Charlotte Davies (CD) – Director of Resources
Moira Marder (MM)	Sue Pym (SP) – Director of Finance
Beccy Mitchell (RM)	
Melody Floyd - Clerk to the Trust (MF)	

Meeting Minutes

Item Ref	Business	Action
1.	<p>Welcome and Attendance</p> <p>AW welcomed everyone to the virtual meeting. RJ was not in attendance, apologies were received retrospectively.</p> <p>AW noted that BM was in attendance for her final meeting before stepping down as a Trustee.</p>	
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>No new declarations were raised.</p>	
3.	<p>Minutes of Previous meetings</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 20.01.20 were approved as a full and accurate record.</p> <p>The actions from the previous meeting were reviewed and marked as complete. MM confirmed that the Pay Policy wording had been added to the agenda for discussion at the next Executive Meeting.</p>	
4.	<p>Matters Arising</p> <p><u>All Saints Sports Hall Update</u></p> <p>CD gave an update on the current situation with the ASAP Sports Hall. The Trust had engaged external consultants to assist with the project management and to review costings etc. There had been some helpful discussions with DfE contacts about how to progress the funding application and the support that the Trust could expect to receive. A full record of the discussion is in Part B of the Minutes.</p> <p>RB queried if the Sports Hall was a large enough risk to be included as a separate line on the Strategic Risk Register. CD noted that this was not currently included but that it should be added. It was agreed to add All Saints Sports Hall as a specific Risk on the Strategic Risk Register. Action: CD to update the Risk Register to include this.</p>	CD

For Monitoring

5.	<p>Trust Financial Update</p> <p>SP gave an update on the current financial status.</p> <p>The turnover, with QE having joined the Trust would now be £52m for the year. This does require the separate audit risk committee, SP noted that it was important for the new committee to meet at least once before the end of the academic year.</p> <p>A full record of the discussion is in Part B of the minutes.</p>	
6.	<p>LGB Finance & Resources Minutes</p> <p>The minutes of the recent LGB meetings were reviewed. MF confirmed that Marine Academy would move to summary sheets from the next meeting.</p> <p>No specific points of action for Trustees had been identified.</p> <p>AW noted that the student number issues facing Exwick Heights were common to primaries at the current time.</p>	
7.	<p>Gender Pay Gap Statutory Report</p> <p>SP noted that there were two charts within the report, one for teachers and one for support staff. Looking at the groups separately the Trust was within the national average. Looking at the workforce as a whole it was not. SP advised that the extra graphs helped to give a better understanding of the current position.</p> <p>SP noted that the Trust was doing everything that it should be and was currently in line with national figures.</p> <p>No concerns were raised.</p> <p>Action: SP to submit the Gender Pay Gap report and ensure it is on the website.</p>	SP
8.	<p>Capital Programme 2020/21</p> <p>SP confirmed that a small amount of funding was being carried forward.</p> <p>There was a degree of work in the Trust’s approach going forwards given the change of schools within the Trust.</p> <p>The allocation from April 2021 would not be received until April so the amount had not yet been confirmed.</p> <p>There was an option to optimise the potential of the QE site and this was likely to be a future topic for discussion.</p>	
9.	<p>Strategic Risk Register/ Risk Impact Review</p> <p>CD noted that, due to the timing of the meeting, the Strategic Risk Register had not been updated since the Board Meeting on 24.02.21. The register would be updated to include the iteration for the ASAP Sports Hall and to consider other Capital issues and projects.</p>	

	<p>CD was also aware that the Educational Outcomes section was due for a more thorough review ahead of the next meeting of the Education Committee.</p> <p>RB noted that it would be positive if some lines were removed when the Strategic Risk Register was updated, i.e. management arrangements. The importance of the Risk Register remaining strategic was agreed.</p> <p>PB noted that the Growth Plan (item 2) needed updating to refer to the Growth Committee being formed. CD confirmed that this would be changed. Action: CD to send the updated Risk Register to RB, DH and AW for review prior to full publication.</p>	<p>CD</p>
For Approval		
<p>10.</p>	<p>Policies</p> <p>Complaints Policy – CD noted that this would also go to the next meeting of the Education Committee for review. The main changes were around the wording of the trustee review stage of the process.</p> <p>RB noted that, as there had been a high level complaint from an LGB Governor around the current process, it would be good practice to get a LGB Governor to review and test the toolkit as well as the Trustees. CD confirmed that the toolkit was in progress and the intention was to roll it out to clerks and complaints co-ordinators initially. It was agreed that the Governor input would be very helpful. Action: MF and CD to liaise and also to make contact with the Governor (MBS). AW noted that it would be good for the Complaints Toolkit to be uploaded to Board Effect so that it was shared with Trustees as well as LGBs.</p> <p>AW noted that the risk for Trustees was that they do not see the complaints in practice as they were not dealing with them direct. It was also agreed that it was only once policies were used that they were seen as fit for purpose.</p> <p>All other changes to policies were agreed. Action: MF to publish and circulate policies following the usual procedure.</p> <p>AW noted that the approval process for policies in the future needed to be discussed and agreed at a future meeting.</p>	<p>MF CD MF</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>School Resource Management Self-Assessment Tool (SRMT)</p> <p>SP updated on the annual requirement to submit the SRMT. This is the official DfE self-assessment tool. SP confirmed that the Trust’s SRMT had been completed in the Autumn and had been submitted. SP would also be submitting self-assessments for QE and ASAP.</p> <p>SP noted that the checklists were good to read from time to time, and did serve as a reminder of areas that could be improved.</p> <p>SP noted the requirements for the new Audit & Risk Committee going forwards now that Trust turnover exceeds £50m.</p> <p>SP noted that the latest KPI workings were included. They tended to reflect aspirations and there would be remodelling to ensure that work was completed within the parameters of the budget.</p>	

