

INDEPENDENT PROFESSIONAL CLERKING SERVICES

The St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Academy Trust

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance, Audit and Capital Assets Committee
held on 14 October 2021 on the rising of the meeting held at 5.00pm

650 ELECTION OF CHAIR. A nomination was received for Ms Dex to Chair the audit element of the meeting.

RESOLVED: that Ms Dex be appointed Chair for the meeting.

651 APOLOGIES. Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Dyas and Mr Sargeant.

It was noted that Mr Davidson had intended to join the meeting remotely. Subsequent to the meeting, an email was received advising that he had attempted to join the meeting without success.

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

AUDIT

653 REPORT FROM THE ACCOUNTING OFFICER.

1. Regularity

• *Academies Financial Handbook has been relaunched and is now known as the Academy Trust Handbook; updates had been detailed earlier.*

Academy Planning Calendar (Finance)

- *Land Buildings Control Tool 9 November 2021*
- *Financial Statements etc. 31 December 2021*
- *Audited Accounts Return 25 January 2022*
- *Audited Accounts published on website 31 January 2022*
- *SRMSAT 15 March 2022*
- *Budget Forecast Return Outturn 17 May 2022*
- *Financial Statements to Companies House 31 May 2022*
- *Budget Forecast Return 3-year 26 July 2022*
- *Internal scrutiny exercise completed by external agency; a report would be presented for discussion.*
- *Register of Business Interests for Trust updated – last few entries being finalised.*
- *Register of Business Interests for Directors updated – outstanding entries to be submitted to Governance Professional by the end of the month.*
- *Website Review undertaken and actions underway to bring governance and compliance items in line with current requirements.*

2. Propriety

- *Meeting with regional ESFA and DfE team to respond to Eileen Milner letter.*

3. Value for Money

- *A range of mid value procurement exercises have been completed to support the works on the Capital Plan.*
- *High value procurement exercises on transport and IT Managed Services will be handled by Hull CC Procurement Team and are due to commence in the Spring Term.*

4. Sustainability

- *We have applied to the DfE Decarbonisation Fund for St Mary's College main school to renew heating and hot water systems.*
- *Zenergi have submitted 2 bids to Salix for low carbon replacement of boilers at St Richard's and St Thomas More.*
- *Investigations would be conducted to establish the possibility of renewables (solar panels) at other primary sites.*

The CFO reported that a meeting had been held with the Pensions Actuary to agree contributions for this year.

- 654 ESFA REPORTING. Information relating to common theme assurance breaches had been received; the majority of breaches had been in relation to regularity on financial statements. There had been a high number of Trusts who had not given the opinion of a 'going concern;' this had not applied to St Cuthbert's Trust.

The CFO advised that there was no reason to expect opinions submitted by the Trust would be modified. It had been noted that systems in place for internal and external scrutiny exceeded expectations.

Further information had been sought on the School Resource Manager system; no response had been received.

- 655 STATUTORY ACCOUNTS. The Finance Manager reported that the end of year accounts were being prepared and would be submitted in line with required timescales.

Mr Fearnley advised he needed to leave the meeting. He was invited to comment on the audit report (minute 657 refers). **In response, he advised that he had submitted comments which had been added to the audit schedule.**

Mr Fearnley was thanked for his attendance and left the meeting.

- 656 RISK REGISTER. It was explained that the risk register would be the key document for consideration by the committee. A strategic priority summary had been developed which would link financial risks and outline potential risks which could prevent strategic priorities being achieved. The strategic priorities would reflect ambitions for the Trust and would be circulated for discussion at the next meeting.

657 AUDIT AND ASSURANCE REPORTING.

Audit Report

It was planned to work through the report received from the external auditor. There had been no surprises and recommendations received had been in relation to tightening procedures and systems.

One area identified had been payment of holidays for casual workers. The position, which had been historic, required harmonising with the pay policy.

In response to a point for clarification, it was confirmed that the issue applied mainly to catering staff.

The CFO advised that many of the issues identified would be resolved following the introduction of the paperless system reported earlier; support from Primary Tech would be sought to expedite its introduction.

Internal Review 2020-2022

Directors were asked to receive and comment on the proposed internal audit schedule for 2020-2022. It was noted that Mr Fearnley had reviewed the document and suggested the addition of VAT processes and returns along with teacher pension reporting.

The CFO concluded that external auditors would consider carefully how the committee monitored key areas, identified areas of concern and how they were being addressed.

658 DATES AND TIMES OF NEXT MEETINGS. Dates and times for meetings were confirmed as follows:

- 2 December 2021
- 20 January, 17 March, 12 May and 7 July 2022

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signature of Chair