



Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust

Achieving Excellence Together

The Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust

Minutes of Finance, Audit & Risk Committee Meeting

On Monday 18th October 2021 @ 12:00

Remote Meeting via ZOOM

Present:

Ms Louise Hutchinson (LH)	Trustee
Mr Andrew Bent (AB)	Trustee (Chair)
Dr Martin Hanbury (MH)	CEO Chatsworth Multi-Academy Trust
Mr Paul Willoughby (PW)	Trustee

In Attendance:

Mrs Emma Taylor (ET)	Clerk, Just A Sec
----------------------	-------------------

Absent:

There were no absences.

The meeting met its quorum

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The Clerk welcomed attendees to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received and accepted from Ms Vicky McRae, Trust Finance Manager.

2. Declarations of Non/Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of non/pecuniary interests in relation to any agenda items. Trustees were reminded to confirm and update their declarations via GovernorHub on an annual basis if they had not done so already and to contact the Clerk if assistance was required.

MH wished to make Trustees aware that he had been appointed as a Trustee of the Tutor Trust, which facilitated the provision of tutoring in mainstream schools within areas of the North West. Trustees thanked MH for raising this appointment.

3. Election of Chair

It was proposed and agreed that AB would continue as the Chair of Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust Finance, Audit & Risk Committee.



Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust

Achieving Excellence Together

Approved: Andrew Bent was elected as Chair of Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust Finance, Audit & Risk Committee.

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (21st June 2021)

The minutes of the previous meeting, having been circulated via GovernorHub in advance of the meeting, were approved as a correct and accurate record.

5. Matters Arising

It was agreed that the actions listed below had been completed or were no longer required:-

- *MH will instruct the LA that in view of the fact that 30 students are educated on a different site and therefore not covered by the PFI, the Trust will not be paying the charges for these students.*
- *MH will establish if there is a fee for provision of an electronic version of the PFI contract and, if financially viable, will obtain this and send an electronic version over to AB.*
- *VM to confirm whether Haines Watt are required to prepare end of year accounts for the 2021 year.*
- *AB will ask Peter Atkinson to attend the Trust Board Meeting on 13th July 2021.*
- *VM will provide LH with the Resource Management Self-Evaluation tool which shows areas of spend and markers against other schools and Trusts.*
- *MH will contact Carolyn Eyre in connection with the three year internal audit plan.*
- *MH will upload the Project Bidding Process: Assistant Headteacher Key Stage 4 and Engagement paper to Governor Hub.*

Remaining actions were updated as detailed below:-

MH will raise the Trustee strategy session with Mr Cole Andrew so that this can be raised at the Trust Board Meeting on 13th July 2021 and a timeframe for the strategy session can be identified [September/October] - the Trustee strategy session had been discussed with Cole Andrew, Trustee, however the date had not been finalised and this action would be carried over to the next meeting.

Action: AB to provide an Omega Trust strategy session agenda for consideration.

AB will contact LH to organise a meeting to review the Finance Committee ToR in readiness for approval in the autumn 2021 term - the review of the ToR remained ongoing and would be carried over to the next meeting.

Follow up meeting to take place between AB, VM and MH before summer or as early as possible in September 2021 to agree a three year audit plan for presentation to the next Finance Committee meeting.



Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust

Achieving Excellence Together

Update: Carolyn Eyre would be conducting a Trust wide three day Safeguarding Audit in November 2021. The remaining audit plan actions would be carried over until January 2021.

Action: Review of the three year audit plan to be progressed and update presented to the meeting on 25th January 2022.

MH to produce catch up action plan for presentation at the Trust Board Meeting on 13th July 2021 – this would be addressed within agenda item 8.

MH will present a Covid Catch Up budget report to the Trust Board Meeting on 13th July 2021 – this would be addressed within agenda item 8.

MH will present the finalised Risk Register to the Trust Board Meeting on 13th July 2021 – this would be addressed within agenda item 9.

MH will record the requisition process for the benefit of Trustees and send this to AB, LH and PW in order that they can approve the process or raise any challenges or questions.

Update: MH confirmed that the requisition process was in place however, software and compatibility issues had been experienced during implementation of the requisition process. VM would update Trustees further at the next meeting. **Action:** VM to provide an update in regard to the requisition process at the meeting on 15th November 2021.

6. Items for Any Other Business

LH requested that the process for Performance Management Reviews at Chatsworth High School and Community College [CHSCC] was addressed within Any Other Business and this was accepted.

7. Budget Update Report

MH provided a verbal Budget update.

CHSCC

A number of contractual changes had been required at the start of the academic year to accommodate new students and these changes had resulted in a deficit of £7,000. The deficit had been remediated by funding from other areas, which included Covid Catch-Up funding of £17,400.

