



THE AUDIT COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

PUBLIC MINUTES

Date	:	Thursday, 18 November 2020	
Time	:	16:00	
Venue	:	Virtual via Zoom	
Present	:	Asha Choolhun	Trustee / Chair
		Mohammed Mamun	Trustee
		Phillip Minns	Trustee
In attendance	:	Tom Canning	Chief Executive Officer
		Sarah Lack	Deputy CEO and Headteacher of Cleves
		Steven Lock	Chief Finance and Operating Officer
		Rose Nelson	Finance Specialist
		Clare Muti	Internal Auditor
		Lance Philpott	Clerk

The Code of Conduct for Trustees requires Trustees to be honest and open with regard to conflicts of interest (either real or perceived). Trustees must not use their position for personal gain in business, political or social relationships. Therefore, a Trustee who has, or may be perceived to have, such a personal interest in a particular matter under consideration should declare that interest, withdraw from all discussions relating to it and take no part in any vote on such matter.

Items marked * are those in which a majority of Trustees may have an interest because of some shared attribute. When considering these items, Trustees should aim to achieve a balanced view, paying particular attention to the sources of information and advice, and remind themselves of their duties as Trustees and to act in the public interest.

1. MEETING OPENING

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
- 1.2 No apologies were received.
- 1.3 Quoracy was confirmed.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS, PECUNIARY OR OTHERWISE IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest made on any items on the agenda.

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3. CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERSHIP LIST

- 3.1 There were no changes to the constitution or membership.
- 3.2 Asha Choolhun unanimously re-elected as chair.
- 3.3 Attention was drawn to **Appendix 1** where Trustees have been asked to review the committee's Terms of Reference. As it was agreed last year no changes were deemed necessary.

4. PUBLIC MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING AND ACTIONS ARISING

- 4.1 The minutes of the Audit Committee held on Tuesday, 7 July 2020 were **AGREED** and **RATIFIED** as a correct record.
- 4.2 There were no actions arising from the previous minutes.

5. MAIN BUSINESS

- 5.1 To receive the Summer Term Internal Audit Report from the Internal Auditor.

5.1.1 INTRODUCTION:

CM presented the IAR which includes all 7 schools and Central. This was a top-level review looking at Fixed Assets, Payroll and HR and also the Purchasing Cycle. The Autumn audit is planned for November looking at Central Purchasing.

5.1.2 OVERVIEW OF DETAILED FINDINGS:

The report is comprehensive. CM emphasised the following points.

The audit findings have been classified using a RAG rating, where Red indicates immediate attention, Amber means there are concerns and Green implies best practice.

Out of 64 findings, 6 were rated Red that cover 2 areas.

- A) The Fixed Asset Register. Across all schools there is some form of register, but nothing is standardised. There is no categorisation. SGL will work on achieving this standardisation. This to be linked to a physical inventory to ensure what is in the register is actually there.

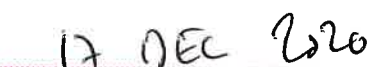
SGL to standardise FARs

- B) Control of High Purchases. This is to ensure Value for Money is maintained.

There is a need for a robust IT/Disaster recovery plan.



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SGL has this in hand.

- C) The Risk Register needs to be more robust as so much hangs on it. It is very important that the Audit Committee is on board with this. It is another pillar that helps manage risk in schools. Improving the Risk Register give more direction to dealing with the key risks facing the schools.

CM is in communication with SGL to address this matter.

5.1.3 AREAS OF CONCERN AND OTHER DETAILS IN THE REPORT

Information on individual schools appears in the first part of the report with central process coming later on.

RN then addressed the Trustees.

Internal scrutiny is a key part of Academy Trust compliance with the DfE.

We need to plan for tighter financial control of the MAT.

Trustees are embedding their scrutiny into the culture of the Trust.

The aim is for a 3 term audit. 2019/20 we managed 2 – Spring and Summer.

For 2020/21 we are recommending that the Audit Committee should approve the schedule for 3 cycles.

Claire is the Head of Academies Finance Internal Audit and will be leading the entire audit engagement with the Boleyn Trust.

The first (Spring) audit flagged up some issues. The Finance and Audit committee are working on clearing these up to ensure that Internal Audit issues have been followed up.

Trustees need to ensure that these issues have been followed up.

Trustees to follow up on all matters raised

The implementation of measures to address the key issues from the 2 audits should be reviewed by trustees at this meeting and at the board meetings. This is part of an ongoing review to ensure the process is fit for purpose.

Trustees are also recommended to look at the impact COVID-19 has had on the Trust in terms of potential risks.

Trustees to explore impact of COVID-19



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5.1.4 CM then continued with her report.

CM referred to the Internal Audit Service section that set out the proposed Programme of Work for approval for 2020/2021 (p90 – 98).

This section set out what to focus on and what needs doing by term.

CM acknowledged they were a little behind but asked if Trustees were able to give their approval SGL can then get to work during this term.

CM then referred Trustees to Part 8 (p97) Methods of work during the Pandemic, explaining how the process would work but requiring the need for a more streamlined and efficient approach to cope with the challenges provided by COVID-19.

AC then asked for any questions.

Trustees all agreed they were happy with the Internal Audit service being provided.

AC confirmed that Trustees should approve the programme of work. She was pleased to see the number of policies that had been drafted and addressed following identification as red issues.

AC then offered her thanks for all the hard work and effort to produce this report.

SGL offered his thanks to CM and RN for all their hard work and how appreciated it is.

AC suggested that as the Risk Register is an integral part of this committee's work it should be a standing item on the agenda.

SL agreed adding that this would ensure the robust nature of the Register and provide another level of checking.

CM picked up on the Risk Register and referred to p99 of the report, looking at Additional Recommendation Outside Business as Usual Internal Audit. She said that, as a committee, consider the recommendations and decide whether you want CM/RN to address them.

CM then referred Trustees to the section on Scope of Work (p104) explaining what was found during the internal audit.

CM said we did have limited time to update the Risk Register during the pandemic so we have set out our findings including how to improve the Risk register.

Trustees are asked to read through the findings and look at the recommendations.



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Trustees to read findings and recommendation

It was emphasised the importance of the Risk Register as a key document.

Help is available from CM and RN for Trustees to ensure they are able to effectively monitor and review the Register as a working document.

The Risk register will be rolled out in 2 phases.

Phase 1 – looking at The Trust

Phase 2 – looking at all schools – if there are issues with the Risk register they can be addressed.

CM asked how Trustees wanted to progress with this.

AC asked if Trustees can recommend it.

SGL replied yes, but then it gets taken to the Board. It should be as tight as possible before that.

SL agreed, highlighting the importance of mitigating all risks.

AC asked for any comment from Trustees.

MM stated that if additional support is available to help them in their role , they should take it.

AC recommended the Risk register, adding that the right people should be in the right place to do the work.

SGL said that at the meeting on 17/12/2020, from 4 to 5pm the Audit will be approved and then from 5 to 6pm it will be presented to the Board for ratification.

CM and her team were then thanked for the presentation.

6. STANDING ITEMS

6.1 Trustee suggestions for future agenda discussions

7. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

7.1 SGL proposed to add the Risk Register as a standing item.

This was agreed unanimously.

8. DATE, TIME AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

8.1 The date of the next Audit Committee will be communicated to Trustees.



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8.2 There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 17:25pm



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