	<p>AW queried if there was any comeback on the submissions. SP noted that sometimes points were picked up on by the ESFA. AW thanked SP for her work on this.</p> <p>RB left the meeting at 18:00</p>	
For Discussion		
12.	<p>Related Party Transactions – Marine Academy Plymouth (MAP)</p> <p>SP noted that this item related to a transaction at MAP Secondary and predated Academisation. MAP had a Member, who was also a local Councillor which made their usage of the EWO and School Library services from Plymouth City Council a related party transaction. SP confirmed that these could not be submitted through the ESFA and, despite demonstrating best value, remained unresolved.</p> <p>A letter had been received from the ESFA who did not accept that the process had been followed. As this was historical there was nothing that the Trust could do about it, but it was problematic.</p> <p>SP noted that the Trust currently had no related party transactions apart from Apprenticeships from Exeter College which was well documented.</p> <p>SP also noted that Fusion School Services, the Trust’s Subsidiary company, were automatically classed as a related party. There would be some work required to approve this as a novel transaction and this would be picked up with the auditors in due course.</p> <p>AW noted that related party transactions were an ongoing bureaucratic problem that was being dealt with in the best possible way, however there was a risk that another letter could be received at some point in the future.</p>	
13.	<p>Audit Committee Terms of Reference and Membership</p> <p>AW noted that this was a work in progress and that the Terms of Reference were not for sign off at this stage. AW’s intention was to review these between now and the summer term. AW noted that starter terms of reference could be a way forward and that these could be developed over time as the Committee commenced.</p> <p>The intention was to have an initial Audit Committee meeting during the Summer term. Trustees would be appointed and an independent Chair would be needed by September. It was important that the new Committee was not a duplicate of the Finance & Resources Committee and its membership, although a degree of overlap would be acceptable.</p> <p>AW was unclear whether members of LGBs could be co-opted to the Audit Committee without them being Trustees. SP had noted that JF, the Chair at St James, was a potential to be Co-opted. PB noted that this was potentially an interesting solution and agreed that it was important to get the correct people around the table.</p> <p>It was agreed that there was a risk with more committees that more Trustees were needed to populate them, however others, who are not Trustees, could be co-opted.</p> <p>MM would do some investigations around the strength and depth of the St James Governing Body. This would be followed up at the Search, Pay & Conditions Committee on 25.03.21.</p>	

	<p>PB noted the importance of getting the terminology correct within the Terms of Reference, particularly the names of the Committees – Finance & Resources and Audit & Risk.</p> <p>PB also queried if the Growth Function on Page 3 should be in the Terms of Reference for the Growth Committee rather than the Audit committee. AW noted the importance of remaining joined up. PB noted that having the Chairs of the other Committees on the Growth Committee would be good practice to ensure financial input at all times.</p> <p>Action: PB to let MF have any further comments on the draft Terms of Reference.</p>	<p>PB</p>
For Information		
<p>14.</p>	<p>Growth Update</p> <p>PB noted that the next meeting of the Growth Working Group would be on 30.03.21. The Group would be reviewing some initial information on two Plymouth schools who could potentially join the Trust.</p> <p>PB confirmed that the Growth Committee would talk about Primary schools if any opportunities arose, however currently none were currently identified. MM noted that the RSC were keen for the Trust to grow the number of Primaries in the future.</p>	
<p>15.</p>	<p>PFI Update</p> <p>AW noted that the next PFI Working Group was on 22.03.21 and that there had been a meeting on 03.03.21.</p> <p>CD updated on the current critical time in the PFI project with working towards the 01.04.21 implementation date.</p> <p>A full record of the discussion is in Part B of the Minutes.</p> <p>It was agreed to share Fusion Board Meetings with the AFR Committee going forwards.</p> <p>Action: MF to upload Fusion Minutes to Board Effect and send the link.</p>	<p>MF</p>
Any Other Business and Next Meeting Date		
	<p>AW noted that it may be possible to hold the first Audit Committee following a shortened AFR Committee meeting. This would be discussed at the Pay & Conditions Committee.</p> <p>AW thanked BM for all of her contributions to the committee and the Trust over the years. It was agreed that everyone was extremely grateful for everything BM had done. BM agreed that it had been an interesting journey and noted how the Trust had transformed since SP and CD had joined.</p> <p>Date of next meeting: Wednesday 12 May 2021, 5.00pm</p> <p>The meeting closed at 18:37</p>	

Signed by the Chair of the Committee: 

Date: 12.05.21