



THE AUDIT COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

PUBLIC MINUTES

Date	:	Thursday, 17 December 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
		Michelle Wilkes	External Auditor
		David Lightman	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.

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

4.1 The minutes of the Audit Committee held on Thursday, 18 November 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 from the External Auditors the Annual Accounts for Year Ending 31 August 2020. [papers circulated on the day]

5.1.1 MW presented the accounts / audit. This was a similar format to last year and there had been no changes to the standard although there were some additional disclosures to note relating to the pandemic and its impact on operations. MW noted under additional disclosures that there was a note about streamlined energy and promoting the success of the Trust.

5.1.2 MW noted that the Trust was in a good place especially in reference to reserves of £6.96m. Also, that the auditors had changed their name from Wilkins Kennedy to Azets.

5.1.3 Regarding I&E – MW thanked RN and Steven Lock for the high quality of their work, which had made the audit so much easier.

5.1.4 MW noted there had been deferred income last year from SCA which had been carried forward. There is an operating surplus of £1.68m in the year, which is actually due to LEA funding and accounting changes.

5.1.5 MW noted that there had been staff cost changes, but it was difficult to make and year on year comparisons.

5.1.6 Re the balance sheet: there was £3.56m GAG funding and £3.4m in general funds – there were no unusual issues highlighted and some capital work had been funded and completed.

5.1.7 MW noted that total creditors falling due within one year is £2.6m and this relates to Trade Creditors, PAYE, some accruals and deferred Pupil Premium income.

5.1.8 MW noted that the accounting policies had not changed.

5.1.9 MW noted that #8 on Page 32 re. the allocation of Central Services costs was now allocated across all the schools.



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5.1.10 All notes will be truncated for the website and the submission to Companies House.

5.1.11 #10 and #11 refer to staff costs.

5.1.12 #17 - Page 39 of the Balance Sheet – refers to the GAG and a note on how the funds are allocated across the schools – as it is regarded as one trust and not a collection of schools, all funds belong to the Trust and losses and profits are not allocated as far as the ESFA are concerned, on a school-by-school basis – it is taken as a whole.

5.1.13 #24 is a note on related party transactions – there were none in the previous auditing period but if there are then these need to be disclosed to RN and SGL.

Q: CAD asked about the auditor's name change.

A: MW replied that they had merged two years ago but retained name autonomy across their clients. This year, they had decided to change to the name of Azets alone but there was no change in the provision of services.

5.2 SGL noted that he and RN had worked on the risks of increased wages as a risk to the financial stability of the Trust and this was now being written into a future forecast regarding recruitment.

5.3 Overall Audit Findings

5.3.1 All key policies and procedures had been followed and reporting and procurement were robust. There was a note about updating the website in a timely fashion and a further note about invoice reporting for VAT purposes.

5.3.2 MW noted there were some emerging issues and some "musts" for next year – internal audits had to be conducted three times per annum, the ESFA had new guidelines on Going Concern and that the Trust's pupil roll will be affected by other schools opening in the area and birth rates in the future.

5.3.3 MW / SGL noted that there were some edits still to be made to the narrative and that the filing deadline had been extended to the end of January 2021.

5.4 AC thanked MW, Azets, and the Trust's team for getting the audit together in such difficult times.

5.5 There were no further questions.

6. STANDING ITEMS

6.1 No Item to report.


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7. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

7.1 No items tabled.

8. DATE, TIME, AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

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

8.2 There being no further business, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and the meeting closed at 17:15pm



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04 November 2021

DATE