The decision to utilise the Covid Catch-Up funding in this way was one which had been devolved to the school. Student routines had been severely disrupted as a consequence of the pandemic, which had resulted in significant challenges to teaching practice. Additional Teaching Assistants [TAs] had been utilised to address this, focusing upon individual students where necessary.



Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust

Achieving Excellence Together

It had not been possible to recruit a Speech and Language Therapist [SaLT] however, NHS SaLT provision had been provided. This had resulted in a saving of £32,500 from the budget for SaLT recruitment.

A SaLT had been successfully recruited at Chatsworth Futures [CF] and she would be dedicating all of her time to the college. The overall SaLT provision would be reviewed in December 2021. Funding from the SaLT tuition programme had generated £19,035.

The outcome from the above had resulted in an overall in year surplus of £62,000.

MH highlighted the budget with regard to supply teaching. To date, £16,500 of the £30,000 budget had been spent and the pandemic continued to present significant staffing challenges. Two staff members had been sent home today because they had tested positive for Covid-19. Staff sickness levels were also high due to other bugs and infections.

MH noted that it had not been possible to secure cover for two staff members between 10.30 to 12.30 today and, more generally, the competency of cover staff could not always be assured. Whilst this had not been costed, there may be merit in employing supernumerary staff, which would facilitate additional control over the skills and training of cover staff. Subject to considering the cost of this model in greater depth, supernumerary staff at Higher Level TA [HLTA] level would be qualified to cover classes for short periods and when there was a full cohort of staff, their skills could be utilised to carry out value added work, which would potentially result in better value for the Trust.

Question: Would insurance cover for long term sickness assist with cases of 'long Covid'?

Long Covid had not presented an issue to date. The Trust took the decision to 'selfinsure' for sickness approximately eight years ago following a cost benefit analysis. The risk of cases of long Covid arising in the future would need to be considered.

MH confirmed that the maternity insurance provision also required consideration. The maternity insurance had been beneficial, having regard to the high proportion of young female staff members. However, it had recently been confirmed that the policy did not provide cover for school leaders where they fell within the upper leadership pay scale. VM had been able to ensure payment on the occasion where this point had arisen however, the lack of cover for senior leaders would need to be addressed, potentially by obtaining quotes from alternative insurance providers or investigating whether it was possible to secure additional cover with the current maternity insurance provider.



Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust

Achieving Excellence Together

Question: What was the cost of the maternity insurance policy?

MH did not have the cost to hand. The value provided by the maternity insurance would require review, perhaps by way of comparison of premium cost over a five or ten year period compared against insurance payments received.

Action: MH/HB/VM to school to review sickness and maternity insurance policies and alternative means of covering staff absences and report the findings at the meeting on 25 January 2022.

Chatsworth Futures

The current financial position provided for an in-year surplus of £50,000.

The learners and approximately 95% of staff members had been fully vaccinated against Covid-19.

The maternity leave cover proposal had been detailed as agenda item 13 however, it was agreed that it would be addressed within the Budget Update.

BC would commence maternity leave in January 2022, unless the impact of the pandemic required an earlier timeframe. In depth discussions had taken place in regard to covering BC's role and ensuring that the current high standards were maintained. Trustees had provided email approval of the model, which had been proposed within the CF Governors' Board Meeting on 23rd September 2021, which included moving the Trust Engagement Officer to the role of Pastoral Manager, to work alongside the Curriculum Manager.

Question: It had been anticipated that a significant proportion of BC's salary would be covered by the maternity insurance policy. Did the lack of cover for school leaders within the upper leadership pay scale change this?

It had been agreed that one fifth of BC's salary would be repaid pursuant to the maternity insurance policy which would pay for the teaching commitment. This had been challenged and, whilst the final position had not been confirmed, it may be necessary to draw some of the salary from the £50,000 surplus.

The Trust Engagement Officer was currently remunerated as a central member of the Trust but the Pastoral Manager role would result in full-time employment at CF. Remuneration of the Pastoral Manager role would need to be paid from the CF budget, which may impact the £50,000 surplus.

Question: Would the need for reduced support from Helen Bramley, Co-Principal, result in a financial saving?

It was anticipated that Helen Bramley would gradually reduce her input from January 2022, which would result in savings against the budget.



Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust

Achieving Excellence Together

Question: Would there be a requirement for CHSCC to fill the role which had previously been undertaken by the Trust Engagement Officer?

