

Audit Committee

Minutes: 13 November 2019
9.30am at Landscope House
A/1/19

Present: Mr Peter Bethel

In attendance: Ms Nicky Dunford – Chief Executive Officer
Miss Becky Ames – Clerk
Mr Matt Matthew – Trust Business Manager

In the absence of Mr Fisher and Mrs Walters, the Committee was not quorate. Therefore any decisions would either be put to the Board for approval or confirmed at the next quorate meeting of the Committee.

Welcome: Peter Bethel welcomed all.

Apologies: Mrs Fiona Walters
Mr Mike Fisher

Declaration of Business Interests:

Mr Peter Bethel (The Chair) declared that he has a relative that is MTA at Harbertonford and PB is also a Trustee of Totnes Show
Bishop Fleming has requested that all Business Interests involving charities and companies need to be listed.

ACTION – All Directors to submit new RBI – Clerk to provide documents at Directors meeting
09.12.19

1. **Minutes of the previous meeting**
Minutes of 8 May 2019 –signed as approved copy.
2. **Matters Arising**
 - 2.1 **Item 2.2 Pupil Premium impact statements**
Chair to report on meeting with Trust Business Manager (TBM) – deferred until the next meeting.
ACTION The Chair and the TBM to meet to discuss.
 - 2.2 **Item 9 – Governance**
The Committee noted that all issues relating to the educational provision are within the remit of the Standards & Curriculum Committee.
3. **Scheme of Delegation and Committee's Terms of Reference**
The Committee reviewed the Committee's Constitution and Terms of Reference; the following changes will be submitted to the Board for approval on 9 December 2019.

Item 3.1 The Chair suggested that The TBM attends all meetings going forward; ND recommended that the TBM attends for the first half of each meeting. The Committee agreed with ND. The Agenda will be made to ensure that any reports which the TBM needs to present or items that requires his input takes priority at the start of the Agenda.

Item 6.6. The Chair of the Committee is the named officer responsible under Risk Management.

Item 6.8. The Chair suggested that a protocol for all new schools should be added to the Trust Risk Register. ND advised PB that currently they produce a Due Diligence report that would find and assess any risks of the new school and look at the impact it may have on The Link Academy Trust. The Committee agreed that the Due Diligence Report should be added to the Trust Risk Register as an Appendix. All newly completed Due Diligence Reports should be presented to the Audit Committee.

The Committee noted that the Trust is seeking new Trustees via Academy Ambassadors with a background in Finance.

4. **2018-19 Annual Report and Financial Statements**

4.1 The Committee reviewed the Annual Report and confirmed that this is an accurate record. The Committee reviewed the Financial Statements prior to their review by the F&GP Committee. This document includes the Trust's Value for Money report. The Chair advised the Committee that Bishop Fleming were asked not to attend due to the thorough report given at the Audit Clearance meeting. The Chair reported that there are currently no significant issues for the Trust and that a clean Audit was produced. The Protocol Annual Report and Financial Statements document to be amended to include The Chair of Audit at the Audit Clearance Meeting at early November. ACTION - IJC to amend existing Report. ACTION - Clerk to forward all Directors the Bishop Fleming Financial Overview Report.

4.2 **Bishop Fleming Management Report**
The Committee reviewed the Report and The Chair reported that again there are no significant management issues. The TBM will address the responses that Bishop Fleming have requested. ACTION - The TBM to provide Management responses to this report.

| EAS Recommendations | Trust Management Response |
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| Register of interests – governance. We recommend that Trustees ensure ALL potential interests are reported to the Trust, who can then determine if they are relevant for recording on the register. We also recommend that the register on your website is not dated and treated as a live document. | Noted and will be a standing agenda item at all future Board meetings. The date on the register held on the website has been removed. |
| Fixed Assets. We recommend that the review for additions is completed after any credits have been posted. | Noted and will be reviewed on a termly basis. |
| Year end transactions. We recommend that bank transactions are dated on the date they are actioned (i.e. BACS date, date cheque written). This will ensure year end creditors and bank balances are correct. We recognise that resolution to this point will be linked to the payroll point above. We have discussed with Matt and will | Noted, following the EAS visit in October 2018 where the issues around the posting of payroll was discussed we understood that we were following the guidance provided. The only month this is an issue is the August payroll and the Trust will seek further guidance in advance of posting |

