

INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONAL CLERKING SERVICES

**The St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust**

Minutes of a meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee  
held at St Mary's College on 20 January 2022 at 6.30pm

PRESENT: Mrs L Dyas, Mr P Fearnley, Mr G Fitzpatrick, Mr D Holtby

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs A Hunter, Internal Finance Manager  
Mr A Rookes, Finance Manager,  
Mrs K Siedle, Chief Operating Officer, Primary (remotely)  
Mrs S Teasdale, Chief Finance Officer

1 OPENING PRAYER. Mr Fitzpatrick opened the meeting with a prayer.

2 ELECTION OF CHAIR. A nomination was received for Mrs Dyas to Chair the committee for the remainder of the academic year.

RESOLVED: that Mrs Dyas be appointed Chair for the remainder of the academic year.

3 APOLOGIES. No apologies for absence were received.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. No declarations were submitted in addition to those already received.

5 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

6 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES. There were no matters arising.

7 TERMS OF REFERENCE. Directors were asked to accept the terms of reference for the committee. They had been reviewed and agreed by the Strategic Committee and would be presented to the Board for approval.

The CFO confirmed that all requirements of the Academies Handbook had been included.

RESOLVED: that the terms of reference for the committee be recommended to the Board for approval, as follows:

**Audit and Risk Committee**

(Quorum 3)

**Membership**

Mrs L Dyas (Chair)

Mr P Fearnley, Mr G Fitzpatrick, Mr M Gallagher, Mr D Holtby

### Terms of Reference

- To monitor financial plans to ensure the Trust remains a going concern.
- To ensure rigour and scrutiny in budget management.
- To have sound internal control, risk management and assurance processes.
- To establish a control framework that regularly reports on regularity, propriety, and value for money.
- To manage risks, including contingency and business continuity and maintain a risk register. The Board must retain oversight of risk and review the risk register at least annually.
- To recommend to the Board the appointment of the external auditors.
- To receive auditors' reports and to ensure recommendations are implemented in the following reporting cycle.
- To regularly review the whistleblowing policy and ensure any reports of fraud and/or irregularity are investigated and reported back.
- To maintain an accurate and up to date register of business interests.
- To ensure the Trust meets the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation.

8 REPORT FROM THE ACCOUNTING OFFICER. Directors considered the report, copies of which had been circulated in advance of the meeting.

#### *1. Regularity*

##### *Academy Planning Calendar (Finance)*

- *Land Buildings Control Tool 9 November 21 - submitted*
- *Financial Statements etc. 31 December 21 – submitted*
- *Audited Accounts Return 25 Jan 22 – submitted to external auditor for approval; would be approved and submitted to ESFA by the deadline.*
- *Audited Accounts published on website 31 Jan 22 – diarised*
- *SRMSAT 15 March 22 – underway*
- *Budget Forecast Return Outturn 17 May 22 – cancelled*
- *Financial Statements to Companies House 31 May 22 – RSM diarised for mid-April*
- *Budget Forecast Return 3-year 26 July 22*
- *Internal scrutiny partner is no longer available so new partnership being formed ahead of planned February activity.*
- *Register of Business Interests for Directors to be updated with new Directors.*
- *Website Review undertaken flagging issues for governance and compliance – action plan nearing completion.*
- *RPA Audits monitoring and reporting due.*
- *Student Return to School Mass Testing completed successfully.*
- *School Improvement NLE Deployment Offers accepted and returned to ESFA.*

#### *2. Propriety*

- *SRMA Deployment nearing completion.*
- *External Audit of Governance set up by the Trust's governance professional has commenced. Directors would receive questionnaire from Stephen Hopkins, External Reviewer; they were asked to complete and return in a timely manner.*
- *Articles of Association are still under review with the Diocese.*
- *AGM with Members is scheduled for 9th Feb 2022.*

### 3. Value for Money

- *A range of mid value contracts have been awarded for various site works such as plumbing and fencing.*
- *Short term Amazon audit to ensure all small orders are demonstrating value for money. No concerns had been identified to date.*
- *Renewal of Bus Contracts Sept 22 - major procurement exercise commenced.*

### 4. Sustainability

- *We have been successful with our application to the DfE Decarbonisation Fund for St Mary's College main school to renew heating and hot water systems, however the Diocese have put this on hold pending further advice from the CES.*
- *Business Support Manager is reviewing Salix LED lighting opportunities across the Trust.*

## 9 ESFA REPORTING. Key items received from the ESFA were noted:

- 8 December 2021: Update on the school rebuilding programme. Urgent consideration would be given to schools which may be eligible to receive funding.
- 15 December 2021: School Resource Management Self-Assessment Tool relaunched. To be submitted to the ESFA by 15 March 2022. The draft submission was circulated for comment.
- 5 January 2022: RPA cost increase from £19 to £21 per pupil; this continued to represent exceptional value and had extended to include cyber cover.
- 12 January 2022: accounts return submitted to RSM for approval prior to submission to ESFA by deadline of 25 January 2022.
- 19 January 2022: GAG statements due to be issued followed by notification of 6<sup>th</sup> Form funding.

RESOLVED: that comments relating to the draft SRMSA submission be conveyed to the CFO.

## 10 RISK REGISTER. Directors' attention was drawn to the risk register which covered all aspects of finance across the Trust and other, broader aspects with wider financial implications.

Directors were asked to review the document and present comments and questions for discussion at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: that the risk register be considered in detail at the next meeting.

## 11 AUDIT AND ASSURANCE REPORTING. The Internal Finance Manager reported on current areas of scrutiny:

- 16 to 19 bursary funding to confirm compliance
- Data from primary schools to review document retention in line with GDPR requirements
- Finance procedures were under review
- Debtors – staff were pursuing outstanding debts; outstanding amounts for academy lettings would be addressed
- Petty cash – increased controls had been introduced across the primaries; these would be extended to include St Mary's College

- 12 GDPR AND DATA PROTECTION. This item would be discussed under Part B (minute 14 refers).
- 13 DATES AND TIMES OF NEXT MEETINGS. Dates and times for meetings were confirmed as follows:
- 17 March, 12 May and 7 July 2022

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signature of Chair

**ACTIONS**

<b>Minute No</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By who</b>	<b>By when</b>
7	Terms of reference be recommended to the Board for approval	Governance Professional	17.03.2022
9	Comments relating to the draft SRMSA submission be conveyed to the CFO	Directors	03.03.2022
10	Risk register be considered in detail at next meeting	Governance Professional – agenda CFO report	03.03.2022

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**PART B - NOT FOR PUBLICATION**

**Confidential items covered by the Articles of Association.**

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signature of Chair