The Headteacher, Ms Helen Birkinhead [HB], had been consulted regarding the implications of the maternity leave cover upon the school. The Trust Engagement Officer's role had included the provision of family liaison and pastoral support and other members of the Senior Leadership Team [SLT] would be able to assist with the benefit of additional training where required. The bid writing work completed by the Trust Engagement Officer had resulted in significant benefits across the whole Trust and she would continue to do this.

A new junior clerking role would be utilised to alleviate the business administration pressures at CF. It was anticipated that this would be filled via Kickstart recruitment, which had worked well previously in regard to Information Technology and TA roles. There was also an added social value to the Kickstart offer.

Question: Would an office apprentice be suitable for this role and would the Apprenticeship Levy be applicable?

MH would review the Apprenticeship Levy prior to advertising the role and thanked Trustees for raising this. The Apprenticeship Levy may result in additional training costs however, if the salary was lower this would represent a cost-effective means of securing extra resources. PW's experience was that standard education often led employees to this type of opportunity and often resulted in rich talent pools within some areas.

Trustees noted and approved the verbal Budget update.

8. Covid Catch-Up

MH provided a verbal update in regard to Covid Catch-Up.

MH attended a Headteachers Conference this week and it was widely recognised that catch-up represented one of the most difficult aspects of the pandemic.

The catch-up requirements across the Trust incorporated a diverse range of needs with many permutations as to how these needs could be addressed. All students had felt the impact of the pandemic emotionally and this could be significantly exaggerated for some students. The bespoke nature of the catch-up needs was not academically based, however, the catch-up steps required were equally as important.

There had been detailed consideration of where the Covid Catch-up Funding would have the greatest impact. It had been recognised that an 'action plan' may not capture all aspects of the catch-up needs and detailed assessment therefore took place as part of the committee work addressing Quality of Education. A draft Quality of



Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust

Achieving Excellence Together

Education report had been prepared, which resulted from a comprehensive assessment, including classroom visits. It had been identified that the curriculum would benefit from being even more comprehensive and good habits within the classroom required reinforcement. Additional TAs would continue to assist with this process. Staff members had completed training to assist them with examining and recognising catch-up needs.

Question: Was the Covid Catch-Up funding secure when the allocation was considered as part of a committee/group format?

Yes the Covid Catch-Up funding was secure. A great deal of work had been invested upon identifying where the funding would be spent and the steps required had been documented. Trustees were assured that the funding would be utilised to achieve maximum impact.

Trustees noted the verbal Budget Covid Catch-Up update.

9. Risk Register

Trustees were referred to the draft Risk Register, which had been circulated via GovernorHub in advance of the meeting.

The Risk Register had been prepared utilising a template which had been provided by AB and represented a Trust wide high level risk assessment.

AB shared his screen and Trustees examined and discussed the draft Risk Register. The following key principles of completion of the Risk Register process were considered:-

- Risk types were categorised as strategic, financial, operational and people risks.
- Within these categories, each risk required a description to enable clear identification.
- The likelihood of the risk would be described and categorised and ranged from improbable, possible to probable.
- Severity addressed how severe the impact would be and ranged from acceptable, tolerable, undesirable and intolerable.
- The likelihood score, impact score and risk score determined the risk level.
- Current controls identified the steps which were being taken to mitigate the risk.
- The most effective risk management would be to implement mitigating actions, which would allow the risk level to be reduced to the lowest possible level.
- Trustees were required to assess the effectiveness of the mitigating actions. This process of assessment included consideration of current controls and how effectively these were being implemented.



Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust

Achieving Excellence Together

- The mitigating actions would be clearly timed and reviewed at each meeting. In circumstances where further steps could be taken to manage the risks, these would be outlined and the Risk Register would be updated.
- Completion of the mitigating steps would facilitate reduction of the likelihood in order that the target risk level could be achieved and the risk level reduced from extreme to medium, for example.

By way of example, Trustees discussed the accommodation risk, which was categorised as an extreme risk with a risk score of 12. A risk score at this level would require immediate action. MH confirmed that there were approximately 150 students spread across three sites because the number of students exceeded the capacity of the Eccles site. Control measures included the use of the three sites and, whilst pressure upon accommodation would remain, it was agreed that the accommodation risk ought to be identified with a likelihood of possible rather than probable and an impact of undesirable rather than intolerable, which would reduce the risk score.

Whilst the accommodation risk was adequately managed, further consideration would be given to whether any additional realistic and achievable steps would lower the impact or the likelihood.

Action: PW and MH to review and challenge the draft Risk Register, for presentation to the meeting on 15th November 2021.

Trustees were pleased by the outcome of the discussions in regard to the Risk Register, which was an excellent resource.

Trustees noted the draft Risk Register, which had been circulated via GovernorHub in advance of the meeting.

10. Internal Audit Report

This had been addressed within agenda item 5.