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| provide guidance on how to adjust this. | |
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The Chair raised concerns with The CEO and The TBM with their current and upcoming increases in work load due to the additional schools which are joining the Trust. The CEO reassured The Chair that there has been further development within the Central Team this term. The CEO has established an Education Improvement Team to manage the increase in work load. The TBM has also been developing the Finance Team and will continue to monitor the situation. The Chair was satisfied with this response.

The Chair referred to the Bishop Fleming Financial Overview Report and asked for some clarification on school deficits. These questions were answered by the TBM and The Chair was satisfied with the answers provided.

The Chair PB advised the Committee that he met with the External Audit Service without officers present.

5. **Internal Auditor**

5.1 **Payroll – IA Report**

The Chair praised the Internal Auditors for conducting a thorough report. The Chair informed the Committee that there are currently no issues regarding Payroll.

The Chair of the Committee recommends the extension of Griffin Accounts Audit for a further two years. This will be recommended to the Board for Approval on 09.12.19.

5.2 **Internal Audit Programme 2019-20**

The Committee discussed the Internal Audit programme for 2019-20.

The Chair recommends the following for Audit which will be recommended to the Board for approval on 09.12.19.

Term 1 Governance.

Term 2 Risk Management.

Term 3 Financial Budgets and Governance.

6. **Academies Financial Handbook**

The Committee is asked to note the Chair's (Isabel Cherrett) report which was discussed by the Board on 7 October 2019 and, in particular, to review the role and responsibilities of the Audit Committee in the 2019 Academies Financial Handbook (AFH)

Noted The Committee members will need to Review the AFH in order to update its role as a Committee. The Committee will report back and discuss at the next Audit meeting.

ACTION – Audit Committee to review AFH.

7. **Risk Management and Trust Risk Register**

The Committee reviewed the agreed sections of the Register and the new risks that have been added. The Committee agreed that current impact scores remain appropriate.

The Committee discussed the Catering Risks and identified that the Risk Owner needs to be at local level i.e. kitchen manager/academy head. The school should take responsibility for the checking of equipment. To be reported to the school.

The Committee identified the need to amend the user notes and add the scoring Legend to the front of the document.

ACTION - IJC to add a Risk Scoring Legend to the Trust Risk Register.

8. **Safeguarding**

8.1 **Single Central Register checklists**

The Chair referred to the SCR supporting documents and accepted these. The following SCR checks were received.

- Bearnese
- Broadhempston
- Cheriton Bishop
- Diptford
- Drakes
- Harbertonford
- Hennock
- Landscope
- Otterton
- Stoke Gabriel
- Tedburn

ACTION – ND TBM to produce a checklist for the next meeting to include all systems in place for Health and Safety and Record checks. The Chair to advise The CEO and TBM of what he would like included.

8.2 Trust Safeguarding Action Plan

For discussion - CEO informed the Committee that this is currently in the course of preparation.

9. Health and Safety

The TBM reported that the Health and Safety Officer role is currently under review. The TBM will be meeting with the Health and Safety Officer to review her annual plan of visits in line with other H&S checks.

10. Business Continuity Plans

The TBM updated the Committee that all BCPs are in date and current.

11. Policy List

The Policy List can be seen as a supporting Document. The Chair is satisfied with the List and how it is used to monitor when a Policy needs to be updated. The Chair is aware that the Policy List is a working document.

12. Date of future meetings

Wednesday 22 January 2020

Wednesday 13 May 2020

Issued: 13.11.2019 BA