11. Finance System

MH provided a verbal update in regard to the finance system.

The Trust wide cloud based finance system, Access Education Finance, had been successfully implemented and centralised all aspects of finance work. Whilst there had been some challenges within the implementation process, for example with setting the reporting period dates, these had been identified and rectified.

Question: What was the nature of the general feedback which had been provided?



Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust

Achieving Excellence Together

Staff members were familiarising themselves with the different systems, for example requisitions, and it was acknowledged that a period of adjustment would be required. Whilst some staff members had found the change difficult, it was anticipated that the system would be fully embedded by January 2022. Trustees understood the difficulties which could be experienced with changing systems and behaviours and the need for this to be supported by training and appropriate briefings. Staff members must be clear that the new system incorporated financial controls, which must be utilised to avoid any breaches of financial procedures, which would constitute a very serious disciplinary offence. The requisition process would be reiterated in order that staff members were clear of what was required.

Trustees were assured that VM had provided training and that instructions provided to staff members had been very clear.

Trustees noted the verbal update in regard to the Finance System.

12. Staffing Update

MH provided a verbal update in regard to Staffing.

The impact of Covid-19 continued to present significant staffing challenges and this picture was replicated within the local areas. These challenges continued to be monitored and managed appropriately.

Trustees noted the verbal update in regard to Staffing.

13. Maternity Leave Cover

This had been addressed within agenda item 7.

14. AOB

Performance Management Reviews at CHSCC

The Local Governing Body of the CHSCC proposed that the Performance Management of HB would take place by way of panel review comprising the Chair of Governors, an experienced Governor and LH as Trustee. The review findings would then be presented to the Trust Board for final approval. Clarification was sought regarding the process for approval of Performance Management reviews and Teacher Pay Awards.

MH confirmed that the Performance Management review in respect of HB would take place on Thursday 21st October 2021. MH had also scheduled the Performance Management review for BC. In regard to his own Performance Management, MH had completed his self-evaluation, together with evidence in support of this, and these would be reviewed with the external School Improvement Partner who would be visiting the school tomorrow for the first time.



Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust

Achieving Excellence Together

Approved: MH would undertake Performance Management reviews in respect of HB and BC as scheduled.

Action: MH and AB to discuss the format for Performance Management review approval offline and feedback to Trustees via email.

Trustees thanked LH for raising Performance Management reviews for consideration.

15. Date and Time of Next Meeting

16th November 2021 at 12:00

Approved: the next meeting date would be brought forward to 15th November 2021 at 12:00 to accommodate Trustee availability. The meeting would take place via ZOOM.

Trustees noted that the Annual Accounts Report would be presented to the Trust Board for approval on 29th November 2021. The draft report, to include key financial statements, balance sheet and cashflow would require consideration in advance by the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee to ensure that there was an opportunity for challenge and questions.

VM would be able to present the draft report at the meeting on 15th November 2021; it would not be necessary for Peter Atkinson from Jackson Stephen to present this.

MA confirmed that he had discussed the current time frames with Peter Atkinson and was confident that they would be achievable.

Action: MH to ensure that the draft Annual Accounts Report will be available in readiness for the meeting on 15th November 2021 and to communicate any issues to Trustees.

The meeting concluded at 1.45

Signed **Dated**
Mr Andrew Bent (Chair)

Summary of actions

10 Minutes of Chatsworth MAT Finance, Audit & Risk Committee

Monday 18th October 2021



Chatsworth Multi Academy Trust

Achieving Excellence Together

Item	Action	Owner
5	MH will raise the Trustee strategy session with Mr Cole Andrew so that this can be raised at the Trust Board Meeting on 13 th July 2021 and a timeframe for the strategy session can be identified [September/October].	MH
5	AB to provide an Omega Trust strategy session agenda for consideration.	AB
5	AB will contact LH to organise a meeting to review the Finance Committee ToR in readiness for approval in the autumn 2021 term.	AB
5	Review of the three year audit plan to be progressed and update presented to the meeting on 25 th January 2022.	AB, VM and MH
5	VM to provide an update in regard to the requisition process at the meeting on 15 th November 2021.	VM
7	MH/HB/VM to school to review sickness and maternity insurance policies and alternative means of covering staff absences and report the findings at the meeting on 25 th January 2022.	MH/HB/VM
9	PW and MH to review and challenge the draft Risk Register, for presentation to the meeting on 15 th November 2021.	PW/MH
14	MH and AB to discuss the format for Performance Management review approval offline and feedback to Trustees via email.	MH/AB
15	MH to ensure that the draft Annual Accounts Report will be available in readiness for the meeting on 15 th November 2021 and to communicate any issues to Trustees.	MH